



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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**“Catholic Educational Leadership: Exploring Overlapping Consensus  
of Catholic Identity Through Narrative Inquiry”**

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Friday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018

9:30 a.m.

Clearihue Building

Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Kathy Sanford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Graham McDonough, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)

Dr. Tim Hopper, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, UVic (Outside Member)

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Dr. Matt Hoven, Department of Religion and Education, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta

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Dr. Adel Guitouni, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic

## **Abstract**

Catholic educational leaders serve as the primary faith leaders in their school community and remain influential in the public discourse of Catholic education. As insiders understanding the contextual educational landscape, and who are at the forefront of renewal and change within their own school communities, Catholic educational leaders are critical in providing an account and understanding of how their lived experience contributed to the formation of their Catholic identity. Through their daily interactions with parents, students, stakeholders, politicians, and community, their ability to articulate their Catholic identity as a school leader is imperative for the broader understanding of Catholic education.

This study, grounded in narrative inquiry methodology, explored the question “What is the lived experience of Catholic educational leaders in relation to shaping, informing, and influencing the conceptual formation of Catholic identity in 21st century schools?” This question resonates with the necessity to better understand how Catholic identity is lived authentically within Catholic schools for leaders who are entrusted with leading a diverse faith community. Four Catholic educational leaders share their stories of experience, working within a relational three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality, and place as key considerations of inquiry. By living, reliving, telling, and retelling their stories to live by, threads of coherence and continuity link their personal, professional, and spiritual landscape.

Participant findings generated four organizing categories: Catholic identity, Catholic education, Catholic leadership, and relationships. Each category was subsequently framed with additional sub-categories to further develop and deepen Catholic identity as a storied landscape of experience within the framework of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry. Navigating this inquiry space gave rise to contradictions and tensions surrounding the articulation and expression of Catholic identity the difficult and complex role of Catholic educational leadership, the turmoil of an educational landscape that is challenging the relevance of Catholic education, and the dynamic and every evolving influence relationships have on faith formation.

To both insiders and outsiders of Catholic education, this study illuminates a better understanding of how Catholic educational leaders shape, form, and influence the conceptual formation of their Catholic identity in 21st century schools. It also provides a lens to view how diversity and unity of Catholic identity is constructed and understood narratively.