

[Dr. Sean Lessard is Recipient of CEA Pat Clifford Award](#)

Congratulations to Dr. Sean Lessard, the recipient of the Canadian Education Association Pat Clifford Award for Early Career Research. Dean Tupper says, "This is a significant honour and Sean is most deserving! In the three years he has been with the Faculty of Education, he has established a tremendous program of research committed to improving the lives and experiences of Aboriginal learners, families, and communities."

Reposted from <http://www.cea-ace.ca/awards/clifford-award>

2015 CEA Pat Clifford Award Winner: Teaching Sideways To Shift The Stories

Dr. Sean Lessard's research into the effects of school and urban living on Indigenous students' identities has the potential to reshape the way curricula, pedagogy and policy are developed to increase their success.



Dr. Sean Lessard Photo

courtesy of CEA

CEA is proud to recognize Dr. Sean Lessard – Assistant Professor of Indigenous Education and Core Studies at the University of Regina’s Faculty of Education – as the recipient of its 2015 Pat Clifford Award for Early Career Research in Education for his work in redefining the ways in which Indigenous learners and their teachers can engage in traditional and non-traditional educational spaces.

[Read this Q&A with Sean Lessard](#)

Dr. Lessard’s home community is the Montreal Lake Cree Nation of Northern Saskatchewan, but a non-Aboriginal rural family in North Battleford adopted him as a child. Frequent trips between both worlds allowed him to develop strong attachments to both communities, which shaped his sense of self. He came to realize that there isn’t one singular story of identity, which now makes up the heart of his research.

Dr. Lessard unpacks his personal experiences of place by teaching “sideways”, or narratively, using inquiry to provoke dialogue and counteract the strong stereotypes of Indigenous peoples that exist among many young teacher- candidates.

As co-founder of the [Growing Young Movers Youth Program](#), Dr. Lessard is working alongside community as a pedagogical space. This program forms an inter-generational living space in North-Central Regina, integrating the teachings of Indigenous families and Elders to deliver wellness activities outside of school for Indigenous youth – many of whom are transitioning from Treaty home communities and experiencing many institutional challenges and barriers as they adjust to urban living. Six Indigenous high school students serve as mentors to the younger students while Dr. Lessard’s teacher-candidates challenge their assumptions and contribute their observations to the ongoing research each week during the school year. Changes made from their findings include the use of different

teaching spaces and physical movement activities to foster an environment of positivity and inclusion.

Dr. Lessard is building an impressive research agenda that aims to support classroom teachers in pedagogical considerations of what it means to engage meaningfully in fostering success for Indigenous learners with significant socio-economic and socio-cultural challenges in formal and informal learning spaces. His work has the potential to transform education for Indigenous learners in Canada and internationally.

About the Pat Clifford Award

This Award is named after Dr. Pat Clifford, one of the co-founders of [The Galileo Educational Network](#). Pat had an extensive teaching background from primary through graduate level, and was the recipient of numerous awards for both research and teaching practice. Pat passed away in August of 2008 but she left a gift to us in her teaching, scholarly writing, poetry and stories.

The recognition

- Formal recognition of your research at a public, education-related event.
- Opportunities for you to develop additional knowledge mobilization strategies with CEA to maximize the impact of your work in the policy and practice fields.
- An invitation for you to submit a feature article about your research to be published in [Education Canada magazine](#).