Title: Pedagogical Thoughts on Knowing Bodies: The Teacher Educator Encounters the Elder and the Phronimos

Abstract:
My dissertation is a study into the notion of embodied knowledge and is written from my perspective as a Settler-scholar studying and working at the University of British Columbia on Coast Salish territory. In this dissertation I propose and develop a theoretical framework for teaching and learning working from Karen Barad’s theory of agential realism that locates the real bodies of teachers and learners in the real places in which they exist. This framework emerges from my experience of teaching children, youth and adults in public schools, and my dialectical engagement with theory and practice over an extended period of time in this place. The core concept in this framework of the transformative pedagogical encounter considers the material and discursive aspects of the learning context, and attends to the centrality of embodied presence and ethical responsiveness in creating the conditions for transformative learning. To inform my theorization, I engage in Gadamerian hermeneutic analysis of both Aristotelian texts related to the embodied wisdom of the Phronimos, and of texts by Indigenous scholars in BC related to the embodied wisdom of the Elder. I draw on these texts as counter-perspective and challenge to the dominance of Western modernist theories and practices in education, and through coloniality scholarship argue that the lack of attention to the body in educational theorizing is related to historic and contemporary forms of privilege and oppression. I locate this study in teacher education and recognize that it is a place where hegemonic narratives and epistemological orientations might be drawn out and questioned. I explore the complicated conversation as originally discussed by William Pinar that emerges from bringing Indigenous perspectives into meaningful engagement with mainstream teacher education. I consider the resistance of teacher candidates and educational structures to this conversation, and suggest self-reflexive practices that engage transparently with resistance and draw out the problematic narratives and discourses in a Settler dominated society. I recommend practices of social equity in teacher education that provide opportunity for teacher candidates and instructors to understand themselves in complex ethical relations and as actively participating in material and discursive practices in real places.