



## Call for Papers

### Desiring Autism and Neurodivergence in Education: Decolonial, Intersectional, Critical, and Creative Perspectives

## Overview

The Re-Storying Autism in Education project invites researchers, artists, and activists to contribute to an edited volume of chapters that will examine the complex ableist and settler colonialist legacies in Autism research, policy and practice in education. The volume will advance neurodiversity affirming practices, policies and educational cultures through artistic, activist and scholarly engagements. We seek new conversations, contestations and perspectives that build solidarity and Autistic justice across sites of difference and tension in Autism research, politics and practice including, for example, self-advocacy and parent advocacy; rural and urban experiences; global North and South disability perspectives; unsettling settler and elevating Indigenous understandings of difference; critical educator/practitioner and user/consumer experiences; rethinking biomedical and neurodiversity approaches. You can find more about the project here ([www.restoryingautism.com](http://www.restoryingautism.com)).

The aim of the volume is to invite difference affirming and intersectional research, knowledge, practice and policy in education beyond Westernized remedial approaches and to open space for new methodological, theoretical, activist and artistic engagements that provoke education toward justice. Such engagements will both query and unsettle everyday practices about how we 'do' education and knowledge generation itself. We are particularly interested in diverse (e.g., BIPOC, women and femme-identified, non-speaking, queer, rural, global South) Autistic and other neurodivergent approaches to research, practice, knowledge sharing and activist art. Rather than define or reify Autism and neurodivergence, for example, as positive or negative brain-based differences, we hold the question of meaning open to invite a proliferation of new and justice-oriented stories of Autism, neurodivergence and difference in education (Douglas et al., 2021).

## Background: Why this Volume?

Autistic and allied activists and scholars advocating for inclusion and justice in education, health and life have, arguably, already made significant inroads toward positive change (see, for examples, Brown et al., 2017; Milton, 2012). Affirming and intersectional approaches have emerged, provoking research and practice in education beyond deficit and remediation towards understanding Autism and other neurodivergence as fundamental to life and tied to culture and location (Armstrong, 2012; Bevan-Brown, 2013; Lamoureux & Katz, 2020). Although at times tenuous, alliances between Autistic self-advocates, family and kin, educators and researchers working for social justice and affirming supports in education are being forged, particularly within Autistic and Indigenous, Black and other communities of colour and participatory initiatives including the Re•Storying Autism project and others (see, for example, Fletcher-Watson et al., 2019; Re•Storying Autism Collective, 2022). Inclusive education policy and accessibility legislation has also been widely enacted, supported by global bodies such as the United Nations (e.g., Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Accessibility for Manitobans with Disabilities Act) as well as local governments across northern Turtle Island (Canada), Aotearoa (New Zealand), the United Kingdom and much of the world. Autistic and disability artists, too, have contributed provocative and affirming expressions of Autistic/neurodivergent experiences (see, among many examples, <https://www.restoryingautism.com/tangled-copy>; <https://www.eesteerelation.com/what-do-we-do>).

And yet, a gap persists in education and life outcomes for Autistic/neurodivergent (ND) folks. This is particularly the case for Indigenous, Black and other People of Colour, and women and femme-identified, working class, rural, global South and other multiply marginalized Autistic/ND people (Kandeh, et al., 2020). Western understandings of Autism as disordered brain development and behaviour in need of remediation, for example, remains a dominant perspective in most global North education and support systems (Gibson & Douglas, 2018). Access to diagnosis and supports generally—alongside diagnostic criteria themselves—remain moored in ableist and colonialist legacies and ontologies that hierarchicalize and devalue difference (Malott, Barraclough, & Yee, 2023). Carceral and racist logics play out at the intersections of Autism and disability in deadly ways, streaming Autistic and neurodivergent Indigenous, Black, and other People of Colour into special education, child welfare systems and prisons at alarmingly high rates (Ineese-Nash, 2020; Watts & Erevelles, 2004). Such logics drive over and underdiagnoses and misdiagnoses (such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and emotional disorders rather than Autism, see Inman, 2019), and justify systemic school-based violence including seclusion, isolation, off-rolling, and expulsion (Bartlett, 2020). Employment, post-secondary education and other alternative affirming life pathways become closed or at best difficult given this broader context of injustice. In addition, Indigenous and other understandings of practices surrounding disability and difference that elevate family and kinship relations (human and non-human) are often absent within approaches to disability and difference within Westernized education and health systems (Bevan-Brown, 2013; Ineese-Nash, 2020).

This volume takes up these life and death problematics. We invite critical and creative scholarship, art, activism, policy and practice approaches to change the tide in education practice, policy and research.

## Topics and Themes

*Desiring Autism and Neurodivergence in Education: Decolonial, Intersectional, Critical, and Creative Perspectives* invites scholarly; research-based; arts, practice and story-based; community-based; policy work; critical lived experience; activist and other critical and creative submissions. We orient to education in the broadest of terms for this volume, including the micro and macro practices—pedagogical, methodological, theoretical, activist, critical and provocative opinion pieces, artistic, cultural and more—that make (and therefore that can re-make) education, knowledge and research systems of which we are a part.

Possible topic areas and themes to be explored include (but are not limited to):

- ⇒ Dismantling ableist colonialist education systems and research
  - unsettling the politics and ethics of methodology and practice
  - creating pedagogies of disruption within ableist, colonial entanglements
  - naming and undoing the criminalization of Autism and race
  - unravelling ableism at the intersections of Autism/ND, race, gender, sexuality, and coloniality in education
  - tracing parallel legacies in education: ableism, colonialism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, white supremacy
  - rethinking the politics of inclusion and/as inclusionism
  - refiguring biomedical and developmentalist approaches
  - reimagining diagnostic practices through Indigenous worldviews
  - Listening to the perspectives of Autistic children and young people
  - Dismantling myths about Autistic experiences (e.g., fallacies of functioning labels, deficits, and preconceived needs)
  
- ⇒ (Un)containing bodies of difference
  - rethinking the space, time and relationality of education
  - reimagining access and inclusion through technology and art
  - exploring hybrid and online practices as radical access
  - investigating access rubs and tensions across difference
  - centering rurality and Autism/ND
  - thinking with alter/divergent communication and sociality
  - sense making and synesthesia as difference-affirming practices
  
- ⇒ Exploring practice and/as world-making
  - making difference-affirming worlds through micro practices of art, research, story
  - exploring critical and creative methodologies as world building

- challenging exclusion through communal and creative practices e.g., care webs, disability/Autistic justice
  - creating affirming educational worlds through intergenerational practices including Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers
  - decolonizing stories of Autism and neurodivergence as transformative educational practice
  - pursuing practices remaking the (humanist) human
  - investigating alter forms of relationality as re-making education
- ⇒ Pursuing policy to re-story and re-make lived worlds
- articulating neuroqueer cultural practice as resistance, survivance, celebration
  - centering ancestral wisdom/Indigenous practices in Autism policy making
  - feeling Autism policy as/and affect
  - challenging the Autism industrial complex (Broderick and Roscigno, 2021) and the rise of behaviourism in education policy
  - challenging individualist colonial legacies in the politics of disability rights, Autism politics and neurodiversity

## Submission Process

To be considered for this volume, send a 250-300 word abstract and current CV to Patty Douglas [douglas.patricia@queensu.ca](mailto:douglas.patricia@queensu.ca) by **September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. Queries about the call for papers and possible topics and formats can also be sent to this email.

Submissions will undergo a multi-stage peer review, including an initial review by the editorial team. Potential contributors will be contacted with a **decision by October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. Acceptance of an abstract does not guarantee inclusion in the volume.

Editors are also planning to apply for funding to host a hybrid two-day workshop event (working title: Desiring Autism and Neurodivergence in Education Symposium), tentatively scheduled for June 25-27<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Invited contributors will be sponsored to attend the symposium in person, or virtually, to present draft chapters/versions of their work. This will help the editorial team to prepare the final manuscript to be reviewed by the publisher. Full submissions are due October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and should be between 3,000 to 6,000 words, including all notes and references.

The final manuscript we are planning will include a traditional text-based volume as well as an online multimedia text that can incorporate text, video, image, sound, and other file formats. Our team will be available to help contributors make their work fully accessible, including ASL, audio descriptions, captions, sensory and other accessibility into their multimedia submissions.

We are communicating with publishers (such as McGill-Queen's University Press, University of Manitoba Press) who have expressed interest in the volume and multimedia online accessible text, focus on Indigenous literature and are interested in growing their disability studies collection with broad distribution networks both in Canada and globally.

## About the Editorial Team

**Stephen Connolly** (s.connolly@shu.ac.uk) is an Autistic, Senior Lecturer in Autism and course leader in MA Autism at the SHU Autism Centre as part of the Sheffield Hallam Institute of Education. His work is located in Autism, inclusive education and University life through emancipatory approaches to research and critically challenging research methodology, methods and ethics.

**Vijaya Dharan** is a Senior Lecturer at Massey University, Institute of Education in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is involved in the Masters in Educational and Developmental Psychology programme. She is the Director of Academic Programmes in the Institute of Education and is also the Educational Psychology endorsement coordinator in the under graduate level. She supervises several doctoral and master's students. Her research interests are in the field of Autism, inclusive education; student (dis)engagement. She is a registered psychologist and a registered teacher.

**Patty Douglas** (she/they) is an Associate Professor of Disability Studies and Endowed Chair in Student Success and Wellness in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. Her work in disability studies, critical autism studies, (m)othering and care and feminist studies of science is informed by critical and creative theories, methodologies and pedagogies. Patty identifies as neurodivergent, and is the mother of two neurodivergent sons, one of whom attracted the label of Autism. She directs the Re•Storying Autism project, and is currently publishing with UBC Press, *Unmothering Autism: Ethical Disruptions and Affirming Care*. @ReStorying [www.restoryingautism.com](http://www.restoryingautism.com)

**Jan Hastie - Iwi (Tribe): Ngati Ranginui** (jan.hastie@toiohoma.ac.nz) is a Senior Academic Staff Member and Programme Lead of the Bachelor of Social Work at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology, in Rotorua, Aotearoa (New Zealand). Her research is located in an indigenous space of decolonising methodologies associated with *tōnā anō Takiwātanga (Autism)* through a lens of *mātauranga wāhine* (Māori women's) knowledge.

**Claire Johnston** is a citizen of the Red River Métis Nation who lives on the lands of their ancestors in Treaty 1 Territory, also known as Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Claire comes from a family line of Piitoshi-iteeyihtam (he/she/they think differently) and is currently mentoring under Master beadwork artist and Knowledge Keeper Jennine Krauchi. Claire finds immense joy in working with their hands and believes their mind

and fine dexterity are gifts from their ancestors meant to be shared. Claire is a founding member of the grassroots Métis collective Red River Echoes, which works to reclaim sovereignty, land, culture, and kinship across the Métis Homeland. Claire is a member of the MMF Two-Spirit Michif Local and is a team member of the Re•Storying Autism Project. Through their art practice and associated community work, Claire seeks to create intentional spaces for young Autistic, Disabled, and Queer Indigenous people to proudly be themselves, explore their gifts, and create kin.

**Nancy Marshall** is a Child and Youth Worker (CYW) and Registered Social Worker (RSW) with a background in supporting autistic children, youth, and families with neuro-affirming approaches to care and wellbeing. Nancy's research as a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at York University, Canada, examines the impact of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) on the wellbeing of autistic people from the perspectives of lived experience.

**Carla Rice** (she/her, they/them) is a Tier I Canada Research Chair in Feminist Studies and Social Practice at the University of Guelph. Her research focuses on disability and non-normative embodiments, feminist and intersectionality studies, and arts-based methodologies. Rice founded Re•Vision: The Centre for Art and Social Justice (<https://revisioncentre.ca>), a research creation centre that explores how communities can mobilize the arts to deepen public dialogue and advance social justice.

**Dorothy Taare-Smith** – Tribal affiliation: Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga a Hauiti – currently living in Gisborne, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Dorothy has a background in special education teaching and has a Bachelor of Education, Post Graduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching (ASD) and a Master of Specialist Teaching (ASD). Dorothy is currently enrolled at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington completing her Professional Doctorate in Health studies. Her research area is based on an Iwi led diagnosis process and on-going supports for whānau which aligns with tikanga a iwi (guided by tribal principles). [takiwatanga.facilitator@outlook.com](mailto:takiwatanga.facilitator@outlook.com)

## References

Armstrong, T. (2012). Neurodiversity in the classroom. ASCD.

Bartlett, N., & Ellis, T. F. (2020). Interrogating sanctioned violence: A survey of parents/guardians of children with disabilities about restraint and seclusion in Manitoba's schools. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(5), 122-155.

Bevan-Brown, J. (2013). Including people with disabilities: An indigenous perspective. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(6), 1-13



Broderick, A. A., & Roscigno, R. (2021). Autism, inc.: The autism industrial complex. *Journal of Disability Studies in Education*, 2(1), 77-101.

Brown, L. X., Ashkenazy, E., & Onaiwu, M. G. (Eds.). (2017). *All the weight of our dreams: On living racialized autism*. DragonBee Press.

Douglas, P., Rice, C., Runswick-Cole, K., Easton, A., Gibson, M. F., Gruson-Wood, J., Klar, E. & Shields, R. (2021). Re-storying autism: A body becoming disability studies in education approach. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(5), 605-622.

Fletcher-Watson, S., et al. (2019). Making the future together: Shaping autism research through meaningful participation. *Autism: The International J of Research and Practice*, 23(4), 943–953.

Gibson, M. F. & Douglas, P. (2018). Disturbing behaviours: O Ivar Lovaas and the queer history of autism science. *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.28968/cftt.v4i2.29579>

Ineese-Nash, N. (2020). Disability as a colonial construct: the missing discourse of culture in conceptualizations of disabled indigenous children. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(3), 28-51.

Inman, C. E. (2019). Absence and epidemic: Autism and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Indigenous peoples in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 8(4), 227–261.

Kandeh, M. S., Kandeh, M. K., Martin, N., & Krupa, J. (2020). Autism in black, Asian and minority ethnic communities: A report on the first Autism Voice UK Symposium. *Advances in Autism*, 6(2), 165–175. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AIA-12-2018-0051>

Lamoureux, K., & Katz, J. (2020) Intersectionality, Indigeneity, and inclusive education: Reimagining business as usual. *Exceptionality Education International*, 30, 12-18.

Malott, K. M., Barraclough, S., & Yee, T. (2023). Towards Decolonizing Diagnosis: A Critical Review and Suggested Alternatives. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 45(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-022-09501-0>

Milton, D. (2012). On the ontological status of Autism: The ‘double empathy problem’. *Disability & Society*, 27(6), 883-887.

Re•Storying Autism Collective (Shields, R., Easton, S., Gruson-Wood, J., Gibson, M. F., Douglas, P., & Rice, C. M.). (2022). Storytelling methods on the move. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1-20.

Watts, I. E., & Erevelles, N. (2004). These deadly times: Reconceptualizing school violence by using critical race theory and disability studies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2), 271-299.