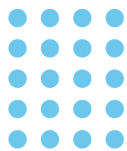
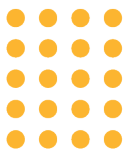


LETTER FROM THE BOARD



We are pleased to share the 4th issue of the Neag School of Education Journal. Leading from our mission, our journal provides a unique space for graduate and early career scholars to develop and share a broad variety of scholarly work, including research articles, essays, literature reviews, and reflective pieces. We take pride in providing a supportive “testing-ground” for graduate authors to refine their original work in collaboration with our graduate-led editorial board. Fundamentally, the Neag School of Education Journal is committed to the growth and development of emergent educational researchers across fields. After much hard work and dedication from our authors and editorial board, we are thrilled to unveil the culmination of their efforts – six pieces that showcase the excellence of our 2026 edition.

Each of this year’s articles exemplify the equity-grounded, methodologically rigorous, and innovative research that this journal endeavors to elevate.

In Integrating Human Rights and Social Justice Education through Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, Saah Agyemang-Badu proposes a justice-oriented framework that integrates Human Rights Education (HRE) and Social Justice Education (SJE) within Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) by drawing from linguistic human rights scholarship, critical pedagogy, and postcolonial theory. Agyemang-Badu argues that the continued dominance of colonial languages in African classrooms constitutes a form of epistemic violence that disconnects learners from the cultural and linguistic resources needed to engage meaningfully with questions of rights and justice. Agyemang-Badu’s piece illustrates how rights discourse can be reframed in learners’ first languages to strengthen linguistic identity, foster critical consciousness, and expand civic participation by offering curricular exemplars grounded in Ghanaian proverbs, oral traditions, and community knowledge systems. Agyemang-Badu concludes with a series of suggestions to strengthen Indigenous language policy, sustained teacher preparation, and genuine collaboration with local communities.

In Co-Generating a Dissertation: Camaraderie, SEL Competencies, and the Cohort Community, Vae L. Champagne provides a reflective narrative of their own journey through a Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (SEAL) doctoral program focused on the value of community. Champagne leverages the strengths of this doctoral process to provide recommendations and highlight the value of community focused collective wisdom in academia. The piece examines how this collective model operates in alignment with the stated goals of SEL/SEAL learning, and Champagne argues that this alignment strengthens the overall value of the program to learners. This is framed as being both a critical component of the quality of the program and integral to their own process. Champagne concludes with a call for programs to adopt these values of care and community, both in



cohort models and in an ethos of collective learning.

In *The Politics of Language: Linguistic Justice and the Unfinished Revolution in Myanmar's Education*, Luyi No argues that Myanmar's current educational crisis is the direct outcome of a long-unresolved struggle over linguistic justice by tracing how successive regimes have mobilized schools to impose centralized authority. Moving across the pre-colonial monastic system, British colonial rule, post-independence "Burmanization," socialist-era centralization, and the democratic transition of 2011–2020, No shows how language policy has repeatedly served as a tool of nation-building that has also entrenched linguistic, ethnic, and cultural exclusion. No ultimately frames the State Administration Council's 2022 amendments mandating Burmese as the sole language of instruction as the predictable culmination of these persistent tensions. No concludes that any meaningful reform must confront this history by centering linguistic justice, by recognizing community-led and faith-based educational traditions, and by engaging ethnic communities as equal partners in shaping a more inclusive system.

In *Evaluating Two-Way Immersion Programs: A Literature Review of Their Role in Advancing Equity for Emergent Bilingual Learners*, Pinyi Wang and LeAnne Salazar Montoya examine how U.S. based Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs promote academic equity and biliteracy for K-12 Emergent Bilingual Learners. Wang and Salazar Montoya's review synthesizes 64 peer-reviewed studies, dissertations, and book chapters published between 2018 and 2025. Wang and Salazar Montoya use an analytical approach grounded in Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy to organize the literature into three thematic domains—instructional practices, community engagement, and post-secondary outcomes—to trace how TWI programs shape students' academic trajectories across the P-20 continuum. Wang and Salazar Montoya find that TWI programs hold genuine promise for advancing biliteracy and academic achievement when supported by balanced language practices, multimodal instruction, inclusive leadership, and active family engagement. However, disparities in implementation, resource access, and digital inclusion continue to limit the consistent success of these programs. Wang and Salazar Montoya's review argues that sustaining TWI's equity potential requires an explicit commitment to linguistic justice and structural alignment across classroom practice, family partnership, and policy.

In *Easier Said Than Taught: Navigating the Development and Application of Critical Thinking*, Jia-han Yang performs a narrative literature review of scholarly research of Critical Thinking (CT) development for students. Yang examines how the context of transfer for CT skills has been shown to impact development, as well as how classroom practices shape these factors. Yang discusses how near and far transfer of CT intersects with domain specificity for students, acknowledging the literature's indication of content specific CT development as more effective while



also framing generalized CT development as crucial for learners. Yang highlights the limits of current research into CT in terms of diverse contexts, and encourages a broader examination of these factors going forward. Yang concludes that CT development is a survival competency for undergraduate students that shapes how they interact with the world beyond academic contexts.

In *From Classroom to Community Spaces: The Intersection of Peace, Democracy Education, and Public Dialogue in Norway*, Cindy Yovanov explores how facilitated public dialogue in Norway extends democratic learning from K-12 schooling into community spaces that confront racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia. Drawing on Communities of Practice theory, Yovanov's pilot study applies Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis to semi-structured interviews with two experienced dialogue facilitators in southern Norway. Findings show that participants initially approach dialogue through the debate-style argumentation learned in formal education but through engagement with the public dialogue space, Yovanov traces how participants move toward fuller democratic participation. Yovanov argues that facilitated dialogue serves as a bridge between institutional and experiential democratic learning, and offers implications for educator development and democratic curriculum design.

We are proud to present the work of our graduate and early career authors. The Neag School of Education Journal is committed to student development through a high-dose, collaborative review process, and we hope authors leave this experience better prepared for future peer-reviewed publication. Our copyright policy is designed with emerging scholars in mind, ensuring they retain full ownership of their work.

We have many fantastic and dedicated people to thank for the realization of our 4th issue. First, we owe an immense debt of gratitude to Dr. Jennie Weiner, our founding advisor, whose tireless dedication to this journal and to students has shaped everything we do. Dr. Weiner concludes her service with this edition, and we are deeply grateful for her leadership and the enduring lessons she has imparted to us as reviewers and researchers. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Jason Irizarry, our dean, whose enthusiastic support from the journal's inception has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to student research and development.

Much thanks to Mikala Kane and the design team at UConn who help ensure that each edition is beautifully formatted.

And thank you to our board members whose hard work and enthusiasm made this issue possible. We are excited to continue advancing this work!

Finally, thank you to the authors of the pieces featured in this issue and all who submitted work. It goes without saying that this would be impossible without your contributions. We are immensely proud to feature your work in this issue.

To learn more about our team and mission, please visit us at education.uconn.edu/neag-journal

