

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores my personal journey of becoming a human being, particularly by drawing on Nuu-chah-nulth principles of ʔuuʔuuqʷaačii (self-independence). Relevant literature, resources and personal stories help identify the underpinning aspects of epistemological dominance, blindness and collisions, which occur in the classrooms of post-secondary institutions. Although Indigenous-led education and policy contributes to Indigenous student success, more has to be done to understand current processes of Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation. Educational practitioners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who engage help lead the way, but will likely encounter the unsettling nature that arises.

At times, feelings of fear, shame and guilt arise leaving people feeling unsure or unwilling to try. Nuu-chah-nulth teachings of yaʔakmis (love and pain) represents the possibilities and limitations of integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and being within post-secondary. Indigenization, reconciliation and decolonization are all processes that require courage and action; they also require leaders who are ready. They also require an understanding of one's self in relation to values, belief and prejudices; it is a critical component of these processes. Leaders must be genuine while recognizing the value of Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation.

The research questions are designed to bring a holistic approach and provide guidance that will help to improve my practice, as an educator. The research questions are,

- What do the principles of Indigenous self-determination mean in the context of indigenizing initiatives within post-secondary education?
- What are the possibilities and limitations (the love and pain)?
- What needs to change in order for these principles to be realized in these initiatives?

Throughout this journey my personal life experiences, as Nuu-chah-nulth-aht (person of Nuu-chah-nulth ancestry), inform and help me unmask favorable and unfavorable practices, specifically of Indigenization. The findings reveal the uncomfortable nature many feel when confronted with the history of Canada and the daunting task of Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation. Unpacking colonial policies and practices of education while examining more closely aspects of who we are (values, beliefs and prejudices), particularly as people who share this land, is a critical component of doing the work of Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada

Academic Studies: B.A. University of Victoria, 2003
M.A. University of Victoria, 2007

Current Position: EdD candidate, UBC

GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Indigenous self-determination, post-secondary education and Indigenization

Courses (500 level and above) for example:

Instructors

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EDST 601A Doctoral Seminar	Dr D. Coulter
EDST 593A Ethics and Education	Dr Zavalkoff
EDST 577 Social Context of Educational Policy, Politics and Practice	Dr Stack
EDST 508D Review of Research in Educational Studies	Dr Butterwick
EDST 602B Doctoral Seminar	Dr Fallon & Dr Stork
EDST 690 EdD Thesis	Dr Butterwick
IGOV 595 Tpcs: Indigenous Governance – Indigenous Leadership Forum	Dr Alfred, Dr Corntassel
GER 591 Direct Studies II: I-Witness Holocaust Field School Project	Dr Schallie
ANTH 590 Directed Reading Anthropology – Indigenous peoples and Reconciliation	Dr Hancock
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AWARDS

New Relationship Trust 2013 – 14

Irvin Barber Scholarship 2013 – 15

Chief Joe Mathis Scholarship 2013 – 15

PRESENTATIONS

- Narratives of Memory, Migration and Xenophobia: An International Symposium. *Canadian First Nations: Migration, Residential Schools and Survival*. University of Victoria. August 24, 2017.
- Workshop. *Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Genocide in Canada*. University of Victoria's Germanic and Slavic Studies, August 21, 2017.
- Diversity Research Forum 2016. Plenary session: Reconciliation and Resurgence. University of Victoria. January 22, 2016.



a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
(Educational Leadership and Policy)

DAWN SMITH

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, University of Victoria, 2003
Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance, University of Victoria, 2007

Friday, July 13, 2018, 1:00 pm
Room 108, North Island College, 3699 Roger St, Port Alberni, BC
Latecomers will not be admitted

“hiit kwii?it siλ (Bringing Something Good from Way Back): A Journey to Humanize Post-Secondary Education”

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair:

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Supervisory Committee:

Prof Shauna Butterwick, Supervisor (Educational Studies)

Prof Deirdre Kelly (Educational Studies)

Prof Robina Thomas (University of Victoria, Social Work)

University Examiners:

Prof Michelle Stack (Educational Studies)

Prof Cynthia Nicol (Curriculum Studies)

External Examiner

Prof Michelle Pidgeon

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