

2021 Leadership in Teaching & Learning Fellows

Rashid Abu-Ghazalah

Project title: *Leveling the Playing Field for Deaf, Hard of Hearing Students, and Beyond*

Collaborators: **Ms. Mei-Ju Shih, Mr. Gregory Van Gastel**



Rashid received his Ph.D. from the department of Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Toronto. He has taught at the University of Toronto and at the University of Waterloo prior to joining McMaster University seven years ago, where he is a teaching-track assistant professor in the School of Engineering Practice and Technology. Rashid's pedagogical interests include the effectiveness of multiple-choice questions as tools of testing knowledge, the use of instructional videos to bridge knowledge gaps, and the use of technology to enhance the learning experience for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Project Abstract:

Even with the various accommodations provided for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), they still face significant barriers in accessibility in their learning needs; leading them to suffer mental exhaustion, the feeling of being excluded, and a decrease in engagement. These detrimental factors have intensified with the transition to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditionally, DHH students would be offered a scribe or a computer note-taker during in-person lectures. After the pandemic, in addition to the aforementioned aids, these students are offered transcriptional services, either via automated closed-captioning, communication access real-time translation (CART) services, and/or post-lecture transcription through the library services at McMaster University. All of these solutions, for in-person and online lectures, have disadvantages in terms of accuracy, cost, and timely delivery.

The primary aim of this project is to enhance classroom accessibilities in teaching and learning, student engagement, and sense of belonging in every department at McMaster University that hosts students who are DHH. However, the tools that will be investigated have the potential to positively impact students whose first language is not English, and students overall.

This project is divided into three phases. In year one, preliminary information from the key stakeholders will be collected before the Fall term of 2022. This is followed by the implementation of the proposed interventions in the first year (phase I). After another round of data collection and analyses, in year two, an expanded implementation, with modifications of the interventions will be initialized (phase II), leading to the development of a toolkit and manual for future use (phase III).

Learning is directly linked to engagement. Students who are DHH are reported to have a lesser sense of belonging to the learning environment than their non-DHH peers (Foster, 1999). These students also have higher university attrition rates than non-DHH students (Albertini, 2012). As such, the aim of this research project is to examine innovative teaching methods to overcome these barriers by increasing accessibility to learning to students who are DHH. Furthermore, students with disabilities that view afforded accommodations as beneficial will use them and will engender a sense of independence (Kurth, 2016). It is the hypothesis of this proposal's authors that international students would also benefit from the proposed interventions by increasing inclusiveness.

Sarah Wojkowski

Project title: *Towards Inclusive Education: Course Mapping and Analysis for the Master of Science (Physiotherapy) Curriculum*

Collaborators: **Jenna Smith-Turchyn, Jasdeep Dhir, Patricia Miller**



Sarah Wojkowski, PT, PhD is an Associate Professor in the School of Rehabilitation Science and currently the Acting Assistant Dean for the Master of Science (Physiotherapy) Program. Sarah is also the Director for the Program of Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (PIPER) in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) and chair of the Ontario Physiotherapy Association's Primary Care Advisory Committee (PCAC). Her research interests include assessment of interprofessional competencies, unmet need for physiotherapy services, primary care and role emerging clinical placements. Sarah also chairs the McMaster Physiotherapy Program's Anti-Racism, Anti-Bias, Anti-Oppression (ARABAO) Committee, which is diligently

working to review and enhance concepts related to equity, diversity and inclusion in the curriculum. A member of the Governance committee for the Centre for Simulation Based Learning (CSBL), Sarah has a keen interest in the integration of simulation techniques into her teaching. A three-time McMaster alumna, she enjoys collaborating with faculty from across Health Sciences to make a positive impact on students' educational experiences.

Project Abstract:

Inclusive education is one based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Specifically, an inclusive education is one where students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, physical surrounding, and the broader environment, in which the diversity in social locations represented by the environment are honoured and respected (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). Additionally, culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is situated in a "...framework that recognizes the rich and varied cultural wealth, knowledge and skills of diverse learners" (Ragoonaden, 2017) and is an approach that focuses classroom curricula and practice on students' cultural frames of reference (Ragoonaden, 2017).

There is much work to be done in terms of identifying how social justice and Indigenous Health concepts are introduced, and scaffolded across the curriculum, and ultimately how these relate to the Program's expected graduate outcomes. The objective of this project is to map and analyze the current Master of Science Physiotherapy (MSc (PT)) curriculum to identify opportunities to introduce, reinforce and apply concepts of health justice and Indigenous health. The research team acknowledges many health justice concepts also relate to Indigenous health; however, there are unique features related to our Canadian context that must be included to Indigenize and decolonize the current curriculum. The tangible outcomes associated with this work will include:

- Two curriculum maps of course and session learning objectives related to health justice Indigenous Health
- Two separate scoping reviews related to the professional expectations for physiotherapists, with a specific interest in entry to practice, for physiotherapists related to EDI and Indigenous Health. These scoping reviews will be prepared with the intention to publish at least the final manuscript, but when possible, publishing the protocol for these reviews conference presentations of the results will also be encouraged
- Recommendations for curricular changes for the MSc (PT) Program Curriculum and ARABAO committees to address identified gaps
- Development, trial, and evaluation of two consultative roles related to curriculum development in the MSc (PT) Program: Indigenous Health and EDI Curriculum Consultants The results of this project will then be disseminated through a variety of methods both within and external to our program.

Jennifer Nash

Project title: *Measuring the impact of a new, required interdisciplinary course in level 1 of the BHSc (Honours) Program on readiness for interdisciplinary learning and skill set development*

Collaborators: **Shahad Al-saqqar, Stacey Ritz, Michael Wilson**



Dr. Jennifer V. Nash completed her Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) degree at McMaster University in 2004 and her Doctor of Chiropractic Degree at Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in 2008. She worked as a chiropractor in multi-disciplinary clinics in Waterloo and Brantford. She has also worked as a consultant with provincial and international associations on community outreach and health system integration projects and is the Lead Chiropractor with the Health2Work program, Region of Waterloo. Jennifer returned to McMaster as a sessional instructor in 2012 and is now an Assistant Professor, Department of Anesthesia, Facilitator/Instructor for several

courses in the Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours) Program and an Interprofessional Education (IPE) Faculty Lead for the Program for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (PIPER) at McMaster. Her interests include inquiry-based learning, group process, interdisciplinary/professional education/collaboration and pain associated with musculoskeletal conditions. Jennifer lives in rural Wellington County with her partner and 3 children. Her motto is “everything in moderation except questions and cupcakes” because you can never have too many of either of those!

Project Abstract:

HTHSCI 1G02: Interdisciplinary Problem Solving in Health is a new, required course for students in level I of the BHSc (Honours) Program. The course was offered in 2019 in-person and in 2020 virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The course was developed to address perceived gaps in the existing program by offering an early introduction to holistic and interdisciplinary perspectives of health and the process of addressing complex problems with specific focus on identifying and refining effective questions. This course provides an initial foundation on which will be built on over 4 years of the program. The course includes a mixed pedagogical approach consisting of large-group sessions with panels of experts and small group work supported by instructors and facilitators. Guest speakers from the McMaster and local community provide students with insight into their journeys, share questions that drive the work that they are doing and discuss how they collaborate with others in this work. The instructor team includes 3 BHSc Program alumni and the Assistant Dean, BHSc Program; each person brings unique knowledge, experiences and skill sets to the team which further contributes to the richness of the course. In-course student and TA feedback on the course has been very positive overall. In addition to student satisfaction, we want to understand if the course is achieving the objectives that we set out to achieve.

In this project, our primary objective is to collect and analyze data that will help understand the impact of the course on readiness for interprofessional learning (assessed through the Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale) and skill development (through pre and post Benchmarking). Secondary objectives include identifying differences in impact, engagement and learning between the two formats (in-person and virtual). The outcomes of this project will allow us to identify, reflect and share what is working and identify and implement changes based on opportunities for improvement and refinement of the course. This work will further contribute to literature on effective practices in interdisciplinary and interprofessional education (IPE), innovative pedagogical practices, integration of expert guest speakers, skill development, information literacy and group collaboration. Learnings will be shared within the McMaster community as well as at local, national and/or international conferences. Alongside this course evaluation, we propose to launch a community of practice

focused on education research within the BHSc Program. This will bring together a diverse group of instructors with interest in this area and provide an opportunity to learn with and from each other by exchanging ideas, sharing experience and supporting each other through unique skill sets.

Chris Sinding

Co-Applicant: **Amanda Kelly Ferguson**

Project title: *Clarifying evaluative expectations through rubric development*

Collaborators: **Maddie Brockbank**



Chris Sinding is the Director of the School of Social Work. In this role she has facilitated and supported multiple teaching and learning initiatives (including projects that foreground equity and accessibility) and contributed to pedagogical research and evaluation studies more broadly. She has a particular interest in arts-informed approaches to teaching, learning, research and practice in social work.

Project Abstract:

Based on anecdotal observations and concerns brought forward by students, teaching assistants, and instructors in the School of Social Work at McMaster University, there is an identified gap in the effective development and implementation of assessment tools and resources for evaluating student learning. Specifically, concerns related to the inconsistencies and uncertainties of assignment evaluations have led to various conversations within the department about how theoretical and practical social work learning can be better framed and assessed by teaching teams across various complementary courses. In an effort to address these gaps and concerns, this project proposes to apply a participatory action research model that will value an emergent and iterative process of developing, piloting, and refining a standardized rubric development tool with implementation and application support measures. The development of this tool will seek to clarify and standardize assignment expectations and evaluation to ensure that students' voices, concerns, and central interests are represented in the assessment of appropriate learning objectives, skills, and knowledges related to social work theory and practice.

Our ultimate goal in this project is to create an accessible pedagogical tool that will incite deeper, more inclusive, and more equitable dialogues among students, instructors, staff, and teaching assistants about the purpose of given assignments, the skills and knowledges being evaluated, and the ways in which assessment can be (re)framed as for student learning and growth. In doing this work, we hope to facilitate increased accessibility and equity within assessment of student learning through the collaborative and participatory development and imagination of this tool. This project will enhance students' overall learning experiences by virtue of the nature of the research design in and of itself, as well as by contributing to the improvement of assessment practices within the School of Social Work, and eventually across McMaster University. Because the project will employ a participatory action research model, students from the School of Social Work will be included in/consulted with at every step of the tool design process –student voice will therefore be built into the final product. The intention is to improve assessment practices within the department with our rubric development tool –this will improve not only that clarity and accessibility of assignment expectations but also better facilitate conversations between students and instructors around what and how their learning and knowledge are applied and evaluated. Eventually, the broadening of this project to other faculties at McMaster University will benefit students' learning experiences across the University.