Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

VANESSA TSE

BEd (University of Victoria, 2011)
BA (University of Victoria, 2010)

“Intersections of Resilience and Holistic Education at a Children’s Home in North India”

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Thursday, September 17, 2015
10:00am
MacLaurin Building
Room A341

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Graham McDonough, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Wanda Hurren, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Daniel Scott, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Scott Watson, Department of Political Science, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This study investigates the resilience of children living at Sundara, a home in North India, which serves destitute and/or orphaned youth who live and are educated on site. Despite the adversity my participants have encountered they are thriving spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally. My research examines this phenomenon and the holistic education practices that support the children in engaging the process of resilience. I employ two theoretical frameworks to illuminate both what is occurring (resilience) and how it is occurring (holistic education). As resilience is understood as largely an external phenomenon, it then follows that the children of Sundara do not necessarily arise from families with the correct genetic disposition to allow them to engage this process (although this can definitely be a factor). Rather, they are educated and raised in such a way to make resilience a possibility. I seek to understand the role holistic education plays in the resilience process at work in Sundara. To this effect, two questions central to my study are: What constellation of factors is present at Sundara that enables children to participate in a community of resilience? What kinds of holistic educational practices support the children’s participation in this community?

To perform this research in a way that honours the relational and holistic way of life at Sundara, I utilize a method inspired by photovoice and I draw upon poetic inquiry as a part of my exploration. My findings indicate that the holistic practices of the home create abundant opportunities for resilience. The three key themes that emerged were: reciprocal relationships, the holistic curriculum (moral and spiritual), and resilience enabling space. In addition, the home fosters a certain being-ness, a mode that the children and staff abide in that allows for greater resilience in their community. My participants appeared to be distinctly rich in spirit. It may be that out of such spiritual consciousness comes a greater ability to connect and engage the relationships at the core of the resilience process.