

November Newsletter

President's Message

Hello fellow grad students!

We have quite a bit of newsletter content this month, so I will keep my update short and sweet.

Would you like to provide feedback on AUGSA's advocacy and engagement priorities? We are conducting a short survey to inform how we prioritize our efforts. Click here to participate:

<https://goo.gl/forms/1bDuJFmf0iQgWqUb2>

Also, keep your eyes peeled! We will be organizing casual, drop-in meet-and-greets in the coming months. They will be a great way to connect with other AU grad students and AUGSA members. Coming soon...

Cheers!

Jamie Czerwinski
President, AUGSA

AU Job Posting – Mental Health Coordinator

AU is recruiting for a Mental Health Coordinator. This position was created as a result of student-led efforts to advocate for increased mental health support for post-secondary students. The position will assume responsibility for developing, documenting, and leading the implementation of a Mental Health Strategy for Athabasca University.

Apply online at http://athabascau.acquiretm.com/job_details_clean.aspx?ID=1278

2017 Online Research Conference for AU Graduate Students – Thank you!

The 2017 “*Knowledge Without Borders*” AU/AUGSA Research Conference was held on Saturday, October 28th, and turned out to be a roaring success- thanks to you, our students. We had Dr. Neil Fassina open the conference with inspiration and dedication followed by students who presented their research in poster and presentation format. A great day for AU and AUGSA!

The winning abstracts are posted below for your enjoyment:

1st place winner (tie): Kelli Buckreus

Social Media Use in Higher Education [Abstract]

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND. Towards the goal of advancing cultures of change and innovation, current trends in higher education position social media as key technologies enabling open, adaptive and interactive experiential learning.

PURPOSE AND TYPE OF LITERATURE REVIEW. To explore the affordances and transformative dimensions of social media in formal and informal higher education learning contexts, a review of research literature was undertaken, following general methodology for systematic reviews and meta-analyses. A sample of 150 studies, drawn from 954 sources identified, were reviewed for descriptive theme, learning environment, formal/informal learning context, user types, social media tools, user aggregations, study design and outcomes.

RESULTS. More than half the studies reviewed employed quantitative methodology, with survey/questionnaire most common. More than half explored highly structured pedagogy in formal learning contexts and face-to-face (f2f) environments. Few studies explored flipped classrooms.

Thematic analysis yielded three transformative dimensions of social media use – emergent, administrative and process – which are described and mapped across diverse learning contexts.

IMPLICATIONS. A conceptual model is proposed repositioning tools as primary actors relative to learners (users) and content, adding user->tool->content interactions that take place within a common cognitive plane. This model re-envisioned the mutually shaping relationships among these three primary actors, contextually embedded within digitally connected environments. Three roles – learner, facilitator, contributor – that users occupy fluidly, are described. Drawing on these, best practices for social media integration in learning are suggested.

Descriptive statistics reveal several gaps in the literature, most notably a need for more research involving experimental design.

1st place winner (tie): Miriam Perry

Indigenous Voices for Well-Being in Northern Manitoba: An Exploratory Study

Indigenous Peoples in Canada have often been viewed from the outside, that is, through the lens of the dominant Western society and their particular worldview. This has often led to inaccurate and even harmful understandings and subsequent policies of the lives of Indigenous Peoples and their communities. Indigenous Peoples are diverse in their local conditions, environment and traditions, thus understanding at the local level is necessary. This exploratory study employed an Indigenous Research Paradigm to gain the perspectives of the people in the two communities of Sherridon and Pukatawagan in Northern Manitoba. A participant observation and conversational method was employed while utilizing the Indigenous Research Paradigm principles of respect, reciprocity, relationship-building and reflexivity. Data was analyzed using grounded theory and thematic content analysis. A main goal of this project aimed to work with the people to explore and analyse the themes that evolved from the conversations and observations to gain a richer understanding of the main issues of importance to their lives and to their community. Other goals are to be accountable and reciprocal to the communities through positive social change; to provide insight for future studies on the issues that matter to the people; and to be a force to influence local, national or international policy as it pertains to the worlds Indigenous Peoples.

2nd place winner: Dana Browne

Background: Obesity is associated with chronic illness, decreased health-related quality of life, and increased costs to the healthcare system and employers. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for obesity.

Research is now beginning to explore the effect of cumulative sedentary behaviour on health specifically within the workplace, where a significant amount of sedentary behaviour occurs. Interventions are needed to effectively decrease sitting time and increase light intensity physical activity in this context, but these methods must also be practical for an office setting. Research suggests that social norms show promise, indicating that theories such as the Focus Theory of Normative Conduct (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990), which incorporates social norms as a construct, may hold potential.

Research Question: This study will investigate whether a social norm-based intervention can effectively decrease sedentary behaviour in a sample of office employees.

Methodology: The intervention will be designed using the Focus Theory of Normative Conduct (Cialdini et al., 1990) and will be introduced to an office setting. This study will use a quasi-experimental multiple group time series design with continuous treatment over four weeks, with data collected through a combination of pedometers and self-reported behaviour.

Results: This study is in-progress; data collection has not occurred. Consistent with the findings from Priebe and Spink (2012, 2015), it is predicted that descriptive norm messages will increase light intensity activity within the workplace.

Implications: Findings may provide an increased understanding regarding the extent to which an individual's activity patterns are influenced by that of their peers.

3rd place winner: Daphne Broadhurst

Going Beyond the Borders of Safety and Efficacy: A Case Site Study Protocol Applied to Patient-Administered Home Infusion Therapy

Background: Beyond the borders of USA and Western Canada, there has been nominal uptake of patient-administered home infusion therapy. To mitigate risks associated with this therapy, guidelines recommend a structured educational programme. Extant literature is focused predominantly on safety and efficiency outcomes, with little direction on how to achieve this patient education.

Purpose: To identify the characteristics of a patient education program (e.g., recipients, providers, intensity, setting, and delivery methods of patient education) designed for this patient population and explore mechanisms which facilitate patient education (e.g., self-efficacy).

Method: This qualitative descriptive/explanatory case study protocol using realist synthesis will employ a triangulated approach to data collection at a Manitoba home infusion centre. This will include: 1) direct observation of nurses teaching patients how to self-administer intravenous antibiotics; 2) focus group interview of nurses; and 3) patient telephone interviews.

Results: Progress to date has culminated in 2 research ethics board approvals. Data will be synthesized in a revised a priori programme logic model designed to explicate resources, context, interventions and mechanisms which lead to an effective self-administration patient education program.

Implications: The revised programme theory will help to inform service providers, policy-makers and researchers in establishing and evaluating self-administration programmes. The logic model will provide a patient education program framework supporting patients having access to improved information and

coaching to become engaged in their care, providers having the resources to change their focus of care to a supportive-educative role, and organizational structures which support patient-administration of intravenous therapy in the home.

[Student Lifeline – Free Counselling and Help Services for AU Students](#)

Student Lifeline is a 24-hour help service available to all AU graduate students. Student Lifeline provides a variety of counselling and support services, free of charge. Access Student Lifeline online or by telephone:

URL: <https://app.lifeworks.com>

Username: AUGSA

Password: wellness

Telephone: 1-877-418-1537

[Download the AUGSA App](#)

The AUGSA App lets you connect with other AU graduate students through your smartphone. It also provides easy access to resources like program and course information, study tools, Student Lifeline, and course management tools.

Download the app now at <http://athabasca.campusapp.com>

[November AUGSA Council Meeting](#)

AUGSA Council's next regular meeting is on Tuesday, November 14th at 6:00pm Mountain Time. AUGSA members are welcome to attend the meeting! To join the meeting, click here: [Join Skype Meeting](#)

[Faculty of Graduate Studies Weekly](#)

Events

Effective Communication & Career Building

Professional Development Workshops

October to November 2017

The Faculty of Graduate Studies is pleased to invite you to a newly launched

Professional Development Workshop (PD) Series on Effective Communication & Career Building.

There are 4 modules. Each module is 2 hours and will be delivered online using Adobe Connect.

More information can be found on the [FGS website](#).

[Register Today!](#)

Open Forum on Advancing Graduate Education

Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Faculty Members are invited to attend the Open Forum on Advancing Graduate Education

hosted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies

The forum will be taking place in person at AU Edmonton and online via Adobe Connect.

Agenda to be announced soon

Please register via email at fgs@athabascau.ca if you are interested in attending this event

FGS Presentations/Workshops

FGS Presents: The Research Itinerary Series –

Topic 2: Evaluation Plans and Experiment Designs

Thursday, November 2, 2017

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Delivery mode: Adobe Connect

Presented by: Dr. Maiga Chang

View the [Abstract](#)

Revising a Dissertation for Publication

Thursday, November 16, 2017

2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Delivery mode: Adobe Connect

Presented by: Pamela Holway

Writing a Proposal for a Thesis

Presented by: Dr. Marti Cleveland-Innes

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Delivery mode: Adobe Connect

More information on these webinars can be found [here](#).

To register for any of these presentations, please contact fgs@athabascau.ca

External Workshops

Workshops and webinars offered by the University of Lethbridge

The School of Graduate Studies at the University of Lethbridge has partnered with Athabasca University to offer free in-person and online workshops to all AU students!

View their Calendar of Events [here](#)

If you are interested in any of these workshops please contact Stacey Leavitt,

School of Graduate Studies at Stacey.leavitt@uleth.ca

External Funding Opportunities

The Fifth Annual National Student Paper Competition

2017 – 2018 Call for Papers

AU's internal deadline is November 15, 2017

Win a paid placement with the Government of Canada!

Students must contact FGS at fgs@athabascau.ca for more information before submitting.

Visit the Institute of Public Administration of Canada [website](#) for more information on the [competition guidelines](#)

2018 Trudeau Doctoral Scholarships Competition

AU's internal deadline is November 24, 2017

Value: \$40,000 per year for three years

\$20,000 per year for three years, as research and travel allowance

Please contact FGS at fgs@athabascau.ca for more information or if you wish to apply.

For more information, visit the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation [home page](#).

Internal Funding Opportunities

AU offers a number of graduate student awards.

Please visit the Student Awards Website for more details:

<http://registrar.athabascau.ca/studentawards/studawrds.php>