Editorial

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the guest co-editors of the 29th issue of *LEARNing Landscapes* titled "Transitions: The messiness of just being human."

Mindy Carter is an associate professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University, Canada. Her research focuses on teacher identity, and on using the arts to foster culturally responsible and socially just pedagogies. She is the recent recipient of the American Association for Theatre Education's (AATE) Johnny Saldana Outstanding Professor of Theatre (2023) award and the AATE honorable mention publication award (2023) for her latest book, *Smallest Circles First: Exploring Teacher Reconciliatory Praxis through Drama Education*. Most recently, she was awarded the 2025 AERA Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Learning. Mindy is revered by students for her teaching of drama education and is an exceptional colleague.

Traci Klein is a PhD candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. She was an assistant professor of dance at Texas A&M International University, a lecturer at UC Santa Cruz, and the program administrator and creative assistant for NYU's Future Dancers and Dancemakers program. She holds an MFA in dance from NYU Tisch, and a BFA in dance from Southern Methodist University. She is a published author, member of the International Somatic Movement Education & Therapy Association, the National Dance Education Organization, the American Education Research Association, and the Canadian Society for the Studies in Education. She is the recipient of the DISE Doctoral Award in Education, the Gretta Chambers Fellowship, and the P. Lantz Graduate Fellowship for Excellence in Education. Her doctoral research focuses on dance education and somatic-based pedagogies that foster creativity.

Traci has been a perfect fit to work with Mindy as a co-editor and to illustrate, as an excellent example, why *LEARNing Landscapes* supports the inclusion of graduate students in all aspects of the publishing process.

This marks the third time in 18 years that the journal has had guest editors, and you won't be disappointed. I invite you to enjoy their informative and engaging editorial and the authors' thoughtful submissions.

LBK

Mindy: Hey Traci! It was so great seeing you last week at the 5th bi-annual Artful Inquiry Research Group (AIRG) symposium (May 2025). I still can't believe you made it to Montreal for this event. It feels like working on this editorial is actually bringing us full circle since the McGill April 2023 symposium on the theme of Re/Emergence(s), which inspired the theme of transitions in this call.

Traci: Yes, I loved how this special issue has allowed us, and these authors, to explore what it means to embrace transitions as an acceptance of being, and how the complexities of human interaction inform every level of educational practice and their related policies. The articles we received really open possibilities for embodied, holistic, inclusive, equitable, and socially just spaces for transformation within artistic practices, teaching, and learning.

Mindy: Absolutely! And so many of the submissions also show, rather than just tell us what this work is about by including multiple forms of representation, reminding us that we are interconnected, relational beings. *Going into the messiness* and not trying to conceal it is really challenging … but acknowledging the emotions, thoughts and felt experiences that make up this human life are an important aspect of recognizing how we can be with one another and create new spaces within academic contexts for the benefit of our teaching, relationships, and lives.

Traci: Exactly! Attending the AIRG symposium was really good for me, in the sense that I was able to find support from my doctoral committee, peers, and other faculty in our department as I navigate a really challenging time in my thesis work. Participating in the collage workshop with Lynn Butler-Kisber was especially encouraging because it helped me find clarity with what I was feeling emotionally. During our "gallery walk" we were asked to write 2–3 adjectives to describe each other's collage. One word that surprised me about my own collage was "vast." I discussed that with my partner, who was working at the same table as me, and realized that it could represent how I have been "reaching out" to others for support in navigating these obstacles. Sometimes you have to realize that you can't do everything on your own, and leaning on others while you confront and dive into the messiness can give you the tools you need to break through certain barriers (see collage below). I love how some of the authors in this issue have brought their artistic practices into their articles, such as Venn diagrams, collage, drawing, narrative inquiry, and picture books. It makes this a really special issue.

Fig.1: Collage by Traci Klein

Mindy: I love this so, so much. I remember seeing your collage during the gallery walk and being struck by the balance of openness and softness but also questioning, wondering, and ambiguity. The mountain in the lower right corner of your piece also makes me think that when we begin in lots of institutional contexts, we tend to privilege the "mountaintop experiences" like graduation or awards or grants … but there is so much unheard, unsaid, and unexpressed when we move away from the linearity of any journey. I guess that is why the "messiness of being human" is important for our authors too. My collage, below, was unexpected for me. I reflected on the prompt: "Try to portray what it looks and feels like to be a teacher, or researcher, or student." This is what emerged. When I looked at the story it was telling after I finished, it read to me like a journey from what it has meant to be a part of a university institution as a student and then faculty member (pre- and post-tenure) and how over time this story has been painful and traumatic, but that eventually I have been able to find my own s/place within the emergence of the realities of academic life as well.

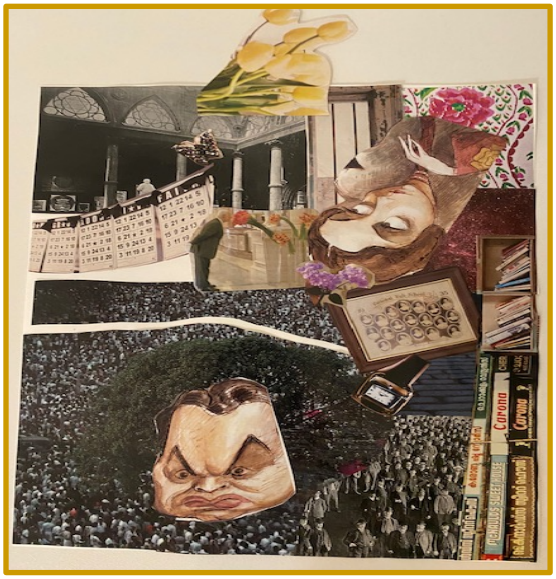

Fig. 2 Collage by Mindy Carter

Traci: I think I saw this piece and was surprised when I found out it was yours.

Mindy: Hmmm … I actually remember you mentioning that when we did the gallery walk to look at one another's pieces … did you write the word "done" on the back of mine? I think I suggested including our collages within this introduction to the themed issue because the collage form reminds me that there isn't just one story in this human life, and there are always surprises, new interpretations to what we think we are doing and (hopefully) also always room to play and explore.

Traci: Let's take a look at what some of the contributors wrote about in relation to *inclusivity* which was a theme in several pieces. **Melissa Daoust**'s (PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa) work explores a mother's (un)learning journey as she confronts settler colonial complicity and her responsibilities in raising a child on stolen Lands. Daoust writes, "the work continues and resists closure" and "It demands instead a continual asking of questions and a willingness to be changed—as we move through the tangled and

unfinished story of this shared existence." Isn't that beautiful? **Abdullah Najjar** (PhD student, McGill University) and **Anila Asghar** (Associate Professor, McGill University), in their article, discuss the intricate complexities of racism and Islamophobia in school settings and present effective pedagogical approaches that teachers can incorporate into their curricula, while **Brittany Ouellette** (PhD Candidate, University of Alberta) confronts her experiences through an autobiographical inquiry about her son's autism diagnosis and how it guides her as a mother, educator, friend, and family member.

Mindy: *Student-centered learning* is another theme, as seen the article by **Carolyn Clarke** (Assistant Professor, St. Francis Xavier University), **Evan Throop Robinson** (Curriculum Consultant in the Caribbean), **Ellen Carter** (Assistant Professor, St. Francis Xavier University), and **Jo Anne Broders**' (Secondary teacher, Smallwood Academy). In this piece, they explore spaces for transformation for teachers and learners using picture books, encouraging students to share their stories so that their voices are heard through multiple forms of representation. **Sakina Rizvi** (PhD Candidate, McGill University) and **Aleesha Noreen** (PhD Candidate, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) examine how educators can use knowledge building and holistic pedagogy to create learning spaces to help students develop a deep sense of personal and social accountability, and to create spaces where students feel their voices are valued. Their inquiry came from a rise in plagiarism and use of AI tools in their classrooms, and the text is supported artistically through digital collage. **Tara-Lynn Scheffel** (Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University), **Sarah Driessens** (Education Specialist, public sector), and **Bethany Correia** (MEd, Wilfrid Laurier University) are K–3 educators who explore student engagement during literacy learning. They reflexively highlight the complex nature of literacy engagement and the importance of active educator engagement. Their focus is on moving beyond observable student behaviors to identify student engagement and valuing the empowerment of learners to take responsibility for their own education.

Traci: I really love how many of the authors weave their own personal stories into their research lives as an example of the messiness of being human. These *interconnections* and *collaborations* come through in **Jen Hinkkala**'s (PhD Candidate, McGill University) article about the importance of preparing arts educators like herself for work as self-employed artists. **Melanie Glaves** (Secondary school teacher, Ontario), **Sean Lessard** (Professor, University of Alberta), and **D. Jean Clandinin** (Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta) recount their teaching and learning experiences with students in a course entitled Girlhood, which carved a space for acknowledging, valuing, and amplifying female voices. In this article they explore the ways two girls' experiences of the course shaped the future practice of the teachers/authors. Through narrative inquiry they embark on remembering the past and courageously moving into the unknown and uncertain future. The article by **Margaret Macintyre Latta** (Professor, University of British Columbia), **Bill Cohen** (Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia), and **Danielle Lamb** (Project Manager and Research Facilitator, University of British Columbia) is about an un/decolonizing and Indigenizing partnership project in which students and their educators embark on a co-curricular making experience where curricula is not predetermined, but is a path that requires collective adaptation, change, and built understandings. **Maggie Rahill** (High school teacher, John Marshall School of Engineering), **Rosalinda Godínez** (Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland State University), **Adam M. Voight** (Associate Professor, Cleveland State University), and **Molly Buckley-Marudas** (Associate Professor, Cleveland State University) highlight the transformative potential of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) in fostering

student agency. They present teaching experiences, student examples, and reflections on implementing art-based YPAR in classrooms, offering insights into reflective, action-oriented educational practices that empower youth. **Nathalie Reid** (Assistant Professor and Director of the Child Trauma Research Centre, University of Regina) and **Thi Thuy Hang Tran** (Lecturer, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education) discuss the development of a Saskatchewan microcertificate entitled Trauma-Informed/Sensitive Pedagogies and Practices which draws attention to the messiness of time, delivery, and beginning and becoming in relation to an understanding of curriculum as the dynamic interaction between teacher, student, subject matter, and milieu.

Mindy: I thought that the same theme (interconnections) could be seen in **Hana Shahin** (Assistant Professor, Zayed University), **Mazna Patka** (Associate Professor, Zayed University), **Mustafa Aydogan** (Assistant Professor, Zayed University), **Ayesha Al Ali** (Undergraduate student, Zayed University), **Meera Bin Thalith** (Undergraduate student, Zayed University) and **Saeed Mohamed Alhemeiri**'s (Undergraduate student, Zayed University) article as they examined the experiences of Emirati undergraduate student research assistants in the United Arab Emirates to understand their motivations, challenges, and the role of mentorship in their growth as emerging researchers. The students' perspectives focus on the necessity of culturally responsive mentorship that values the interplay between individuality and collaboration to foster agency and community equally. **Nicole Lee** (Assistant Professor, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), **Ken Morimoto** (Research Fellow, Tokyo Gakugei University), **Melissa Boucher-Guilbert** (Graduate student, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), **Fayrouz Ibrahim** (Assistant Professor, Damietta University), **Robin Jensen** (Graduate student, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), **Megan Macdonald** (Graduate student, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), and **Rebecca Zynomirski** (Graduate student, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), in their a/r/tographic study group, discuss how the concept of sustainable relationality is engaged within a community of practice. A/r/tography and propositional thinking opened a space for this gathering to become a messy yet nourishing place from which to envision different ways of working and being. Finally, **Nathalie Thibault** (Assistant Professor, Wonkwang University) provides a unique perspective on how Venn diagrams informed her transition from student to teacher, doctoral student to doctor, and how they have created a way to visualize and ideate various intersecting ideas throughout the research processes. Thibault writes, "While we are all striving for creativity, I am hoping to transition from thinking outside the box to thinking inside circles." I really love this! It seems like we have created an opportunity for playing with text and opening up space(s) for folks to not only engage with their ideas and research intellectually, but from the heart as well. This is essential work to me as in my own teaching, research, art making, and writing, I am continually noticing that the whole person has to be involved in all aspects of anything we remotely think about as educative.

Traci: Absolutely, this is something that I found was centered in the Commentaries as they all include some form of dialogic engagement as part of the learning process: Aggarwal's learning cycle model, Jenssen's imagined conversation with Braidotti, and Silverberg's text messages with his adult daughter. For example, **Swati Aggarwal** (Scholar, University of Delhi) brings a reflective exploration of the author's eight-year journey studying philosophy at a central university in India, with transformations in thinking and envisioning the "learning cycle" with peer interaction and inner dialogue being crucial to learning. **Runa Jenssen** (Associate Professor, Nord University), along with an illustrator, **Ingvild Blæsterdalen**, examines the complexities of embodying an academic voice, advocating for performative and embodied knowledge within academia. The author envisions a dialogue with Rosi Braidotti, discusses new materialism, inclusivity, belonging, and community. Jenssen writes, "By voicing transitions, whether through song, storytelling, or embodied research, we create academic spaces where knowledge is felt, experienced, and lived." Finally, **Mark Silverberg**'s (Associate Professor, Cape Breton University) playful exchange using texts and dialogue with his daughter **Aidyn Silverberg-Ceresne** capture some of the complexities of the parent–child relationship. You know, I never would have expected so many creative offerings when we set out to create this call! It has been such a pleasure to learn how everyone is making sense of "the messiness of just being human."

Mindy: Yeah, and you know it makes me feel connected to this bigger shared web of experiences to know we're all trying to figure things out in our own little corners, but that when we stitch them together in a special issue like this, we can see the overarching themes and ideas as well.

Traci: I think it's time to invite readers to take a deeper look! But before we do, there are a few *Acknowledgments!* Our deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Maija Liisa-Harju for her stellar support in editing this issue in its early stages. We couldn't have done this without you! Thank you to the authors for their interest and scholarship within this topic, and to the reviewers for their supportive and constructive feedback. We would also like to thank Eve Krakow, the *LEARNing Landscapes* copy editor, and of course, Dr. Lynn Butler-Kisber, for her continued support of the Artful Inquiry Research Group and for bringing this special issue to life.

MC & TK

Lynn Butler-Kisber (BEd, MEd, McGill; EdD Harvard) is a professor of education in the Department of Integrated Studies, Faculty of Education, and an associate member of the Department of Equity, Ethics and Policy, School of Population and Global Health, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University. She was recently selected to the Harvard Graduate School of Education Alumni Council (2205–28). She was the recipient of the Faculty of Education, Distinguished Teaching award in 2022, is past chair (2021–23) of the Elliot Eisner Special Interest Group at the American Educational Research Association, and is the McGill representative (2021–25) on the Advisory Board for English Education to the Ministry of Education of Quebec. Her teaching and research include qualitative research methodologies, leadership, multiliteracies, and professional development. She is particularly interested in arts-based methodologies, more specifically in visual inquiry (collage, photo/film, and visual narratives) and poetic inquiry, on which she has written and presented extensively. She focuses on issues of marginalization, equity, and social justice. Her upcoming book with Gail Prasad (York University) is a *Handbook on Arts-Based Research* (Routledge). She is the founding (2007) and continuing editor of *LEARNing Landscapes*, an online, open access, peer-reviewed journal that integrates theory and practice, encourages multimodal submissions, and promotes the inclusion of a variety of voices. Current projects include the NEXTschool Initiative and the Climigrant (climate migration) Project. She has done a range of international research and development projects in Dominican Republic, China, Indonesia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and in the UK and US.