

## ABSTRACT

This exploratory study investigated a range of factors that might predict whether students with behaviour disorders and mental illnesses would or would not successfully complete high school. The data for this study, extracted from the BC Ministry of Education database, included all students born between 1991 and 1994 who were enrolled in BC public and independent schools identified with behaviour disorders and mental illness (N = 16,498).

A descriptive, quantitative analysis was conducted to identify association between a range of variables - (a) demographic information, (b) school engagement factors, (c) Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA) performance, and (d) special needs designations - and completing or failing to complete high school.

Logistic regression analyses identified the predictive probability of factors associated with graduation or failure to graduate. Secondary analyses were conducted for two sub-populations of students with behaviour disorders and mental illnesses, Aboriginal students and English Language Learners, to determine if similar differences existed between students who complete high school and those who do not.

The study found undisputed evidence that students with behaviour disorders and mental illnesses in British Columbia have the poorest school completion rates of any other group of typical or special needs students in the province. Grade repetition, multiple school changes and early departure from school were significant predictors of the failure to complete secondary school. Students of Aboriginal ancestry were grossly overrepresented among students with behaviour disorders and mental illnesses and at a significant disadvantage with respect to high school completion in comparison to all other peers.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: Nanaimo, BC, Canada  
Academic Studies: M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1998  
B.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 1983  
Current Position: Director of Learning Support, Catholic Independent Schools Vancouver Archdiocese

## GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Educational Studies

### Courses

### Instructors

EPSE 595	Qualitative Methodologies in Educational Psychology and Special Education	Dr. R. Young
EDST 595	Conceptual Inquiry in Educational Research	Dr. D. Vokey
EDST 570	Seminar in Sociology of Education	Dr. J. Dillabough
EADM 554	Educational Administration and Policy	Dr. H. Mawhinney
EADM 581	Leadership, Administration and the Aims of Education	Dr. W. Poole
EPSE 526	Seminar in Specific Learning Disabilities	Dr. Lee Swanson
EPSE 515	Seminar in Behaviour Disorders	Mr. Stan Auerbach
EPSE 565	Special Course in School Consultation	Dr. William McKee
EPSE 571	Seminar in Research in Educational Psychology and Special Education	Dr. D. Allison
EPSE 512	Problems and Issues in Special Education	Dr. Shirley McBride
EPSE 592	Experimental Designs and Analysis in Educational Research	Dr. D. Allison
EPSE 599	Master's Thesis	Dr. William McKee
EPSE 506	College and University Teaching	Dr. K. Schonert-Reichl
EDST 601A	Doctoral Seminar	Dr. D. Coulter & Dr. M. Gleason

## SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Charles Ungerleider  
Dr. Marion Porath

Dr. William McKee  
Dr. Michelle Stack



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

### PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(Educational Studies)

### JENNIFER TONG

M.A., University of British Columbia, 1998  
B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1983

Thursday, June 22, 2017, 9:00 am  
Room 1306A, Education Centre, Ponderosa Commons  
*Latecomers will not be admitted*

**“An Exploration of School Related Factors Associated with School Completion for Children and Youth with Behaviour Disorders and Mental Illnesses in BC”**

### EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair:

Dr. Edward Kruk (Social Work)

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Charles Ungerleider, Research Co-Supervisor (Educational Studies)

Dr. William McKee, Research Co-Supervisor (School Psychology)

Dr. Michelle Stack (Educational Studies)

University Examiners:

Dr. Wendy Hall (Nursing)

Dr. Janet Jamieson (Special Education)

External Examiner:

Dr. Christina Rinaldi

Department of Educational Psychology

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta