



McGill

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

Annual Report 2012

Ralf St.Clair, Chair, DISE

Introduction

The Department of Integrated Studies in Education is the largest teaching unit within the Faculty of Education. At the end of 2012 we had 24.5 tenured, 7 tenure track and 8 non-tenure stream faculty. We deliver the majority of McGill teacher education programs, and currently have around 1300 active undergraduate students. We also have 280 Masters students, 119 graduate certificate students, and 119 doctoral students. Given these numbers, we also have a large number of courses taught by course lecturers— approximately 200 in 2012—though it should be noted that most course lecturers teach more than one course.

In 2012 the Department did a lot of work on administrative structures. This included a new teaching workload allocation structure (bringing mean teaching load above 9 credits), a merit working group that developed a new framework for merit allocation, and appointment of a Director for Kindergarten and Elementary Education programs. In Mike Canavan's first full year as Administrative Officer he made some fundamental changes to administration in the Department, partly driven by diminishing resources but also by strategic administrative priorities. Altogether DISE finished the year doing more with less than has ever been the case in the Department's history.

Early in 2013 the Department went through Unit Review, and at this point we identified three overarching imperatives:

Sustainable teacher education

There is a need to craft more sustainable teacher education programs. Program growth driven by externally mandated requirements has led to student numbers that stretch our capacity and resources further than is appropriate. With over 70% of our undergraduate classes taught by course lecturers and real issues in getting enough field experience placements there are clear signals that our strategy needs to evolve.

Graduate programs and research

The Department needs to continue its efforts to build a portfolio of funded research. This has enormous benefits for our graduate students, who will be better supported and offered a wider range of experiences. This will also offer better management of graduate student progress through our programs and support to faculty members to attract broader funding.

Consolidation of administrative structures

The Department is highly constrained by funding austerity and high levels of regulation in terms of how administration is organised, leading not only to a shortfall in resource but also a highly unstable situation where there are not enough known factors to support effective planning. Continued work on transparency and improved information flow at every level is necessary to ensure the Department has the tools needed to allow informed forecasting.

Research and publications

The Department demonstrates a good level of research activity with an upwards trajectory that suggests we have the capacity to make our mark in increasingly significant ways. Over the last two years, based on consistent measures, publications have been as follows:

	2011	2012
Articles, chapters, books	78	107
Conference papers	125	196
Other publications	95	81

Attainment of research funding also continues a good pace. Reviewing the last three years once more, the table below indicates funding achieved within that calendar year. Given that we obtained \$300,000 in US National Science Foundation funding in 2011, to make it an unusually strong year, the Department has essentially doubled funding between 2010 and 2012.

Year	Amount
2010	347,783
2011	1,022,939
2012	683,690

As an indication of the strength and diversity of research within our department, we include the profiles of four of our researchers.

- **Dr. Asghar** is interested in the teaching of evolutionary science in regions with strong religious fundamentalism, and the implications that this holds for the development of scientific understanding. She works with a broad network of researchers in Canada, the United States, and Pakistan, and is currently writing a book summarising her work in this area. Her work shows the internationalism in the heart of our department, and the way that educational research can play a critical role in understanding broad global issues.
- **Dr. Shariff** is interested in cyber-bullying and runs one of the key information portals on this and associated topics. The recent tragic cases have raised media interest in this topic, and Dr. Shariff has been in great demand as an expert and speaker. This example shows that DISE researchers are well-placed to address emerging social issues.
- **Dr. Mitchell**, working from a literacies background, has become involved in health-centred girls education in Africa, specifically in response to issues of HIV and AIDS. Dr. Mitchell is a James McGill professor, a university level recognition of research excellence. She has recent been appointed as Director of the Faculty's Institute of Human Development and Well-being and has been asked to provide policy advice in a number of significant fora and to help with curriculum development in African schools. In these ways, the research of the department is directly influencing governmental decisions at the highest levels.
- **Dr. Ghosh** has been elected to Associate Fellowship of The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World in recognition of her work on gender in India and her leadership of the Comparative and International Education Society. Dr. Ghosh is also a James McGill professor.

This demonstrates the relevance of Departmental research to global networks and organisations tackling the most deep-seated issues.

In March 2012 the Department formed a Research Committee chaired by Professor Shaheen Shariff. In the words of the mandate, the aims of this committee are “to investigate ways to strengthen the department’s research capacity and effect policies to facilitate a culture of research.”

Teaching and learning

The Department has two main areas of undergraduate activity as well as a teacher qualifying graduate program and conventional graduate programs.

Undergraduate teacher education programs

In 2012 the Department added a second Program Director for our teacher education programs. Dr. Caroline Riches continues as Director of the MATL (discussed below) and selected undergraduate programs, while Dr. Beverly Baker joined her as Director of K-Elementary programs. They worked closely together through the year to develop our teacher education programs.

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee changed its name to the Teacher Education Program Committee (TEPC), in order to recognise the existence of our graduate teacher education programs. A student representative from these programs was invited to join the committee. In recognition of this committee’s status as a faculty committee other units involved in teacher education (sharing DISE courses and offering courses in DISE programs) were also invited to join TEPC. This included Educational and Counselling Psychology, Kinesiology and Physical Education, and Music Education.

The Department launched a curriculum mapping exercise involving interactive maps outlining our teacher education programs with hyperlinks to brief information about each course offered. Designed to identify gaps and overlaps in our programs and give instructors a chance to see where their teaching fits in the bigger picture, these maps allow instructors so see at a glance all the topics and readings covered throughout each program.

Better targetting of recruitment was a key concern, and the Department started a push in conjunction with the re-launch of the B.Ed. K/Elementary Pédagogie de l’Immersion Française major. As French Immersion is a common program across English schools in Quebec, and a very popular option across Canada, completing this program should increase students’ employability upon graduation. We believe that many students from across Canada will be attracted to the idea of studying French Immersion in Montréal.

In response to concerns about the ease of entry to teacher education programs and the need to ensure that applicants have a genuine interest in teaching, we have introduced a Letter of Intent for applications. This will be applied to Fall 2014 admission, and will involve the applicant writing a short statement regarding their intentions as a teacher.

In October 2012 we hosted the five-yearly accreditation visit from CAPFE (Comité d’agrément des programmes de formation à l’enseignement). The results were not released until the end of January 2013, and suggested that there was work to be done, particularly around the coherence of the program. This recommendation fit well with the direction of our program evolution. We received full accreditation for a limited period, and are expected to indicate in April 2014 what our plans are to improve coherence and to ensure greater University support for teacher education.

First Nations and Inuit Education

Following the resignation of FNIE Director Donna-Lee Smith effective December 31st 2011, Ralf St.Clair and Elizabeth Wood co-directed the programs. They visited communities in Val d'Or and Kuujuaq to plan programs with Cree and Kativik School Boards, and a steering meeting with all partners was held in Fall 2012.

The on-campus Bachelors in First Nations and Inuit Education (in partnership with the Cree School Board) entered its third year in summer 2012. A number of issues have arisen with this model of the program, as expecting students to attend university and field experiences in Montréal when they have families and experience in their communities proved to be unrealistic. The program is undergoing profound redesign to cope with this challenge as well as the difficulties of the English Examination for Certified Teachers.

Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning

This innovative program began in 2011. The program is designed to provide people who already hold a university degree with teaching certification in 15 months (Intensive study), so Fall 2012 saw the convocation of the first cohort of 28 students. In line with development plans the number of students recruited into the program increased towards a steady state of 120 students per year.

Initiatives with respect to graduate supervision:

Professor Lise Winer continued as Graduate Program Director in 2012. Her intention for the year was to bring more common approaches to the PhD process, and this had some success in terms of clarification of key program milestones. In an attempt to continue enhancing the transparency of the programs there was considerable work on communication. A number of FAQ sheets were prepared and posted on the DISE graduate program websites: Role of the Doctoral Advisory Committee; PhD Comprehensive Examination and Research Proposal Guidelines; Finding an M.A. Supervisor; M.A. Project Guidelines; Co-Curricular Activities Report Form; Hiring of Course Lecturers; Student Checklist for 2012 SSHRC (MA and PhD); and Issues of Equity and Diversity for DISE. Additional presentation PPTs were posted from Orientation (MA and PhD), and CV/Cover Letter Preparation. These have been very well received and several more FAQ/Guideline sheets are in preparation.

Funding is a continuing concern for our graduate students. Mechanisms were developed to ensure more transparent and equitable allocations of funds and teaching positions. In addition, three new DISE Graduate Awards were instituted out of Graduate Excellence Fund money in order to better recognize the contributions and achievements of our graduate students: DISE Award for Innovative Dissemination of Research Results; DISE Award for Community Engagement; and DISE Award for Educator-Practitioner Research.

Initiatives and innovations related to graduate teaching programs:

One large project in graduate education in 2012 was the development of a new PhD Concentration in Mathematics & Science Education. This should be in place in Fall 2013, although we may not be able to advertise until 2014.

The Department also developed a new course in the unusual format of a student-run and student-led seminar, on Critical Race and Indigenous Theory and Education, led by PhD student Rachel Zellars and advised by Dr. Aziz Choudry. This proved to be highly successful, and the Department looks forward to more such initiatives.

Involvement in the community

The Department hosted the Canadian Association of Teacher Educators (CATE) Working Conference, November 1-3 2012. This conference was a great success, bringing together educators from North America and Europe to look at the pressing issues of teacher education in Canada.

In summer 2012, the Department hosted the 2nd McGill First Nations and Inuit Youth Leadership Symposium, thanks to support from the Casgrain Foundation. Dr. Lisa Trimble was Director of this program, which brought ten young leaders from Northern communities to spend time at McGill. The aim was to improve the likelihood that they would attend higher education. The individuals selected to attend were those who, it was believed, would be able to have an influence on their peers, so this initiative will have effects well beyond the ten selected.

A range of faculty and students across the Department continue to provide significant amounts of support and professional development to school boards and educators both across the Province and beyond. Examples include the Graduate Certificate in Leadership, or supportive and research-informed professional networks we provide to educational managers in Québec and Vermont.

Members of our Department also participate substantially in the management of the Faculty and the University. Two of the major initiatives of the Faculty—the Institute of Well-Being and Human Development, and the Office of Leadership, Community and International Initiatives—are led by members of our Department, Professor Claudia Mitchell and Professor Lynn Butler-Kisber.

Milestones

Dan Darrigan, former Administrative Officer of the Department, passed away unexpectedly in the early days of 2012.

Michael Canavan joined the Department as Administrative Officer at the end of 2011.

Kathy McElroy retired from McGill after 42 years of service.

Jennifer Element left the Department to move to Alberta.

Ryan Bouma joined the Department as Student Advisor.

Ralf St.Clair joined the Department as Chair, moving from the University of Glasgow.

Marta Kobiela joined the Department as Assistant Professor Math and Science Education.

Paul Zanazanian joined the Department as Assistant Professor Social Sciences Education.

Honours, awards and prizes

Among many examples in the Department:

Professor Ratna Ghosh completed her term as President of the Comparative and International Education Society.

Professor Kara Jackson received the 2012 McGill University Faculty of Education Heather Reisman and Gerald Schwartz Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Professor Roy Lyster was appointed by the Department of Canadian Heritage as Associate Partner to the European Centre for Modern languages.

Professor Teresa Strong-Wilson was invited to join a MELS Expert Table on Reading held in January.