

Margaret Haughey Master's Award Committee, 2021

The results are in and we have a winner for CASEA's Margaret Haughey Award: Kathryn Desrochers (Kathryn.desrochers@uleth.ca).

Kathryn's thesis was titled: *Rural Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Practices Influencing Efficacy*.

Her supervisors were:

Dr. Carmen Mombourquette and Dr. Pamela Adams, University of Lethbridge.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee who adjudicated this award:

Dr. Elaine Fournier (University of Western Ontario)

Dr. Louise Clement (University of Laval)

Dr. Joelle Rodway (Memorial University)

Warmest regards

Don

Chair, Margaret Haughey Master's Award Committee



Kathryn Desrochers

Winner of CASEA's Margaret Haughey Master's Thesis Award 2020.

Thesis Title: Rural Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Practices Influencing Efficacy

Teacher efficacy and resilience have been shown as influential in educational change, teacher retention, and achieving student outcomes. Given the connections between teacher efficacy and resilience with positive school and student-based outcomes, this study aimed to begin to develop a greater understanding of factors contributing to and influencing teacher efficacy. More specifically, this study sought to gain insights into leadership practices that highly efficacious teachers perceived to impact their effectiveness. Highly efficacious teachers were determined based upon the use of the Desrochers Efficacy Scale (DES) which utilized the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) to inform the relevant domains of practice. The administration of the DES in a rural school division in Alberta led to the identification of nine self-identified highly efficacious teachers. The nine were interviewed about their experiences and perceptions pertaining to past and current leadership. Interview data were analyzed using a phenomenological thematic approach. Four main themes were emerged including: contextual variables impacting efficacy; social and emotional supports perceived to impact efficacy; feelings of efficaciousness; and leadership characteristics valued by highly efficacious teachers. Findings revealed the importance of relationships, collective responsibility, clear direction, positive reinforcement, investment, communication, learning, and feeling part of a team. Recommendations outlined key leadership characteristics and practices that may influence teacher efficacy, including: developing strong personal relationships; being visible and present to remain connected to classroom practices and pedagogy; cultivating trust; utilizing strong communication skills to support and guide teachers, as well as set direction and expectations; effective and responsive instructional leadership; and providing structures to support teacher collaboration.