

# RESEARCH CONNECTION

## Getting to know BU CARES

*By Michelle Lam, PhD, Director of BU CARES*



### Why this research is important

Education is a powerful force for change. For BU CARES, understanding more about what education looks like for rural and Indigenous students and how to do it in a good way means working with rural and Indigenous partners to identify challenges and then work together for creative solutions. In addition, rural and Indigenous communities have much to teach the rest of Canada and beyond.

Guided by values of connection, creativity, usefulness, and integrity, BU CARES also supports a constellation of projects and partnerships. Using podcasts, newsletters, social media, reports, articles, briefs, infographics, films, a website, events, and workshops, BU CARES shares pertinent research and fosters engagement that furthers understanding about education in Indigenous and rural places.

### What you need to know

The [Centre for Applied Research and Education in Indigenous, Rural, and Remote Settings](#) (BU CARES) is a research centre in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Launched in 2008, BU CARES aims to support, facilitate, and promote research that improves education for Indigenous and rural students. The research of BU CARES includes a focus on anti-racism, educational technology, Indigenous education, eco-justice, and well-being and mental health. By partnering with communities, school divisions, not-for-profit organizations, government, and academics, BU CARES fosters a supportive environment where students, faculty, and community researchers can collaborate and develop ideas together.

### How the research is conducted

Most educational research is conducted with partners in schools or community organizations. For that reason, BU CARES focuses on applied research done through community-based participatory approaches. Projects are collaboratively designed and facilitated, with significant involvement from both academic and community partners.

In past years, BU CARES has conducted arts-based, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. The methodologies chosen depend on the needs of the project.

### How this research can be used

Currently, BU CARES is leading three projects and employs eight research assistants. Together with our partners, we are exploring:

1. What does Indigenous identity mean through the voices of Indigenous students? (Partnership with the Indigenous Peoples' Centre at Brandon University)
2. Changing the script with pedagogies for anti-racism education (Arts-based film project funded through the Government of Canada).
3. School and community impacts of a reconciliation initiative (Partnership with Mountain View School Division).

These three projects aim to identify strategies for increasing understanding and equity in Indigenous and rural places. As these projects continue, knowledge from the projects will shape understandings, theorization, policy, pedagogy, and curriculum.

BU CARES also currently partners with 12 other projects on topics like microaggressions, digital well-being and mental health, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, culturally responsive teaching, epistemic beliefs, and more. Just as a rising tide lifts all boats, the efforts of BU CARES to support and mobilize research knowledge across the BU campus and in partnerships with other institutions result in increased opportunities for students, more knowledge that benefits Indigenous and rural communities, and ultimately better education for Indigenous and rural students.

### About the director of BU CARES

Dr. Michelle Lam is the Director of BU CARES and a member of the Curriculum and Pedagogy department in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Prior to entering academia, she was an English as an Additional Language teacher in Canada and abroad. She is interested in education for anti-racism, equity, and the potentials of community-based education.

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### Keywords

Education research, Indigenous research, rural education, participatory research, community-based research

### Publications

To learn more about research at BU CARES or our recent publications, please visit [www.bucares.ca](http://www.bucares.ca).

### Podcasts

Our podcasts connect university researchers with community members. Join Drs. Jackie Kirk and Michelle Lam, in their podcasts [Leaning In And Speaking Out](#).

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