Reflections on Creating a Student-Run Journal: A Duo-ethnography

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Literature regarding graduate student training suggests that graduate students struggle to become involved in academic publishing. Once involved in the publication process, however, graduate students are able to transform their learning, as well as develop knowledge and skills for their future careers. To further foster student involvement in the publication process in the Werklund School of Education (WSE) at the University of Calgary, seven graduate students from educational research and psychology decided to launch a student-run, peer-reviewed research journal called Emerging Perspectives: Interdisciplinary Graduate Research in Education and Psychology (EPIGREP). This article focuses on the editorial team members' shared reflections and experiences as we used Norris and Sawyer's (2012) duo-ethnographic approach to answer questions regarding the identified gaps that EPIGREP would fill in terms of graduate student training, the challenges and barriers faced during the inaugural year, and the ways in which participation in the journal could empower journal users to engage in the publication process. Finally, we note implications and future directions regarding establishing EPIGREP as a graduate student initiative to foster research participation.

Keywords: graduate research training; academic publishing; duo-ethnography

Introduction

Graduate education is often considered to be preparation, job training, or socialization for future careers within academia (Austin, 2002; Ethington & Pissani, 1993; Gardner & Barnes, 2007). However, for some students, graduate programs lack sufficient training in academic literacy and preparation opportunities for publication, both as an author and as a participant in the publication process. Garbati and Samuels (2013) found that only 8.60% of all authors in educational research were graduate students. Garbati and Samuels noted that students were not publishing with other students and only four papers were sole-authored by students. However, publication opportunities and writing collaboration with peers may not only enhance but also provide opportunities for students to develop as academics and scholars (Garbati & Samuels, 2013). Such work also provides graduate students with the opportunity "to become involved in the work and life of the faculty" (Austin & McDaniels, 2006, p. 414). By engaging in such a hands-on

experience, graduate students become connected to not just the work itself but also the community, which benefits from the work (Johnson, 2013). This experience also provides students with "unique gains not available in their training programs" (Doran, Somerville, Harlem-Siegel, & Steele, 2014, p. 122).

While Garbati and Samuels (2013) presented research on student authors, little is known about students as reviewers or editors during their academic careers. If graduate students are to have opportunities to become sole-authors and develop academic literacy, they need to better understand the publishing process through experiences as reviewers, writers, and even editors of a journal. Ni Uigin, Higgins and McHale (2015) stated that being involved in the publication process has many benefits for students, as it helps them develop components of academic literacy such as problem solving and critical thinking. In the development of the journal and in their roles as editors, "students were encouraged to think critically and creatively beyond the parameters of the classroom environment and to actively engage with the theoretical knowledge that they had mastered" (p. 63). It is in this arena, beyond the classroom environment, where graduate students find their voice as academics (Ni Uigin et al., 2015). Academic literacy can also be referred to as academic capital, a construct extended from Bourdieu's (1977) forms of capital that are fostered through the social structures graduate students interact with. These forms of capital are socialized forms of language, literacy, and access to higher forms of knowledge that graduate students are surrounded with during their academic tenure. However, if these forms of capital only reside within the walls of a classroom or on a course syllabus, increasing academic literacy through an acquisition of capital does not extend or grow the socialization of graduate students to become academics. Through the undertaking of a student-initiated project, graduate students have the potential to not only increase their academic capital but also their social capital through "connect[ing] in some fundamental way with various aspects of the social life of the institution" (Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005, p. 610). The graduate student experience often resides within four walls; therefore, if graduate students seek to further their careers and better understand the publication process, a start-up journal offers a means to develop forms of capital and academic literacy.

Garbati and Samuels (2013) called for graduate programs to revisit their role in facilitating student authorship. Specifically, they suggested that graduate programs either formally modify their degree requirements to allow first-time authors to get their work published or support their involvement in the peer-review practice as reviewers or editors. Austin and McDaniels (2006) echoed this suggestion, noting that "the graduate school experience must include opportunities...to master the skills and abilities associated with each aspect of faculty work" (p. 449). While there is currently movement in this direction in the Werklund School of Education (WSE) at the University of Calgary through the development of guidelines for graduate students to complete manuscript-based thesis, graduate students also need to be leaders and be involved in the creation of additional research training opportunities. In particular, student initiatives have the ability to make valuable changes within the academy. "Top-down approaches alone will not bring about the needed change, as they fail to appreciate the role that graduate students and postdocs - who are grossly underrepresented in this discourse - play in eliciting change" (Schillebeeckx, Maricque, & Lewis, 2013, p. 938). Inspired to elicit this change, graduate students in education and psychology at WSE created Emerging Perspectives: Interdisciplinary Graduate Research in Education and Psychology (EPIGREP), a student-led journal in which graduate students gain experience at all levels of the publication process, thereby increasing their academic literacy and capital.

The founding editors of EPIGREP discovered unintended outcomes through the process of creating a student-led journal, which prompted an inquiry into the process. Given the paucity of research in the area of student publishing and student-led journal start-ups in graduate school, we

thought to offer our experiences of creating a journal through duo-ethnography, as each founding member has developed their own perspectives from the start-up. What we hope to share through this article is not only how the process unfolded for us as beginning editors but how each of us has extended our learning beyond the confines of classroom walls and course syllabi and transformed our graduate learning experience. We also discuss the theoretical concepts that framed the study, including transformative leadership and peer-supported learning, and then outline the research method of duoethnography. After a discussion on the research design and analysis, we share our findings and implications for future directions.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Transformative Learning

In the last few decades, transformational learning has become one of several influential adult learning theories (Meriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012). For instance, transformative learning theory underscored the lived experience of women returning to school (Mezirow, 1978), cultural spiritual transformation (Tisdell, 2003), race-centric and social change transformation (Williams, 2006), and as a course of restorying our lives (Randall, 1996). Clark (1993) stated that transformational learning:

> shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize. The process can be gradual or sudden, and it can occur in a structured education environment or in the classroom of ordinary life. Transformational learning is, in short, a normal part of our lives and intimately connected to the developmental process. (p. 47)

Hence, a transformation is one that can be life-altering; associated with growth and progress. In creating this article, we focused specifically on Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning regarding our experiences of coming together to create and operate a student-run journal. Mezirow described various forms of learning through his own experience: learning how to do something; learning about how something works; learning about the expectations of others; and learning to form a progressing concept of self as a person with particular values (Mezirow, 1978). He noted that the most fundamental learning occurs when we are "caught in our history and reliving it" (p. 101). He was referring to the need to be reflexive of assumptions that have predisposed the way we see ourselves, our relationships with others, and the way we live our lives.

Furthermore, Mezirow (1991) discussed how our expectations or habits can be challenged through reflection and critique and may result in the transformation of "meaning perspective" and "experience" of the interpretation (p. 6). Mezirow pointed to how transformative learning is at the forefront when assumptions are discovered to be inauthentic, distorting, and therefore, invalid. Hence, a transformation is apparent when new or transformed meaning schemas emerge, or when reflections centered on these assumptions transform meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). He argued:

> Adult development is seen as an adult's progressively enhanced capacity to validate prior learning through reflective discourse and to act upon the resulting insights. Anything that moves the individual toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrating meaning perspective, the validity of which has been established through rational discourse, aids in adult development. (p. 7)

Therefore, to be transformed is a personal and progressive process. This process involves meaning perspectives, or how we understand experience; intentional learning, which is a process of problem solving; making meaning through reflection; distorted assumptions or uncovering errors in learning; perspective transformation, which considers how learning leads to change; and fostering

transformative adult learning (Mezirow, 1991).

Peer-Supported Learning

Graduate programs in education and other faculties have been working to transform the environment for graduate students and increase completion rates through peer mentoring and peer-supported learning programs (Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007). Such programs and shifts in graduate student experiences have moved graduate student learning and engagement beyond the supervisor-supervisee relationship and past coursework to include "multiple and overlapping notions of communities" (Boud & Lee, 2005, p. 503) where graduate students are afforded opportunities to extend their relationships beyond the confines of their supervisor's office and the classroom setting. This transformation of the graduate student experience has not only generated a growth in peer-to-peer engagement (Boud & Lee, 2005) but has also "increase[d] the time and physical and psychological energy that students devote to the academic experience" (Colvin & Ashman, 2010, p.122). Peer mentoring and peer-supported learning resides at the centre of the experience of creating our journal for both ourselves, as members of the editorial board, and our fellow graduate students with the unintentional consequence of transforming our graduate school experience.

The hierarchical relationships in graduate school, how we find our way within graduate studies, and how we understand the nuances and clandestine practices are either navigated blindly or with the support of our supervisors. As graduate students, however, we also need to learn how to find our way outside of this privileged relationship, extending ourselves to better understand the "ill-defined problems of the field" (Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007, p. 252). These hidden experiences that are left for discovery become sites of deep, impactful learning that grow organically around a common seed, and the learning that occurs at these sites can rival the experiences gained within coursework (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). Agency and autonomy become distributed, not vertically, such as our relationships with instructors and supervisors, but horizontally as we work through the troubles and obstacles that are associated with creating a graduate student-run journal (Boud & Lee, 2007).

The editorial board is moving through a process of learning *with* each other while also becoming mentors for our peers through the process of publishing and reviewing. Each of us as editors have had experiences of being published and/or rejected through publishing and being reviewers; therefore, we seek to work *with* our peers using concepts that have been identified as successful components of a peer mentoring relationship (Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007). In the publishing and reviewing process, our editorial team has built relationships with our fellow graduate students through encouraging and motivating peers within the publication process. Through the publication process, we are not only providing opportunities for emerging research to become published but also working with fellow graduate students new to both the steps required for a successful publication and the completion of a good review, resulting in an encouraging means for professional exposure to academic publishing.

This experience has benefited not only fellow graduate students through mentorship opportunities and exposure to academic publishing, but also ourselves as graduate student editors. That is, we have learned how to better support our peers, develop a better understanding of the publishing process, and make connections in academia and publishing spheres (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). As we each work to not only publish an academic journal, but also to enhance the graduate student experience, we have embodied a deep sense of agency that moves far beyond a course syllabus.

Research Method

As authors and research participants, we were interested in understanding the transformative learning we experienced during the past year as the founding EPIGREP editorial team. More than this individual reflection, however, we sought to highlight our converging and diverging perspectives of this shared experience. Through this polyvocal account, we hoped to challenge our assumptions and, importantly, encourage continued growth and learning as we embark on the next step in the journey to develop EPIGREP. These goals, along with our research question and theoretical underpinnings, fit with the duo-ethnographic approach, which "is a collaborative research methodology in which two or more researchers of difference juxtapose their life histories to provide multiple understandings" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 9).

Norris and Sawyer (2004) established duo-ethnography as a way to move past the hegemony of auto-ethnography, which prioritizes one voice above others. Instead, a duo-ethnographic approach invites multiple voices in order to challenge status quo assumptions, ideologies, and epistemologies (Norris, 2008). Based on a history of social justice, duo-ethnography is used to address power and privilege within society, creating space for voices that are typically marginalized (Norris & Sawyer, 2012). In the case of our study, we presented our voices as student researchers regarding our experience of establishing a journal for and by students. As student voices are underrepresented in the peer-reviewed process (Garbati & Samuels, 2013), a duo-ethnographic approach provided an opportunity to shed light on this perspective.

In establishing duo-ethnography, Sawyer and Norris (2012b) identified 14 tenets. First, people make meaning of their experiences through personal analysis, creating an informal life curriculum. Second, researchers as participants position themselves as part of the text they are creating, not outside of it. Third, researchers as participants are not the focus of the inquiry but are the context in which the exploration occurs. Fourth, researchers as participants re-conceptualize important experiences or dominant stories of their lives. Fifth, researchers as participants focus on questioning experiences, rather than aligning themselves with prescribed roles such as the hero or victim. Sixth, identity is not rigid and is always open to change and questioning. Seventh, the meanings created through this exploration are fluid and are not meant to represent objective truths. Eighth, the goals of the inquiry are not prescribed beforehand and applied to the data in order to shape it. Ninth, researchers as participants are individually charged with the responsibility of promoting diverging rather than converging reflections in the dialogue. Tenth, power and privilege are explicitly discussed in the dialogue. Eleventh, the sociopolitical location of participants is a relevant context for the dialogue. Twelfth, the state of the literature relevant to the dialogue is a relevant context for analysis. Thirteenth, participants work together in a shared responsibility to explore new perspectives rather than converging around one perspective. Finally, readers of a duo-ethnography become themselves participants in the dialogue, offering continued analysis and changing of perspectives.

Research Design and Analysis

The participants in this inquiry were a group of seven graduate students from different educational research and psychology specializations who formed the founding EPIGREP editorial team. As the context of participants is important in a duo-ethnographic approach, we will briefly outline our specializations. At the time of inquiry, Maisha was a doctoral candidate in School and Applied Child Psychology with research interests in the area of childhood anxiety disorders,

specifically, understanding interactions of risk factors and examining mindfulness-based cognitive-behavioral interventions for anxiety in diverse child and youth populations. Jon was a doctoral candidate in Counselling Psychology with research interests in the international career transition of skilled immigrant workers and international students to Canada. Brit was a master's student in Language and Literacy investigating the effect of learner language proficiency on responses to written corrective feedback. Gina was a doctoral student in Educational Leadership with research interests pertaining to the experience of immigrant and refugee youth leading for social justice and advocacy. Konstantinos was a doctoral student in Counselling Psychology with research interests in social justice advocacy for queer clients in counselling. Brianna was a doctoral candidate in Language and Literacy with research interests in sociolinguistics, settlement, and internationally-educated tradespeople in Alberta. Teresa was a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Learning with research interests in understanding student expressions and feelings of disengagement with the curriculum in schools using photovoice as a methodology.

For data collection, we were guided by Sawyer and Norris (2012a, c, d). Specifically, the editorial team gathered together to engage in a recorded, two-hour dialogue regarding the research question "What gaps did we hope the Journal would fill in graduate student training?" First, we took turns sharing an opening reflection about the roles and niche we anticipate the journal to fill in training graduate students to be better scholars. From there, the dialogue evolved into new reflections about our experiences, which changed as we listened to each other's accounts. To help guide the conversation and before engaging in the duo-ethnography, we developed some questions, such as "What were some of the barriers and challenges we faced during our inaugural year?" and "How do we wish to empower journal users and ourselves through the publication process?" We then transcribed the recording, reviewed the transcript, and added or refined our respective reflections to smooth out the dialogue for reader comprehension.

For data analysis, we followed the example of Nabavi and Lund (2012). Given the breadth and depth of data, we negotiated which critical learnings from the conversation to include in this article. Our intention was not to stymie our learning by promoting one story over another, but rather to strike a balance between breadth and depth by providing space for a thorough exploration over a superficial one. Our hope is that we will continue this process in future articles and eventually be able to share the full body of learning that emerged from this duo-ethnography.

Research Findings and Discussion

In presenting the findings, Norris (2008) noted that there is no one 'right' way to engage in duo-ethnography, however, one approach is to synthesize data collection, i.e., stories, and analysis, identifying key shifts in learning for an integrated discussion of findings. Consequently, we organized our findings to showcase the key stories from the dialogue based on the three guiding questions. After presenting the key stories for each research question, we provide a short discussion before moving on to the next research question. Finally, we offer a synthesis discussion for all stories in order to illuminate future research steps.

Question 1: What Gaps Did We Hope the Journal Would Fill in Graduate Student Training?

In addressing this first research question, there were two main themes within the dialogue. First, we discussed the circumstances that lead to each of us pursuing involvement with a student-run journal. Second, we noted what our original goals were, either individually or as decided upon by the group, for the journal, and the objectives of the journal to supplement graduate students' training. The stories below showcase these themes.

Precipitating Circumstances for Pursuing a Student-Run Journal

Maisha: If I think back to the beginning of the journal, it started when Graduate Programs in Education Students' Association (GPESA) applied for a Graduate Students' Association (GSA) quality grant. GPESA was established about two-three years prior to my start in the association. Therefore, GPESA was also going through several transitions in establishing itself as a student-body organization within the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. Back in 2013, we were still a very young organization and we wanted to be secure financially to be able to provide more effective and meaningful services to our students and the greater Werklund community. We put together a grant to fund resources that we would need to establish GPESA. The executives of GPESA also wanted to provide a platform for Werklund students to engage in research and scholarship through a journal, operated by the organization. Fortunately, we were successful in winning the grant, but there was not much movement made to establish the journal in the first year. In 2014, when I was elected President of GPESA, I felt that I had some personal responsibility to start some movement and work towards establishing the journal to utilize the grant money. That was my original objective of the journal, to get it off the ground.

Brit: I was also a member of GPESA as a Promotions and Media Relations Officer. I was at our first transition meeting, and I started chatting with other GPESA journal committee members. At that time, I had also recently taken a position as a research assistant with the Taylor Institute developing online conference proceedings, so I then shared with these committee members that I had experience with an online journal, and they said that it was fantastic, so I pushed my way onto the committee. It was really serendipitous, actually. I was like yeah, I could help with online journal systems, I know who to talk to, I am already in contact with somebody. I had just gone to a conference in open access publishing where I had seen a presentation on someone creating a student journal. My aim at the time was to be the glue that kept the journal together, to use my knowledge about the journal system to keep the journal operating and to get that grant money used.

Brianna: In my first year as a doctoral student, in my own Educational Specialisation Area (EDSA), Language and Literacy, we had discussions about starting our own journal. While initially many of the EDSA students were interested in being part of the journal initiative, we slowly lost participants because students were graduating, for example, and after a while, I was the only one left. When I heard through GPESA, I was also a member at that time, that they had the money and there were other people who were interested to starting a journal, I was like great! I figured I could try to be part of this journal instead and still achieve my goal of helping to create a journal.

Teresa: I was in my second year of my doctoral program and had not yet had that grad school experience I was looking for. My thoughts were always that grad school ought to be this place where students gather and talk, tackling issues that were important to them but also work collaboratively to fill voids that we felt were there in our programs, such as study groups and just someone to reflect ideas off. I had not yet experienced this, so when I saw there was a vacancy in the GPESA for a Curriculum and Learning representative, I put in my name and found a wonderful group of people that began to fill out my experience in the program. At one meeting, Maisha asked if anyone would be interested in joining the editorial board. So, I signed up and not only do I love being a part of such a cool thing as starting a journal but this experience really matched those grad school experiences I was looking to have.

Konstantinos: As for me, Maisha approached me, and she said "well, there's this new position, this is what has been happening with this journal, if you're interested, let's have a conversation." I thought about it, and I had worked on publications before, with my supervisor, and I had already reviewed a few manuscripts for other journals. I started thinking, okay, if this is the trajectory that

I'm going to take in the future, if this is my future career path, being involved in academia in various capacities, one of which can be reviewing, or editing or just being a researcher, wanting to publish my own work, I think this journal is a great opportunity for me to come in and learn from the inside-out, or what's going on behind the scenes of publishing.

Jon: Kind of similar to Konstantinos, Maisha approached me to talk about seeing if I was interested, and at that time, I had just finished going through a year of working on a few different articles for publication, receiving mentorship from a senior faculty member, and so, I was really going through this process, seeing what it was like to become a first-time author. I also had an opportunity to be a reviewer for a book that one of those articles was going into. As well, I was beginning to think of, okay, is there a future career path for me as an academic, because I came into graduate school thinking just about the practical aspect. I wanted to go into the program to become a clinician. I was feeling torn between two worlds, so then when Maisha brought this up, it seemed like an opportunity to explore further, one way or the other, but something that I was struggling with at the time was that, being an educator in my past, and being someone who wants to be more in practice, pure academia felt more theoretical, less tangible. Being an editor, having an opportunity to be an editor felt like a way to bridge past experiences by capitalising on the experience I had just gained, becoming an author, and offering mentorship in my role as an editor to new authors, and being hands-on with that whole process.

Gina: I'm the new kid on the block! I just joined the editorial board recently and came on while you were all in the middle of establishing the journal. I guess I'll go back to the beginning. I also joined GPESA, a few years after others on the team, and at one meeting Brit and I ended up chatting, and Brit asked would you be interested in being a reviewer. I said okay, what does that entail? She said you'll get these articles sent to you in your area of focus, and then you review it. You know what? I didn't know the difference between a reviewer and an editor at that time ha! So, I thought well this is a good opportunity and also one of the faculty members approached me last year or the year before. She knew that I do quite well with APA editing so she asked me to edit her book and I did that for her with her, it was so much fun, like I really enjoyed that part of it so I thought well I have some skills, I have lots to learn, I should put those skills to use and gain some additional training by joining the journal.

Figuring out our objectives and clarifying goals for the journal

Brit: Along the lines of expectations for the journal, we didn't know what to expect, we didn't know how many hours a week it was going to be for editors or reviewers. We didn't know how many submissions we might get, we didn't know how much work it would be per editor, so I then really saw it as my role, as the journal manager, to figure that all out and so I got the website up and got us trained on that so it became tangible and manageable. I felt like we couldn't have specific goals or objectives until we had these details determined.

Maisha: Yeah and I think we also had some key meetings, I remember we had a weekend meeting where we met at like 9 o'clock and we stayed on campus until like 4 o'clock to figure out the website details and finalize the scope and focus, because we needed a resource for ourselves and to show potential authors that this is what the journal does, this is how publication would work. It was at this point that we needed those very focused, intentional, goal-oriented meetings with an end product. That was key for creating momentum and beginning to define the goals and objectives of the journal and how it would support students.

Konstantinos: Even though we had the website and some specific objectives, I think the way we individually understand those objectives may differ. For me, I see the journal as an opportunity for students to have a voice in terms of getting their research published and helping them with their

future career if they're interested in going down that road. I keep thinking about the ethics of why we're doing what we're doing. Is it just to get that publication out there and for someone to have it on their CV or, you know, is this something that matters, that's going to be out there that people have access to and, most importantly, have free access to. How do we support our audience to engage in this process and help them grow in terms of their skills through the feedback we provided, the feedback that the reviewers provide, and who we appoint.

Maisha: I came from a very research intensive undergraduate institute and we had a lot of focus on research-related activities, you were going to conferences from undergraduate, you were part of publications, so when I came to Werklund specifically, it was hard for me to go through a transition where I met a lot of graduate students for whom the focus was not in academia. Even in educational research, the students are like "Yeah, I want to become a consultant" or, you know…I mean "I want to be a practitioner." Especially in the psychology field, it was hard for me because my focus has always been in academia and think of practice on the side. So I sort of thought about "why are there fewer people at Werklund interested in becoming a researcher?" And then I thought about, from a structural point of view, do we have enough opportunities for students to consider academia as an option? Do we provide the resources and the training where students from a master's level will think that "I'm comfortable coming into academia"? Or "I have enough publications that I would be competitive enough to apply for a job." And I felt that was missing, so I really started thinking about having a journal that comes out of Werklund, that will contribute to some extent to fostering a culture of academia. Where it's maybe a beginning step for students becoming more comfortable with publishing, where students get more opportunity and mentorship with publishing.

Brianna: For me, it was important as an objective to have the mentorship piece, and the learning piece. At various times, we've kind of pulled back from offers from faculty to help with the journal because we didn't want it to be taken over or run by them. We really wanted it to be a student-led journal, and we really wanted to set up the process where you do the module online so you get some idea of what is expected of you and what you need to do. For example, if we get papers that seem like they are not ready yet, to be able to work with the authors and say, "here's what you can do, what else can we do to help you." It's not enough just to know that the manuscript is not good enough, we need an opportunity to learn, to be taught.

Teresa: To build onto Brianna's thoughts, being the editor in charge of reviewing book reviews has been eye opening in that almost half of the ones submitted struggled with reviewing a book and then expressing their understandings on paper. Some of the writers had experience with publishing and this showed, but the majority had not, so I did not really recognize how much mentorship was going to be involved with this small aspect of the journal. Clearly, mentorship and learning opportunities are a critical objective for the journal.

Jon: I think that's what stood out to me, too, in terms of objectives. One of the objectives of the journal was that we wanted it to not just be a journal; we wanted it to be a journal that filled a niche, a journal that targeted a gap that students needed to bridge into ideas. I think sometimes, if we're honest about it, there is a lot of stigma against education and psychology, that they're not competitive in terms of research and things like that, compared to the hard sciences like physics and chemistry, for example. I think a journal with a base in education, in WSE, was an opportunity to build not only the confidence of ourselves, but other students to make that bridge into publication.

Gina: I think the energy that we all have, when we put all our objectives together is going to keep the journal moving forward, despite feeling like an imposter sometimes. "What can I offer? What do I have to offer? What do I know about publishing, as an editor?" It's a learning journey, it's a process that, I think, that's key for me because, as a graduate student, I don't think I'll ever stop

learning, whether I'm done my PhD or, you know, whether I'm in academia or a practitioner or both, I'm never going to stop, so discovering these changing objectives as we learn and grow is a part of that journey.

Discussion. As we started the dialogue, one of the key themes that we all touched on was our origin stories about the needs, wants, and precipitating circumstances that brought us to the journal. Although we were all in similar degree levels at the same post-secondary institution, we had unique skills and gaps in our training that made the journal a fit for us. It was this balance between having skills already, such as Brit's knowledge about the journal platform or Gina's APA skill, and where we wanted to expand our learning, including Teresa's, Konstantinos's and Jon's desires to explore future career options in academia, that created the precipitating circumstances leading each of us to the journal. Joining the journal was based on personal and professional motivations from all in the editorial board and as Maisha noted, we felt a sense of responsibility to take on the challenge of creating and running a student journal.

Given the differing personal and professional reasons that brought each of us to the journal, when we started talking about the specific expectations or objectives that we had, it seemed logical that we would also have our own ideas about the purpose of the journal. Moreover, these objectives seemed to evolve or solidify as we went through the process of creating and operating the journal. For example, Maisha knew she wanted to create a culture of research, while Brianna and Teresa wanted to demystify the publication process. However, even with these differing objectives, we seemed to coalesce around the shared utility of mentorship to achieve these goals. For us, mentorship was a platform that allowed beginning authors and users of the journal to figure out their objectives, for example, get a publication, while also providing us the opportunity to clarify the journal's goals.

Question 2: What Were Some of the Barriers and Challenges We Faced in our Inaugural Year?

As our conversation evolved to talking about the barriers and challenges we experienced in our inaugural year, two primary themes emerged in our discussion. First, we identified that one of our unexpected challenges was to involve graduate students with the journal. In our perception, we felt that students were not as enthusiastic as we anticipated them to be for the journal or to be part of the journal as authors. Second, in our discussion, we also noted the challenges we all experienced in creating a balance in our work and academic schedules while simultaneously finding adequate time and opportunities to fulfill our responsibilities as editors effectively. The conversations below reflect these themes.

Lack of student engagement and enthusiasm for the journal

Maisha: I think our initial initiatives were predominantly faculty-focused when we were trying to establish the journal. We had great, insightful conversations and discussion with various faculty members who gave us invaluable guidance in establishing a student-run journal. However, I don't think we have taken enough opportunities to foster engagement and enthusiasm among our peers, the graduate students. I don't believe our peers are enthusiastic yet about our journal, and our journal is essentially established for graduate students. I think we are still missing this, students are not relating to the journal, where they feel that this establishment will play some role in enhancing their graduate training. We need to spark that enthusiasm and engagement. We need to reach out to students. During the year, I had some time to reflect, to think about who is our target audience for authors? We say it in our mandate that our journal is a good platform for beginning authors to gain publishing experience, but maybe, our beginning authors don't have the resources, coaching or the mentorship to engage with the publication process yet.

Jon: I saw that as a barrier too. Sometimes we give lip service to research; we talk about it and its importance, but there's not as much action toward completing it. Part of this inaction is that there is no formal guidance, or structured way into the publication world. I could see why students may say "Yes, I would love to be a published author," but they don't have the model to follow to help them through this process. Does that make sense?

Brit: Yes, that is making sense. Actually, it's almost like there is a hidden knowledge in academia about how to publish. We know how to write a paper because we've spent our entire undergraduate degree? experience? bridging up to writing a paper in grad school, but we don't know how to write a manuscript because, well, we never had the opportunity to do so. Even when I went to seminars to learn about publishing, I found the information was mostly on *where* to publish rather than *how* to publish. Then I thought to myself, well, I know where to publish-it's where everyone I am reading is publishing, but I don't know how to get from writing a paper to turning the paper into a manuscript. I also know a lot of my peers don't know how to get there. It's like this underground knowledge almost, but people don't know how to teach that either.

Brianna: Like Brit, I found that most seminars are about how to choose journals. What we are working through right now with our authors is how to turn that term paper that is only read by your professor into a publishable manuscript, and this is what is missing from most advice and seminars, although it is the practical advice and training that students need.

Teresa: It is similar to the hidden and implicit curriculum of graduate school...things that others just assume we know so they do not teach it outright. As graduate students, many of us are also research assistants. I find that many of these roles are often on the back burner, but your supervisor or the principal investigator does not stop, pause, and teach you how to publish, show you how to a develop a good manuscript, and give you examples of journals to publish. Maybe it is the expectation that we will learn this on our own, but publishing needs support and mentorship.

Gina: You just made me think of something...in turns of sparking this interest, what about, moving forward, having faculty talk to their students and having them introduce us, our journal, and letting the students know that EPIGREP could be a place to start if they are thinking about publishing. I find that word of mouth, when you know someone and you personally invite them to submit a manuscript, it may be more effective and powerful than just letting them look up and find the journal.

Jon: Gina, we could take your idea and go one step further. Could we get the journal incorporated as part of the curriculum? Most graduate courses require students to write a research paper, why not have the students write the paper for the journal? I think as we noted earlier, there is a not a well established culture for graduate students to be thinking of publishing, or that publishing is worth their time. If students were expected to create manuscript-level and styled papers in their courses, then that might provide the motivation and bridge that students need to get more enthusiastic about participating in the journal.

Gina: I was also thinking about reaching out to our Research Advisory Committee and see how we can work with them to relay this message to faculty and have it also passed onto students. I think students would appreciate the mentorship from the faculty in their courses to prepare them to publish.

Konstantinos: We can also take this suggestion to the Teaching and Learning Committee, I think they would be interested. They always ask about the journal, and what we are up to. We could take the idea, "How do we incorporate the journal into curriculum?"

EPIGREP editors finding a balance

Konstantinos: I realize that I have some accountability to my role as an editor. For me that has

been hard, especially when dealing with my doctoral candidacy process, trying to juggle that and other commitments, and then being accountable to the journal and being responsible to getting back to authors in a timely manner. This editorial position is voluntary, after all. I am not telling myself that this needs to be on the back burner because it is voluntary, but trying to do all these things, being a doctoral student, I am pretty sure it's not just me because we all have our fingers in 20 different pots. I was wondering if that's a common experience, or across the board, other people have thought about those things? Just wondering….

Brit: I agree, Konstantinos, and thank you for bringing up this issue. We have our hands in various pots and we are trying to balance or juggle it all. I wonder whether our commitments to our own research, work, graduate training, etc., are interfering with our ability to be efficient to follow-up with authors to remind them to address our review comments and re-submit their manuscript for second or third review. As graduate students, we take courses, take on research and teaching assistantships, prepare and take candidacy exams, prepare for and present at conferences, and of course, work on our own research. These responsibilities take time, but the work we do as the journal editors is diverse, time-consuming, demands attention and our best effort. As editors, we all are doing initial reviews of manuscripts, choosing which reviewers should review the manuscript, overseeing and sometimes collaborating in the reviewing process, and then based on the review outcomes, we have to work with the authors and reviewers to process and coordinate the re-submission process.

Maisha: We are all graduate students and we are learning how to do our jobs as editors everyday. Yes, all these responsibilities that you just described, Brit, take time, focus, diligence, and sometimes mentorship that we are so fortunate that we are able to seek out from each other whenever needed. At the same, we also cannot compromise the work we have do as graduate students with respect to coursework, research, candidacy, internships, and the list goes on.

Gina: Yes, we are definitely involved in various other work on top our own research. For me, I am sessional instructor, research assistant, and just completed my provisional hours towards registration as a psychologist. I am also a mom, partner, sister, and friend to those I love. However, this opportunity to be involved in such a grassroots and exciting initiative to collaborate with fellow students and be mentors in the publication process is invaluable. For me, I say yes to many roles because I know I have some skills, and the relationship cultivated with my peers is priceless.

Teresa: I agree, totally, as much as I was looking to fill an emptiness and collaborate with grad students I also wonder about balance. Is all this hard work we are doing not going to open up opportunities for us? Then I remind myself that service is a large part of my life and whether or not anything transpires for me career-wise, I revel in the relationships I have built over the years with colleagues, peers, and past students. As stressful as it all gets, I like to think that this investment is paying off not only by our providing opportunities for other grad students to publish and review but now within this group we have built strong relationships with each other.

Maisha: Yes, there is no doubt that creating the journal has been a rewarding process. However, I think we also should be less hard on ourselves and, like I said earlier, acknowledge that this position demands time. Brit, you are also right, if we think we are not responding to authors in a timely way, maybe we could take some pre-emptive measures to smooth the review and re-submission processes for our authors. Maybe it's time to review our website to evaluate when an author is about to submit their manuscript, are they aware of the journal's expectations and requirements? Maybe we need samples on our website? We are having ongoing discussions about creating video tutorials to support students to develop manuscripts, we should start working on that, and other resources that could be disseminated to help students with manuscript writing.

Jon: That makes me think further about collaborating with our faculty. Like I mentioned earlier, if

students are writing these manuscripts in their courses, they will be receiving mentorship from a faculty member, which will inherently strengthen their manuscripts and benefit the review process that we will undergo after. Basically, I think that the mentorship process can start happening even before the student gets to submitting their manuscript to EPIGREP. Perhaps this will increase our workload, if students start preparing manuscripts in their courses and submit en masse, however, I think that is mitigated by faculties' expertise already being incorporated in the evaluation of the manuscript/paper. Is this how we find a balance between engaging students but also not overtaxing our already busy schedules?

Brianna: I think the balancing acts that we are all doing underscore why collaboration and mentorship are so important. We can't all do everything but sharing the load and being open to the help and expertise that are available are just some of the aspects of grad school that result in growth.

Discussion. During our inaugural year, low student engagement and enthusiasm as well as our own struggles to strike a balance between our academic and work commitments and effectively operating the journal were two primary challenges that we experienced. Whenever we sought out mentorship from our faculty, we constantly sensed their enthusiasm and support for the journal, and these were invaluable in inspiring and empowering us to work towards our goals. Simultaneously, we also sensed that the journal did not spark a sufficient level of interest and enthusiasm among graduate students, our peers and colleagues. As we began to explore possible reasons to explain low student engagement and enthusiasm, we realized that publication skills like developing manuscripts and addressing reviewer's comments are not explicitly built into our graduate curriculum. We as students do not typically receive step-by-step, concrete coaching in our graduate training to publish. Lack of coaching and mentorship for publication may discourage students from getting involved with the process and make the publication process more intimidating. Creating a journal and providing a platform to publish may not be enough to spark that enthusiasm, encouragement, and interest in students to publish if we do not establish proper avenues to foster engagement and participation between the journal and students. As we move forward, it will be important for the journal to develop and facilitate individualized mentorship opportunities and hands-on learning experiences for students to engage in the publishing process. As scholars (e.g., Johnson, 2013; Doran et al., 2014) in the field have suggested, these hands-on learning opportunities will allow students to gain skills and experiences which may not be available in their regular graduate curriculum and will then enhance their overall academic literacy.

Our second challenge illustrated our own struggle as editors to create an adequate balance in our day-to-day life to keep up with our diverse commitments. As graduate students, we are tied to many commitments and deadlines, and they take up most of our daily schedules. Consequently, during the year we sometimes struggled to manage our academic commitments and simultaneously find adequate time and opportunities to effectively fulfill our responsibilities and obligations as the journal editors, which are also plenty. At times, we were delayed in responding and following up with our authors, which undoubtedly elicited feelings of guilt and inadequacy in us. Therefore, we explored ways in which we could re-structure our responsibilities by collaborating with faculty. For example, if authors are submitting manuscripts which were developed under the mentorship of a faculty member, then our editorial and reviewing responsibilities may be reduced to some extent. Our experience in the past year reflects the amount of time and commitment warranted in student-led initiatives and illuminates how faculty collaboration, mentorship, and peer-support could alleviate the stress we experience juggling our commitments and creating a balance in our lives.

Question 3: How Do We Wish to Empower Journal Users and Ourselves Through the Publication Process?

We envision the journal to be a platform for peer-supportive learning and mentorship for publication not only for our authors, but for ourselves as well. Hence, we wanted to take the opportunity to listen to each other's perspectives as to how we wish to empower our authors and ourselves through the publication process, our third research question. After reading our stories in this regard, two main themes emerged. First, we discussed how we wish to empower our peers to help them develop confidence and take pride in the work they do as student researchers. Second, as we reflected on our own personal growth, we noted that the journal taught us to learn to trust our strengths and contributions that we can make as student researchers and editors. Our conversations, representative of these themes, are written below.

Cultivating confidence to publish

Gina: We are graduate students for a reason, we are here in our lives because we do know things. My message to students is that you know that you are becoming one of the experts in your field, so you have lots to say and write about. You might as well take the extra step to get your knowledge and findings disseminated so more people can read your work and what you are passionate about.

Brianna: Yeah, it is important to accept that boldness that yes, I do know some things. It is also important to accept that publishing is a learning process, and the first step to that process is to try. Just try it.

Maisha: Exactly what I was thinking, Brianna. Publication is a learning process. When we choose our area of study for research, our interest in the topics reflects our enjoyment and passion for the research we do. I hope the journal helps to cultivate that similar nature of enjoyment in students with respect to publishing and scholarly reviewing. I hope that the process of publication instills pride and confidence in the work students do, and that they see the feedback and coaching they receive from their reviewers as opportunities to learn and grow as authors.

Jon: I hope that beginning authors to the journal know that we as editors once stood where they stand; we remember how confusing and difficult it was to work toward publication. We didn't just wake up one day and think, 'hey, I can be an editor of a journal.' We built our confidence in publication slowly but surely, and it culminated in our current roles, but we faced many obstacles along the way as well.

Brit: Precisely. The first time, the process can be scary, intimidating, or even painful. It is hard not to take revisions personally, but tear off that band-aid and start the process. As beginning authors, it helps to have a mindset that revisions are there to improve your writing, don't view them as setbacks.

Konstantinos: Also, despite feeling overwhelmed by the publication process - especially for first-time authors - it is important for students to remember that there are resources they can rely on which can help improve their writing. Peers with publication experience or research supervisors can potentially serve as such resources by boosting graduate student authors' confidence regarding their academic prose. In addition, they can normalize potentially undesirable publication outcomes, e.g., manuscript rejection, or resubmission with major revisions, and act as role-models who underwent similar experiences in the past and, thus, can demystify for new graduate student authors the process of disseminating our research through publication.

Teresa: It is not easy putting yourself out there, but the risk is worth it. Hesitation and worries are understandable, but imagine what great books and articles may have never made it to print if the author had not taken a risk to say this is worthy, this is good enough for me to share. So, do not be so critical on your work or ideas that they never leave your computer or journal. I would also like to tell our authors that as the editor, I have learned to read deeply the work that is coming in and provide feedback that does not turn away an author but empowers them to do better.

Maisha: Then as editors, we should also pay close attention to the feedback and comments that our authors are receiving from their reviewers. Is the feedback useful? Empowering or overly harsh or critical? If the feedback is not useful or doesn't provide concrete directions on how to improve their manuscripts, then the author may be discouraged or less motivated to continue with the publication process.

Learning to Trust our Strengths and Contributions

Gina: What have we learned about ourselves through this process? For me I see it as practicing self-compassion. I learned to give myself permission to ask questions and reach out for help with things. I would also like to model that process with our student authors. When you are working on a paper and submit it for review, it is understandably an anxious process, but that paper does not have to be perfect. There's a team of people here in our journal that authors can learn from and that's really powerful.

Jon: Similar to what Gina said, I can be humble about what I don't know, but I can also be bold about what I do know. Being with the journal has given me the confidence to be bold in putting myself forward in whatever expertise I do have. As editors who are also students, we all have expertise at this point in our research area. My mentors have been saying this for awhile and logically this made sense, but being in the journal, I have felt what they were saying.

Brit: As the only master's student in the room, surrounded by people with much more experience and expertise than I have, like Jon said, I realized I do actually have expertise in certain areas and I can be confident in that knowledge. It's really helped with my confidence in applying to conferences and then the subsequent presentation.

Maisha: I agree, learning to be bold about what I do know. Being involved in various responsibilities as a journal editor, I now feel more confident to share my expertise in the area that I have received training and experiences. This position definitely adds to the confidence I take with me to a room when I am being asked to speak about my research. I think, interestingly, along with my research work, this journal position has also helped to identify the passion I have for research teaching and mentorship.

Teresa: Talking about mentorship, I think the collaborative opportunities that the journal offers have been empowering to me. For example, as the book review editor, I have books from all of our departments so when I run into, "Oh, is this really what the book is saying," I know I can rely on one of fellow editors for assistance.

Konstantinos: I definitely also appreciate the collaborative opportunities. I used to be a huge perfectionist but I think I have worked to relinquish that. I find it most beneficial to work in a group because there's that collaboration and you allow disagreements to be settled through democracy.

Brianna: For me, this process has helped me to realize that we are not alone. It can feel like we are the only ones who struggle with creating manuscripts, or providing good feedback, but, in this and all collaborative processes, we can see that others have the same struggles, and we can work through them together.

   Discussion. For beginning authors and students, the publication process could be daunting and anxiety provoking. It may be difficult to muster the courage and confidence to submit their own work for an evaluation that determines whether their work is worth sharing with the scholarly community. Reflecting on our own growth as first-year graduate students to authors, and now to editors, we hope that the publication process with the journal allows graduate students, our peers, to gain confidence about the skills, achievement, and the expertise they have developed so far in their academic careers. When we are confident and we take pride in the research work we do and the papers we write, it helps us to take risks and submit it for publication. It may be easier to take

that risk when we realize that the publication is, after all, a learning process. As graduate students, we are always learning, and it is our occupation, so we know we can learn. Once we take the feedback from our reviewers as opportunities to grow and be better storytellers of the research we are doing, we may even learn to enjoy the publication process and take pride in the progress we made. With respect to EPIGREP specifically, we hope that the individualized mentorship and coaching facilitated through the publication process also empowers our authors.

With respect to our own growth as editors, involvement with the journal has further reinforced our beliefs in our strengths, expertise, and the skills we have developed so far as young academics. The journal has enhanced our sense of self-efficacy to provide expertise in the areas we have training and experiences in. Additionally, the journal has brought us to a peer-supported community that allows us to learn from each other, collaborate with each other, and work together on our common goals to empower graduate students and become future scholars.

Implications and Future Directions

A review of the educational research literature indicates the need for and benefits of greater graduate student involvement in scholarly activities that transcend typical class requirements (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Garbati & Samuels, 2013; Ni Uigin et al., 2015). Aspiring to enhance the research culture in the WSE, University of Calgary, we aimed to build upon and strengthen an already existing academic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) by establishing a student-managed academic journal. In keeping with Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory, we sought to create a platform that would allow graduate students in education and psychology to equip themselves with the necessary skills required to facilitate the pursuit of an academic career. Using Norris and Sawyer's (2012) duo-ethnographic approach, we, the founding editors of EPIGREP, reflected on our hopes regarding the agentic potential of the journal, i.e., how it might address current gaps in academic graduate training and learning, respectively, the various challenges we experienced during the journal's inaugural year, and the ways in which we might mobilize fellow graduate students to actively participate in academic scholarship.

Our analysis of the stories shared shed light on several integral aspects pertaining to managing a graduate student research journal. Important questions arose with respect to the editors juggling their academic commitments to find time to fulfill their responsibilities with the journal, and student engagement in the publication process. In alignment with studies indicating underrepresentation of student authorship in published research (Garbati & Samuels, 2013), in our conversations we identified that there is an increasing need for students to have individualized mentorship and skill development opportunities to learn to how to publish and be active student researchers, along with having a journal platform such as EPIGREP to encourage participation in publication. In addition to our ongoing efforts to promote and advertise EPIGREP locally, nationally, and internationally, we are now aware that it will be important to for us to collaborate with our faculty and committees at WSE to begin to fill that gap and provide mentorship opportunities for students to gain skills and experiences to engage and participate in publications. Therefore, we should explore and develop initiatives in which students receive instructional mentorship for publication and academic literacy.

A concrete step towards that direction, for example, would to be have journal-faculty collaboration in which certain courses from each of the Werklund educational specialization areas (e.g., Learning Sciences, Counselling Psychology) will have assignments that will be required to be written in a manuscript format, which could then be submitted to EPIGREP. It is our hope that this kind of course assignment will not only encourage research participation in students, but will

also allow students to be mentored on publication from both the faculty and EPIGREP. Therefore, we continue to lobby relevant WSE committees such as the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and the Graduate Programs in Education Council (GPEC) to move this proposal forward. The mandate of the RAC is to provide strategic guidance in support of the goals of the Office of Research at WSE. Particularly, RAC is responsible to advise on matters related to research development at WSE as well as recommending policies and processes relevant to research at the School. GPEC is responsible to advise the WSE on matters relating to curriculum and overall structure of existing graduate programs within the School. Hence, GPEC examines and approves proposed course changes and supports coordination of graduate programs and initiatives to increase cooperation across educational specialization areas in the School. Given our proposal for journal-faculty collaboration as discussed earlier, RAC and GPEC seem to be the appropriate committees to seek collaboration and potentially develop initiatives like incorporating publication-based assignments into graduate curriculum.

Furthermore, we are continuously trying to create a peer-supported learning environment through the journal platform to provide increased support, scaffolding, and mentorship opportunities to reviewers and authors submitting their work to EPIGREP. Presently, we are working to improve the online application and submission processes, offer online training modules and videos in response to the needs identified by several of the EPIGREP editors to support and engage students in publication.

Finally, creating and running a student-led, peer-reviewed journal has been a rewarding but also challenging undertaking. What has been key in our developing a better grasp of roles, responsibilities, as well as the steps involved in the editorial process itself is peer support and peer-mentoring. Since our editorial team is comprised of graduate students with varying degrees of familiarity regarding the publication process, we have been open to learning from one another to ensure that we fulfill our roles with integrity, and following the same protocol that other peer-reviewed publications adhere to. Similarly, given that many of the manuscripts we receive for publication may be coming from graduate students who are first-time authors, we strive to make ourselves available to them as a resource. For instance, we provide mentorship to authors whose work may not be up to standard for publication, yet there is ample potential for revisions that would help turn that work into publishable material.

Conclusion

In much the same way that a rope is made stronger from being made up of many different strands, our varied perspectives and responses to both our successes and challenges have enriched our experiences as individual editors managing our graduate student research publication, EPIGREP. In this article, our separate voices lent themselves nicely to using duo-ethnography, helping us make sense of the commitment to and processes of establishing a peer-reviewed academic journal. Our hope is that, by sharing our experiences with EPIGREP, we are furthering the conversation about graduate student involvement in research and academic publishing. This involvement, albeit laden with potential challenges, can incur significant benefits for graduate programs' training, graduate student learning and skill development, and future academic careers.

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