

## Co-Authorship Trends in Philosophy of Education Journals in the US and Canada

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Résumé de l'article

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# Co-Authorship Trends in Philosophy of Education Journals in the US and Canada

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*A variety of epistemic practices and norms influence how knowledge and understanding are advanced in academia. Co-authorship practices and norms, the focus of this paper, have implications for the epistemic resources that are brought into individual scholarly works and how the resources are distributed among networks over time. Although co-authorship is widely accepted in social scientific research in education, single authorship has remained predominant in philosophy of education. This paper is part of a project exploring co-authorship practices and norms in philosophy and, in particular, philosophy of education. We aim to develop an empirical understanding of co-authorship trends in four primary philosophy of education journals in the United States and Canada. We examine the frequency of co-authorship in these outlets over the last two decades, the participants in co-authored projects, and the philosophical topics that are being explored through co-authorship. Our findings indicate that these venues are publishing co-authored works with increasing frequency and that most co-authorship is happening among faculty collaborators and among scholars who share common disciplinary backgrounds. The observed increase in the practice of co-authorship in these philosophy of education journals points to the significance of exploring it in greater depth, including giving attention to questions of ethics and epistemology that co-authorship raises, as well as to comparative analyses of trends around the world.*

## Introduction

Academic disciplines share a fundamental aim of advancing knowledge and understanding. A variety of epistemic practices and norms within and across disciplines influence how this aim is pursued, and many of them involve collaboration with other scholars and their ideas. The ways that scholars approach authorship and co-authorship, citation of prior work within and across disciplines, and formal and informal peer review, to name a few examples, impact both the types of questions that are explored and elevated within scholarly communities and the ways in which those questions are examined. Among formal kinds of collaboration, co-authorship practices and norms have implications for the epistemic resources that are brought into individual scholarly works and how the resources are distributed among networks over time. Although co-authorship is widely accepted in social scientific research in education, single authorship has remained predominant in philosophy of education. In recent years, opportunities

for collaborative authorship appear to be increasing in philosophy of education, yet analyses of these trends remain scarce. We are thus motivated to examine the landscape of co-authorship and consider some specific tensions in the dynamics of co-authoring philosophical scholarship.

This paper is part of a project exploring co-authorship practices and norms in philosophy and, in particular, philosophy of education. The broader project aims to understand current practices and norms, to advance an argument for elevating the academic standing of co-authorship given its intellectual and professional benefits, and to identify strategies for advancing co-authorship in ways that are responsive to issues of power and the risks of inequity that may arise.<sup>1</sup> The argument is grounded in some basic tenets of feminist epistemology, namely the situatedness of knowers (Dotson, 2014; Haraway, 1988; Pohlhaus, 2012), in which their claims are partial, provisional, and subject to revision over time (Longino, 2008); and, relatedly, the epistemic interdependence among researchers, sources, and other tools for inquiry that are required for scholarship (Anderson, 1995; Code, 2020).

In this paper, we focus on the first descriptive aim as we begin to develop an empirical understanding of co-authorship trends in philosophy of education in the United States and Canada. First, we motivate our interest in this topic by contextualizing what co-authorship is and why it matters as an epistemic practice. We then review existing literature on co-authorship trends to ground the need for further empirical inquiry. Next, we present our study of co-authorship trends over the past two decades in four philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada. The study addresses the following research questions:

- Has the frequency of co-authorship in four primary philosophy of education journals published in the US and Canada changed over the last two decades?
- Who is engaging in co-authorship?
- What philosophical topics are being explored through co-authorship?

We then discuss our findings, which reveal growth in co-authorship over the examined period, with a focus on further empirical and philosophical questions raised. In particular, we identify opportunities to use our findings to guide further empirical investigation of co-authorship in the US and Canada, as well as opportunities to develop comparative analyses of practices in philosophy of education in other regions globally. We also point to the need for more attention to the philosophy of collaborative authorship, including ethical and epistemological questions about the potential benefits of co-authorship. By exploring co-authorship trends in the US and Canada in recent decades, we hope to prompt deeper empirical and philosophical exploration of purposes, practices, and norms of co-authorship among philosophers of education.

## **Contextualizing Co-Authorship as an Epistemic Practice in Academia**

In order to contextualize our empirical analysis of co-authorship in philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada, we begin in this section by providing insight into (1) accounts of epistemic interdependence and collaboration, and (2) the nature of authorship and potential benefits of co-authorship. Then, in the next section, we review prior empirical studies of co-authorship trends and the ways that concerns about power, representation, and ethical collaboration through co-authorship have arisen in the empirical evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> A draft paper focused on the latter two components was presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in 2023.

### ***Epistemic Interdependence and Collaboration***

Here, we begin by introducing the feminist epistemological grounding of knowledge production that motivates our interest in collaboration generally and co-authorship practices in particular. First, scholarship requires epistemic interdependence, in which every project draws from existing literature, ideas, and voices of scholars in a given field, whether through formal or informal means (Anderson, 1995). Drawing on feminist epistemological accounts, we understand the knowledge produced through scholarship as situated, partial, provisional, and plural, in which one's situated position is tied to one's knowledge claims, and such claims are limited by virtue of one's partial perspective, subject to revision over time, and likely to coexist with other competing claims (Longino, 2008; Dotson, 2014). And finally, when one makes claims to knowledge, one takes responsibility for those claims (Code, 2020). That is, the process of knowledge production is not merely epistemic, but also ethical and political. With this social understanding of knowledge production, the importance of collaboration to scholarship becomes central.

The ways that individuals collaborate can affect the epistemic authority of their work, the development and spread of ideas, and the very nature of shared learning within an intellectual community. Working together to improve collaborative practices in the pursuit of knowledge is of vital importance to any community dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. And in order to improve scholarly collaboration, it is important to understand current collaborative practices. Collaboration can take many forms. Scholars offer each other feedback on projects at various stages of development, from the initial conception through to peer review; they reference each other's work through formal citations and acknowledgements; and they take a variety of approaches to writing together, to name a few examples.

In addition to authorship practices, which will be our focus, it is important to note that scholars have examined a number of topics related to publishing norms and practices, including citation and peer review. Regarding peer review, scholars have advanced a number of radical positions on this scholarly practice. In philosophy of science, Heesen and Bright (2021) argued that it should be abolished in science journals because it creates poor incentives for research production. Berg (2001) critiqued the anonymous and double-anonymous approaches to peer review, which arguably advance masculinist views of objectivity by ignoring the situatedness of authors. In our own subfield, scholars have conducted empirical studies on citation practices in philosophy of education journals, noting that the majority of citations are sourced from outside of these journals, which limits the possibilities for direct engagement with our colleagues' work (Frank & Rukki, 2016; Hayden, 2012). This concern about lack of scholarly discourse is also considered among philosophers and educators, whose discourses and methodologies are often difficult to bridge (Arcilla, 2002; Fenstermacher, 2002). In addition to examining peer review and citation practices, considerable attention has been paid to authorship and co-authorship practices in various fields, though with limited evidence about practices within philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada.

In order to ground our interest in exploring co-authorship in particular, we next review some accounts of the nature of authorship as well as distinctions between various forms, including co-authorship, multiple authorship, and collective writing.

### ***The Nature of Authorship and Potential Benefits of Co-Authorship***

Scholars have reflected on the very idea of the author – not only as a legal status attributing one's intellectual property, but also as an ontological position from or through which one conveys ideas. As a matter of intellectual property, scholars have traced the historical contingencies linking knowledge production and dissemination to proprietary authorship, particularly as texts could be made widely available through mass printing (Rose, 1993; McGill, 2013; Willinsky, 2017). Ventimiglia (2018), whose research focuses on religious texts, argues that this legal grounding of intellectual property has raised concerns about authorial control over a given text, its meaning, and its circulation.

As a matter of ontological foundations, postmodernist scholars opened discussion about the instability of authorial function and intent (Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1998). Specifically as these arguments relate to our project, scholars, particularly in aesthetics, have debated conceptions of co-authorship. They have defined it in such ways as joint authorship that is uncoerced and cooperative among authors with shared intentions (Livingston, 2011), collective intentional action among actors that causes a text (Sellors, 2007), and a more middling position that requires reasonable coordination among members of a group working together as a body (Bacharach & Tollefson, 2010). Based on these competing definitions, debates have continued to distinguish co-authorship from multiple authorship, which have different implications for coordination as well as the responsibility that authors take for the text (Bacharach & Tollefson, 2015; Hick, 2014). Bacharach and Tollefson (2010) identify the distinction between co-authorship and multiple authorship as hinging on the level of coordination among the authors. Hick (2014), in contrast, argues that co-authorship involves all authors taking responsibility for the whole of a work, whereas in multiple authorship each author takes responsibility for only their contribution to the whole.

In philosophical scholarship, the attributions of both intellectual property and ontological position can influence the norms and practices of the field. Even as scholars articulate their ideas from situated positions, their claims to the ownership of those ideas do not imply their control over those ideas' interpretation, use, or reapplication. This concern over downstream effects can be relevant to all disciplines, but it is especially relevant in conceptual and analytic inquiry in which the ideas can be cited or addressed with a sense that they are independent from their particular expression in a given argument. That is to say, readers can engage with the argument as it stands, whatever their assumptions about the author(s) and their intent. Further, the debates in aesthetics about the nature of co-authorship challenge us to consider what it is to write in one unified philosophical voice or multiply coordinated philosophical voices – especially as building the argument involves dialectical exchange, and the written argument is meant to capture the variety of intuitions, reasons, interpretations, and conclusions.<sup>2</sup>

In our view, exploring these possibilities for collaborative authorship, and co-authorship in particular, can be very beneficial to the field of philosophy of education, even as those benefits introduce some risks around collaborating fairly and inclusively. While these arguments are not the centre of this paper, we offer a brief overview here to help ground our interest in the current empirical study, which aims to understand co-authorship practices in philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada over the past two decades. First, we note that in an area that has traditionally been dominated by White scholars, and men in particular, and that remains predominantly White today, co-authorship can be one way to increase the representation of scholars who hold identities that have been marginalized in the field.<sup>3</sup> However, pursuing co-authorship as a means to expand scholarly representation in the field also raises questions about who benefits from this process. When minoritized voices (whether with respect to identity or to intellectual views) are included in academic collaborations, they still tend to be disadvantaged or marginalized relative to the more powerful majority voices (O'Connor & Bruner, 2019). This imbalance risks allowing voices with more power to have their ideas overrepresented or to receive more credit than their collaborators (reflected, for example, in authorship order or invitations to present on the topic). People from traditionally marginalized backgrounds can come to be disadvantaged in group collaborations by virtue of numbers and power dynamics. It is important to recognize this potential for inequity within efforts to secure the possible benefits of representation of co-authorship.

A second and related set of potential benefits of co-authorship concern strengthening the epistemic authority and value of work in the field. Considering epistemic authority, when authors are differently situated but collectively endorse an idea, we might think that the case they make is more epistemically

<sup>2</sup> We thank our colleague Winston Thompson for noting the distinction between the ideas and the expression of those ideas in a given published work, in which the latter more directly considers the situatedness of authors.

<sup>3</sup> In this paper, we follow the style guide of the National Association of Black Journalists in capitalizing colours whenever they are used to describe race.

valuable (not necessarily more true or more justified).<sup>4</sup> Co-authors bring distinct academic expertise and unique social positions which combine to bear in important ways on philosophical work pertaining to education, particularly regarding questions of social, political, and ethical import. Debates in feminist epistemology have considered the ways in which one's epistemic advantage may be grounded in experiences of oppression (Alcoff, 1999; Collins, 1986; Dror, 2022). Collaborations with authors who have experienced various forms of oppression may add epistemic authority to a given account or normative argument, especially those advancing justice in educational contexts. Such collaborations are important for developing ethical and accurate scholarship, as well as for individuals and groups of scholars who have been systematically marginalized or silenced in the academy. Co-authorship in philosophy also creates opportunities to develop novel insights within and across disciplinary subfields, allowing for greater crossover of research interests and potential for new intersections of philosophical thought. However, it is important to note that expanding co-authorship in a field that has traditionally prized single authorship grounded in decontextualized conceptions of authorship requires a deeper structural shift in how knowledge is verified and legitimated.

Finally, co-authorship has the potential to yield interpersonal benefits that redound to the field as a whole, including fostering intellectual friendship and mentorship. The expansion of co-authorship could facilitate collaborations across academic generations, in which mentors co-author with mentees to help them learn about scholarly production. Empirical evidence suggests that those who were mentored are more likely to become mentors themselves, as they have clear models for how it works and they recognize the benefits of the process (Johnson, 2016). Co-authorship could thus yield benefits both to mentees as co-authors and to their future mentees seeking to understand and contribute to their field. Here, again, some caveats are in order. One risk involves the unequal distribution of mentoring opportunities in the academy.<sup>5</sup> Evidence shows that mentoring relationships tend to form when mentors prioritize either “rising stars” or “academic cloning” (Johnson, 2016, p. 40). With the former, mentors tend to favour the students who perform well, especially early in the program experience – which unevenly rewards those who are already trained or acclimated to the academic climate of graduate school. And with the latter, mentors tend to select mentees who mirror them, which may be because they want to prioritize their own research interests, to nurture networks of “like-minded” scholars, or to retain influence through a “self-made” community in the broader field. Another risk is in the dynamics of mentoring relationships themselves, where more junior colleagues may be subject to exploitation of their labour and to the underrepresentation of their intellectual contributions. It is important for those pursuing co-authorship, particularly in mentoring relationships, to be cognizant of these risks.

In order to mitigate the challenges that may arise in securing each of these potential benefits of co-authorship, philosophers of education will need to address both informal norms and formal policies, which will inevitably be a slow process and one in which they will encounter resistance. It is our view that this work is valuable and worth advancing and that it calls on us to understand more about trends in current practices. In this study, we aim to provide one step in building out a fuller understanding of co-authorship as a form of collaboration within philosophy of education.

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<sup>4</sup> We thank our colleague Valerie Soon for raising this point that there might be unique epistemic value for collectively authored works, though this value would not suggest that those works offer greater truth or stronger justification than single-authored works.

<sup>5</sup> We thank Harry Brighouse for articulating this problem in a forthcoming manuscript.

## Evidence on Collaborative Authorship Trends

### *Collaborative Authorship Trends Across Disciplines*

The theoretical debates discussed above, which introduce concerns about ownership, interpretation, responsibility, and coordination among authors, raise empirical questions about current practices. Many studies have tracked co-authorship trends in various fields. In within- and cross-discipline analyses, Cronin et al. (2003) examined co-authorship and subauthorship (represented in acknowledgements) in psychology and philosophy across the 20th century through an analysis of articles published in two journals: *Psychological Review* and *Mind*. Over the 100-year period examined, 74% of papers in the former and 98% in the latter were single authored (Cronin et al., 2003). Moreover, the rate of co-authorship in psychology increased over the century, becoming the norm by the 1980s (Cronin et al., 2003). Elsewhere, analyzing nearly 80 years of data starting in 1940, Wang et al. (2021) found that philosophy articles had among the lowest average number of authors of 19 fields of study examined.

Henriksen (2016) tracked the increase in co-authorship in the social sciences over a period of 34 years, from 1980 to 2013, across 4.5 million peer-reviewed articles. He noted that the increase has occurred not just as the result of greater international collaboration, but with some variation across different subject categories of social science, particularly when studies include very large data sets and complicated experiments. In both scientific and social scientific research, there is a greater need for collaboration among researchers given the complexity of research studies, involving multiple areas of expertise to complete a study (Kumar, 2018).

Although there has been less analysis of co-authorship trends in the humanities disciplines, Leane et al. (2019) explore these practices in English literary studies. They suggest that this discipline is especially entrenched in celebrating the sole author, and proceed to track authorship trends at five-year intervals between 1995 and 2015 for a representative sample of 51,192 articles from the MLA International Bibliography. Overall, they find that co-authorship accounts for only 4% of publications, though there has been a slight increase over the period. Some studies have examined co-authorship in the humanities in specific geographical areas (e.g., Ossenblok et al., 2014, focusing on Flanders).

Within philosophy of education, attention to collaborative authorship practices is a more recent area of interest. In addition to longstanding practices, such as hosting workshops in which scholars share their work in progress and discuss common themes across their independent scholarship, as well as attending symposia organized by various journals and professional societies, more opportunities for formal co-authorship and multiple authorship appear to be arising. *Educational Philosophy & Theory*, published by the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA), has been a leader in recent years in developing “collective writing,” in which multiple authors contribute short (often 500-word) pieces on a theme which are compiled into one collective piece (e.g., Arndt et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2016; Peters et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2021a; Peters et al., 2021b; Peters et al., 2022a; Peters et al., 2022b; Tesar et al., 2021). Growing out of the Editors Collective (a New Zealand-based group of editors and reviewers from journals in education and philosophy), this initiative marks a novel approach to collaborative writing that blurs the boundaries between co-authorship in which all authors share responsibility for all components of a piece of work, and multiple authorship in which individual subcomponents of the overall work are attributed to individual authors (Jandrić et al., 2021). Within these collective writing projects, further questions emerge around the extent of co-authorship within the various contributions to one collective piece and the forms of collaboration across authors that take place in the development of a piece of collective writing (Jandrić et al., 2021; Peters et al., 2022c). And beyond the collective writing work of PESA, philosophy of education scholars around the globe may have increasing opportunities to engage in co-authorship that involves multiple scholars jointly developing a work and taking shared responsibility for it in its entirety. However, the prevalence of these various forms of collaborative authorship in the field have not been measured, to our knowledge.

### ***Representation, Power, and Ethical Co-Authorship***

As noted above in our discussion of the potential benefits of co-authorship, there are also potential risks. Regardless of discipline or topic of study, co-authorship is not a neutral collaboration. Attending to these risks and benefits is especially interesting in disciplines like philosophy, in which there is not strong precedent for the division of labour throughout the research process. Empirical studies of co-authorship have also examined trends in co-author roles across various axes of representation. First, researchers have examined the prevalence of co-authorship among faculty and doctoral students in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) (Maher et al., 2013). Differences in mentoring relationships across disciplines have been cited as a potential reason for variation in co-authorship rates (Babchuk et al., 1999). Discussion of mentor–student co-authored works at times assumes that the student lacks the knowledge or skills to publish independently (Maher et al., 2013). In some fields, including philosophy, sole authorship remains as an indicator of authority and credibility (Biesta, 2011; Cronin et al., 2003).

Turning to authors' identity characteristics, a number of studies of authorship and co-authorship have examined gender representation within and across disciplines. For example, Wang et al. (2021) studied gender trends in computer science scholarship, projecting that gender parity in the field will not be achieved until after 2100. Zettler et al. (2017) tracked gender-based authorship trends in the top 15 criminology and criminal justice journals over a 40-year period, between 1974 and 2014. They noted that, when it came to representation by women, although there was a slight increase in representation as sole and first authors, the statistics still show under-representation: 26.6% of sole authors were women, and 33.3% of first authors were women. Examining race and publishing in sociology, Hermanowicz and Clayton (2020) compared trends in co-authorship by examining faculty CVs and found that White and Asian scholars were significantly more likely to co-author journal articles than their Black/African American and Latine counterparts. They identified cultural and structural reasons for these differences, including that Black and Latine scholars were more likely to identify as qualitative researchers, who are less likely on average to co-author across racial/ethnic identity categories (Hermanowicz & Clayton, 2020).

Expanding on the implications of these inequalities, scholars have argued that academic culture and norms themselves present challenges to equitable scholarly collaboration. For example, Bain and Payne (2016), working in queer and feminist studies, critiqued the “academic capitalist cultural economy” (p. 334) in which knowledge production occurs, describing the persistent challenges such an economy creates for marginalized identities in academia. While scholarship in these research areas often promotes the benefits of co-authorship, Nagar (2013) also noted the importance of cultivating trust among collaborators, particularly through shared acknowledgement of the complexities of identity, representation, and political imagination. In another dimension of critique, Kumar (2018) noticed that increasingly in scientific research, co-authorship has been treated as a reliable proxy for tracking research collaborations more generally. However, different disciplines have different thresholds for contributions to research projects that warrant the status of authorship. This sometimes leads to tensions around authorship order, and in some cases to “honorary” or “ghost” authorship in which no significant contribution is made by named authors. Kumar emphasized this “significant contribution” criterion but recognized the complexities in developing solutions, noting one possibility of creating a “contributor role taxonomy” to determine authorship contributions and order, proposed by Brand et al. (2015). In light of some of these trends, scholars have raised concerns about collaborations among authors in which power dynamics can influence research processes and products. Bruner and O'Connor (2016) considered how the division of labour among authors might systematically disadvantage certain groups, especially given the hierarchical nature of academia and the unequal representation of identities in particular fields. And as we noted above, when some groups remain systematically disadvantaged, this can have additionally negative effects on epistemic communities (O'Connor & Bruner, 2019).

Because philosophy of education draws norms from both philosophy and social science, we have collected a set of accounts and critiques of co-authorship that reflect that variation in expectations across



the disciplines. For some disciplines, there is a much longer precedent for collaboration – in science, for example, the majority of work is co-authored (Morrison et al., 2003). However, the concerns about power difference and discrimination remain relevant to academia more broadly and should inform efforts to expand co-authorship in philosophy of education.

## Data and Methods

The considerations in the previous two sections frame our inquiry into co-authorship trends in philosophy of education in this paper. First, the distinctions between various conceptions of co-authorship, multiple authorship, and collective writing are important, and their application warrants deeper consideration in philosophy of education. With regards to these distinctions, our scope in the current study is modest, focusing on co-authorship in particular and on publication trends in the US and Canada. We aim to provide evidence of trends in one form of collaborative authorship within primary philosophy of education journals published within one geographic area over a 20-year period. We note that there are many ways to define the boundaries of a community of inquiry and that these boundaries are porous. Our hope is that examining journals in a particular geographic region will be of interest to scholars who publish in these venues and will provide a foundation of evidence that can be expanded upon in future studies, including comparative analyses of trends within philosophy of education globally. In response to limited studies on co-authorship trends in philosophy and the even less attention paid to philosophy of education in particular, we chose to analyze descriptive trends over a 20-year period. We explored representation in co-authored work by examining co-authors' roles (e.g., faculty, student, practitioner). We do not report gender and race/ethnicity trends because this information is not consistently available in philosophy of education articles. Finally, we examined trends in the disciplinary perspectives of co-authors (e.g., philosophy, social science) and the topics explored in co-authored works as windows into the content of collaborative co-authored work in the field.

The dataset for this study was drawn from four philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada: *Educational Theory* (ET), *Philosophical Inquiry in Education* (PIE) (formerly *Paidensis*), *Studies in Philosophy and Education* (SPE), and *Theory and Research in Education* (TRE). We selected these journals because they are the primary outlets in this region dedicated to publishing a broad array of work in philosophy of education. Data were gathered from each journal's website. All issues published in these journals over the 20-year period from 2003 to 2022 were included. ET, SPE, and TRE published issues in all years in this period. PIE/*Paidensis* published issues from 2006 to 2010 (inclusive) and from 2012 to 2022 (inclusive). Within each issue, all substantive peer-reviewed original articles were included in the dataset, as well as introductions to symposia or special issues that offered a substantive contribution beyond summary content.<sup>6</sup> We also excluded afterwords, errata, issue information, editorials, and book reviews. Any article with two or more authors was coded as a co-authored work. Applying these criteria, the dataset included 2,087 articles, of which 403 (19.3%) were co-authored, with the other 1,684 (80.7%) being single authored.

For all included co-authored articles, we collected article titles, author names, author bios, keywords, and abstracts wherever available. Articles were sorted into three nested categories: co-authored articles, co-authored symposium or special issue articles, and introductory articles for symposia/special issues to facilitate comparison of co-authorship rates generally and within special issues in particular. We calculated co-authorship rates as a percentage of all included articles meeting the inclusion criteria for each journal each year from 2003 to 2022, as well as aggregated rates over the full period by journal and in total. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between co-authorship rate and year, and to determine whether co-authorship rates changed in a statistically significant way over

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<sup>6</sup> *Educational Theory* uses "symposia" which include full issues on a theme, as well as smaller sets of articles on a theme within an issue that includes other non-thematic content as well.

the focal period. We also used a one-way ANOVA test to compare co-authorship rates among journals and used an independent t-test to compare the average number of co-authored articles appearing in special issues/symposia and standard issues.

To analyze author roles and disciplinary areas, we used biographical statements included within the published articles wherever available. Of the 403 total co-authored papers, 262 included author bios. Further biographical data were collected, if deemed necessary, in the following order: faculty and staff information on the official websites of academic institutions (or the relevant institutions for the authors outside academia), biographical data included in other publications by the same author, and professional social network services (e.g., ResearchGate, LinkedIn). Priority was ascribed according to this order of data collection, and in cases of conflicts between collected data, the former data point was assigned priority. The date of publication was also considered so that changes in biographical information after the publication would not be represented. Using this data, we coded all authors of co-authored articles by role: faculty (F), graduate student (G), postdoctoral researcher (Post), practitioner (Prac), and other. Additionally, we coded each author's primary research area into one of the following categories: philosophy or philosophy of education (P), social science or social science of education (S), other humanities (H), and other. Authors were coded into only one category for role and primary research area.

We also coded co-authored articles according to topic area using their titles, abstracts, and keywords. First, we examined keyword frequencies within the data. We then generated a list of subareas in the field, cross-referenced for alignment with common keywords, and refined the list of codes. Through this process, we developed a list of 13 topical categories, including both branches of philosophical inquiry and topics of particular relevance within education scholarship, that we then applied to the co-authored articles. The categories included continental philosophy; decolonial and postcolonial theory; education policy; epistemology; equity, diversity, and inclusion; ethics and moral philosophy; feminist philosophy; history of philosophy; methods in philosophy of education; philosophy for children; philosophy of race; political philosophy; and teaching, learning, and pedagogy. Articles were coded into as many categories as applied. For example, Gary and Chambers's 2021 article in *Educational Theory*, "Cultivating Moral Epiphanies," was coded as ethics (as it studies moral epiphanies and their ethical usage); continental philosophy (the authors draw from continental philosophers); and teaching, learning, and pedagogy (the article suggests theoretical or practical strategies for teaching and learning).

For the author and topic coding, after generating a codebook, we undertook an initial round of coding in which two of the authors reviewed 30 of the co-authored articles. We then discussed questions that arose, made minimal revisions to the codebook, and clarified how to apply the codes consistently. Then, one author coded the remaining articles. After this round of coding was complete, we again met to discuss a small number of articles in which questions arose. Once all coding was finished, we reviewed frequencies across these categories and trends among author groups.

## Findings

We present our findings about co-authorship trends in these four philosophy of education journals from the US and Canada in three sections: (1) overall trends in frequency; (2) characteristics of those engaging in co-authorship, including their professional roles and primary disciplinary areas; and (3) the topics explored in the co-authored articles.

### *Frequency of Co-Authorship*

Addressing our first research question regarding changes in the frequency of co-authorship in philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada over the last two decades, we first report on the frequency of co-authorship and trends over time. Out of 2,087 articles that were published between 2003 and 2022 in ET, PIE, SPE, and TRE, 19.3% (n = 403) were co-authored articles. The majority of co-authorship

(77.9%,  $n = 314$ ) comprised collaboration between two authors, followed by three (14.4%,  $n = 58$ ) and four or more authors (7.7%,  $n = 31$ ). Figure 1 shows the total number of articles and total number of co-authored articles that were published each year across the four journals, indicating an increase in total number of articles published over the period. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the year and the proportion of co-authored articles. There was a positive correlation between the two variables,  $r(18) = 0.521$ ,  $p = 0.019$ . This indicates a moderate positive correlation that is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, meaning that co-authorship rates in these journals generally increased in the period from 2003 to 2022.

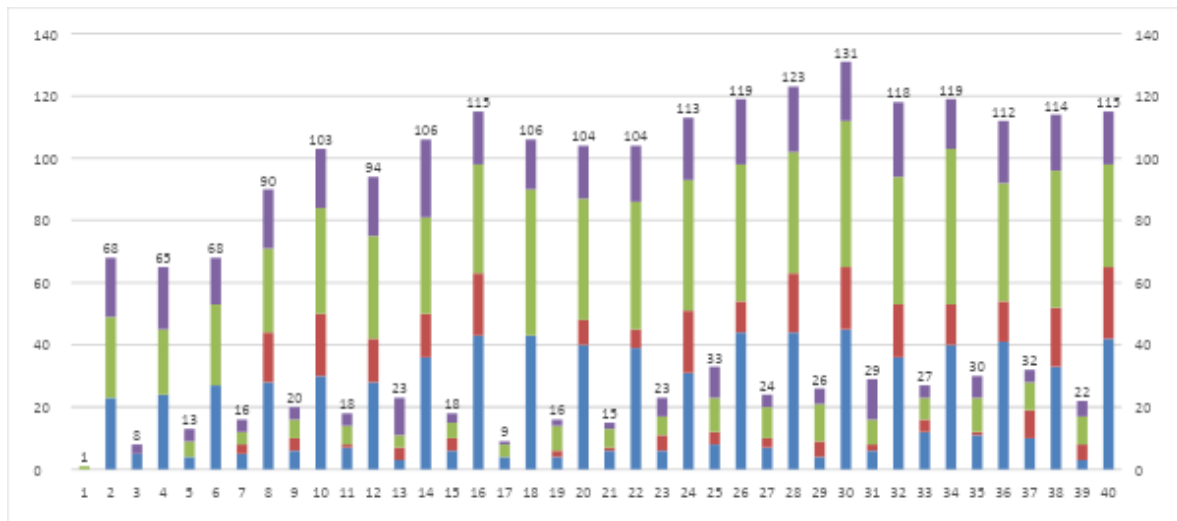


Figure 1. Number of Co-Authored Articles and Total Articles Published per Year

At the journal level, the proportion of co-authorship varied, with ET publishing the lowest proportion of co-authored articles (16.3%) and TRE publishing the highest (25.5%) over the included period (see Table 1). A one-way ANOVA test revealed that the differences in co-authorship rates over time between journals were statistically significant,  $F(3, 72) = 2.84$ ,  $p = 0.044$ . Figure 2 shows the trend in co-authorship rates by journal and overall. This figure shows variability both within and across journals. The solid black line shows the aggregated trend in co-authorship rates across all four journals over the time period.

Journal	Total	Co-Authored	Proportion	Avg # Authors
ET	717	117	16.3%	2.20
PIE	252	57	22.6%	2.33
SPE	738	132	17.9%	2.33
TRE	380	97	25.5%	2.36
Total	2,087	403	19.3%	2.32

Table 1. Co-Authorship Rates by Journal

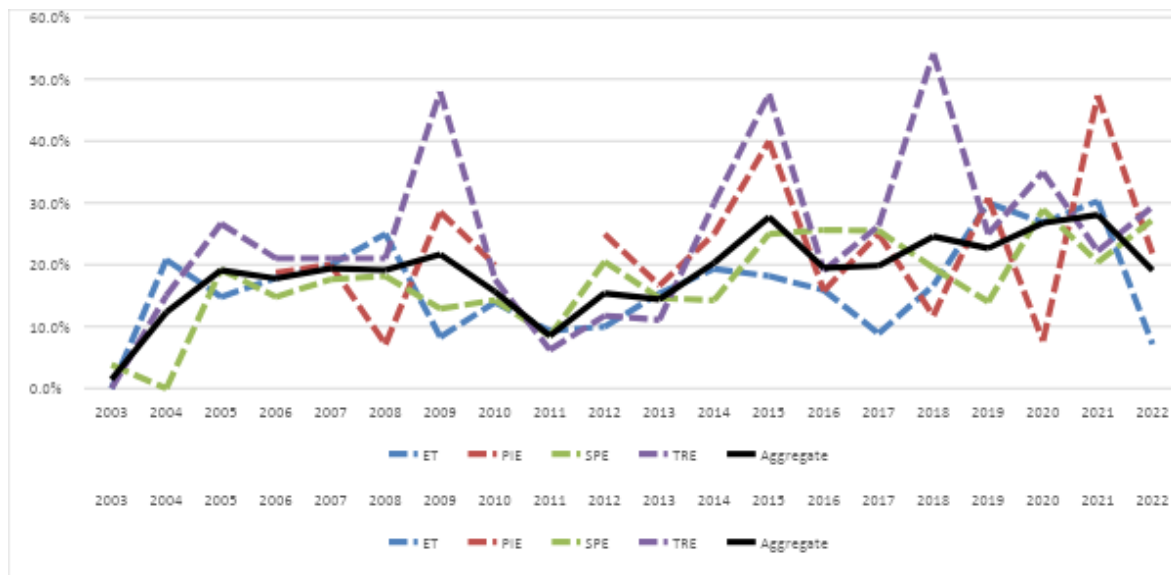


Figure 2. Co-Authorship Rates by Year

We also compared the rate of co-authorship within special issues and symposia (including book symposia) to that of standard issues. Of the 403 co-authored articles, 57.1% ( $n = 230$ ) appeared within special issues and symposia. Of these, 47 were introductory articles for the symposium or special issue. At the issue level, 314 issues were published in these four journals during the 2003 to 2022 period. Of the published issues, 45.5% ( $n = 143$ ) were either a special issue or an issue that contained a themed symposium or book symposium. Special issues and symposia included on average 1.36 co-authored articles. In comparison, standard issues ( $n = 171$ ) contained an average of 1.01 co-authored articles. We compared the co-authorship rates between these two groups statistically using a t-test.<sup>7</sup> The 143 special issues and symposia demonstrated significantly higher numbers of co-authored articles than the 171 standard issues,  $t(312) = -2.49$ ,  $p = 0.007$ . This test indicates a statistically significant difference in the number of co-authored papers in special issues and symposia compared to regular issues.

### *Professional Roles of Co-Authors*

With regards to our second research question, who is engaging in co-authorship, we examined the professional roles and primary disciplinary areas of co-authors in the dataset. We found that most co-authorship occurs inside academia (see table 2): faculty–faculty groups accounted for more than half of total co-authorship (57.1%), followed by faculty–grad student groups (20.1%) and faculty–postdoctoral researcher groups (6.0%). Collaboration between scholars and educational practitioners outside academia, which included CEOs and management-level employees in education enterprises, corporate editors, governmental consultants, and youth counsellors, accounted for 5.1% of total co-authorship.

<sup>7</sup> Although the data was not normally distributed, the sample sizes were sufficiently large to make a t-test appropriate. See Sainani (2012).

Roles	Frequency	%
F–F	230	57.1%
F–G	81	20.1%
F–Post	24	6.0%
F–Prac	17	4.2%
F–G–Post	3	0.7%
Post–Post	3	0.7%
F–G–Prac	3	0.7%
G–G	2	0.5%
G–Prac	2	0.5%
G–Post	1	0.2%
Post–Prac	0	0.0%
Prac–Prac	0	0.0%
Other	37	9.2%

Table 2. Frequency of Co-Author Role Groupings

We also looked at the frequency of co-authorship among different disciplinary pairings, categorizing authors' primary areas as philosophy or philosophy of education (P), social science or social science of education (S), other humanities (H), and other (for practitioners, natural scientists, and authors who provided insufficient data to determine their primary area). As shown in table 3, we found that philosopher–philosopher groups (P–P) accounted for about half (48.6%) of total co-authorship, followed by social science–social science groups (S–S) (19.1%) and philosophy–social science groups (P–S) (13.6%). “Other” primarily included non-academic practitioners and undergraduate students, as well as cases in which the data were insufficient to determine the author's research area. Aggregating cross-discipline collaborations, we found that in aggregate P–S, P–H, S–H, and P–S–H groups accounted for 22.1% of all co-authorship.

Areas	Frequency	%
P–P	196	48.6%
S–S	77	19.1%
P–S	55	13.6%
P–H	15	3.7%
S–H	7	1.7%
P–S–H	12	3.0%
H–H	4	1.0%
Other	37	14.3%

Table 3. Frequency of Co-Author Primary Discipline Groupings

### ***Philosophical Topics Explored Through Co-Authorship***

Finally, regarding the topics explored in the co-authored papers examined in this study, we found that the topic that appeared with highest frequency was teaching, learning, and pedagogy (44.9%,  $n = 181$ ). This topic code was followed in frequency by continental theory (24.3%,  $n = 98$ ), political theory (23.1%,

n = 93), and ethics (19.9%, n = 80) – three areas that represent foundational subareas of philosophy with relevance to education. Table 4 presents the frequency for all topic codes.

Topic	Frequency	%
Teaching, learning, pedagogy	181	44.9%
Continental philosophy	98	24.3%
Political philosophy	93	23.1%
Ethics	80	19.9%
Equity, diversity, inclusion	75	18.6%
Epistemology	44	10.9%
Education policy	42	10.4%
Decolonial, postcolonial theory	23	5.7%
Feminist philosophy	16	4.0%
History of philosophy	16	4.0%
Philosophy of race	12	3.0%
Philosophy for children	6	1.5%
Methods in philosophy of education	6	1.5%

Table 4. Frequency of Topics in Co-Authored Articles

## Discussion and Implications

This study aimed to describe co-authorship trends in four primary philosophy of education journals from the US and Canada as part of a larger project seeking to explore co-authorship practices and norms in the field and to establish co-authorship as epistemically and ethically valuable. Here, we discuss the descriptive foundation offered by our findings in this paper, focusing on identifying further empirical and philosophical questions that they raise.

One primary finding of this study was that co-authorship rates in the journals examined have increased significantly over the last 20 years. This finding is consistent with other studies of a variety of disciplines that have found increases in co-authorship over time (Cronin et al., 2003; Henriksen, 2016; Kumar, 2018). While the increase over this period was significant, our investigation of this trend was limited in scope both temporally and geographically. Further studies could examine co-authorship rates farther back in time to the inception of philosophy of education in the US and Canada. We would expect to see low levels of co-authorship in earlier periods, consistent with findings in other broader studies on co-authorship (Cronin et al., 2003; Henriksen, 2016; Kumar, 2018). Such an analysis would make it possible to determine the time period(s) in which growth in co-authorship has been most pronounced, facilitating further historical analysis of these periods and the factors contributing to changes in co-authorship rates.

Future research could also expand in geographic scope in a variety of ways. It would be valuable to compare the trends found in this study with trends across Anglophone philosophy of education, with particular attention to the growth of “collective writing” as a unique form of collaborative authorship in the Australasian publishing context. Given the conceptually blurry boundaries between co-authorship and multiple authorship, future qualitative inquiries could compare how authors in collective writing projects and more traditional co-authored projects understand their relationship to their joint work and their perceptions of the epistemic value of these various forms of collaborative authorship. Comparative analysis of trends within and across various language communities and regional areas would help provide a more complete picture of similarities and differences in authorship practices in philosophy of education.

For example, in developing this study as scholars currently based in the United States who are interested in co-authorship practices in North America, we looked for philosophy of education journals published in Mexico to include. We learned that there are not philosophy of education–centric journals in Mexico and that scholars working in philosophy of education there tend to publish in philosophy journals, general education journals, or philosophy of education journals published elsewhere (e.g., pan–Latin American journals).<sup>8</sup> A more complete study of collaborative authorship in the Americas could compare trends across a wider array of publication outlets. Comparative national and regional studies could also examine differences in work expectations and performance evaluations and their relationship to authorship trends.

Turning to the comparison of different types of issues, we found that co-authorship occurred with higher frequency in special issues and symposia compared to regular issues in the journals analyzed. This points to further questions about the nature of collaboration in special issues and symposia in the field. For example, these venues sometimes offer workshops or other ways to provide detailed, peer-reviewed feedback from other authors involved in the special issue or symposium. Another possibility is that these venues are often associated with broad themes, which could be addressed well by drawing on the expertise of multiple authors. Further research could explore the reasons behind this trend. And given that co-authorship is a still developing practice in philosophy of education, these venues have excellent potential for contributing to the development of norms and best practices, especially for early-stage scholars looking for guidance on collaborative research processes.

We also observed that the majority of co-authorship in the focal journals was occurring in groups of two, rather than larger groups, which are more common in science and some social science disciplines. Further empirical work could explore why pairs are the most common co-author group size, including investigating the nature of co-authorship relationships in philosophy of education compared to those in other types of scholarly work. Furthermore, we could consider whether there is something distinct about the types of questions explored in philosophy of education that makes co-authorship in smaller groups more beneficial. For example, we might collect the impressions of co-authors of working through normative disagreement or deciding on appropriate divisions of labour across the project. We might also explore whether co-authors feel that they use each of their voices additively or create a new voice entirely in a given project – both an empirical question about co-authors’ experiences and a philosophical question about the nature of collaboratively developed works. Here again is an opportunity to compare trends in the US and Canada with collective writing experiments emerging elsewhere in the global field.

Turning to who is engaging in co-authorship, we also see ample room for further investigation. In this study, we limited our analysis to author roles and primary disciplinary areas due to the nature of the data available. We were unable to answer questions about other characteristics of those engaging in co-authoring, including identity characteristics like race/ethnicity and gender. These worthwhile questions that cannot be answered through article analysis could be explored through, for example, interview or survey methods. We also only examined the author roles and disciplines for the co-authored works in our dataset, rather than for the single authored works as well. Applying the same coding approach to the full dataset would allow comparison across single-authored and co-authored works, which would make it possible to answer questions such as whether scholars at a particular career stage are more likely to engage in more single authorship or more co-authorship.

It was notable in our findings that co-authorship occurred most frequently among faculty, rather than across different professional roles. This observation raises the question of whether developing co-authorship as a form of mentorship in philosophy of education could be a valuable and underutilized opportunity in the field. As Kumar (2018) noted, the use of co-authorship as a proxy for collaboration may be obscuring the value of collaborative practices. Similarly, we do not mean to suggest that co-authorship ought to serve as a proxy for mentorship, as mentorship is a more complex relationship that is not merely comprised of formal or professional tasks (Johnson, 2016). Still, co-authorship *can* be

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<sup>8</sup> Our thanks to Tomas Rocha for his insights into philosophy of education publications in Latin American contexts.

approached as a substantively collaborative or mentoring practice, so it is worthwhile to acknowledge that predominantly faculty–faculty projects might be missing opportunities to partner with graduate students. Future research might capture those substantive bonds through surveys and interviews. It might also explore other possible co-authorship proxies, where, for example, co-authorship indicates greater shares of work or more complex pieces to a research project.

We also find it notable, if not surprising, that most co-authorship teams in the journals examined were intra-philosophical. As we mentioned above, working in pairs may make it easier to navigate normative disagreement and divide work to complete a philosophical argument. However, as philosophy of education turns toward what some have called “empirically engaged philosophy” (Levinson & Newman, 2015; Wilson & Santoro, 2015), it would be interesting to explore how cross-disciplinary teams manage the research process together. Empirically engaged philosophy can involve citing existing studies or conducting them as philosophers or with other empirical experts. Just as we were limited regarding other identity-based information about co-authors, we do not know if those in philosophy positions have also trained in other methods. But as the field continues to experiment with different methodological frameworks to pursue new routes for explanation, justification, and evaluation of phenomena, philosophers could benefit from these collaborations by gaining experience with methodological experts (Higgins and Dyschkan, 2014).

Turning to the philosophical topics that emerged as most common in our study, the results were unsurprising, reflecting topics and areas of philosophy that are commonly explored in the field. Further interesting questions that we did not analyze in the paper include whether particular topics are explored through co-authorship more frequently than single authorship. Like with the author coding, we also only examined the topics for the co-authored works in our dataset, rather than for the single authored works as well. Expanding the topic analysis to include all articles, both single and co-authored, would provide greater insights into the types of inquiry that are being pursued through co-authorship. Finally, further research could use citation analysis to explore the reach of co-authored compared to single-authored work in the field. As interest in co-authorship grows, it would be worthwhile to develop an understanding of any implications of collaborative authorship of various forms (e.g., interdisciplinary co-authorship, collective writing) for the uptake of work in the field.

We have introduced a variety of further empirical questions. But just as urgently, we also see the need for greater attention to the ethics of co-authorship, including whose voices tend to be represented in co-authored projects, and the revision of primarily individualistic norms around argumentation and writing practices. In our earlier discussion of our motivation in this paper, we introduced several potential benefits of co-authorship, including diversifying representation in the field, improving the epistemic authority and quality of scholarly work, and supporting intellectual friendship and mentorship. Each of these potential benefits calls for further argument and consideration of associated risks. Continued consideration of these benefits and risks could be used to develop practical strategies for pursuing co-authorship in epistemically and ethically valuable ways.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented trends in co-authorship in four philosophy of education journals in the US and Canada over the last two decades. Our findings indicate that these journals are publishing co-authored articles with increasing frequency and that most co-authorship in these venues is happening among faculty collaborators and among scholars who share common disciplinary backgrounds. The increase in the practice of co-authorship points to the significance of exploring it in greater depth, including attention to questions of ethics and epistemology that it raises – in the processes and practices, values and norms, and content and modes of inquiry. Additionally, with the modest scope of this study, many interesting empirical questions about co-authorship and other forms of collaborative authorship in



the field remain unanswered. Our hope is to prompt further interest among philosophers of education in reflecting on how and why we engage in co-authorship.

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