



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

NICOLE LAND

MA (University of Victoria, 2011)

BSc (University of Alberta, 2014)

**“Fat(s), Muscle(s), Movement, and Physiologies in Early Childhood
Education”**

School of Child and Youth Care

October 20, 2017

9:00 A.M.

Clearihue Building

Room B007

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Sandrina de Finney, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

Dr. Mindy Blaise, College of Arts and Education, Victoria University (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Cecilia Åsberg, Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, Linköping University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Lucina Brown, Department of Education Psychology & Leadership Studies, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Euro-Western early childhood education physical activity curriculum foregrounds practices of physical literacy, childhood obesity prevention, and normative health promotion. Arguing that these pedagogical frameworks delimit how children and educators can engage with bodies in early childhood education, this dissertation utilizes documentation from pedagogical research with children and educators to think *with* fat(s), muscle(s), movement, and physiological knowledges. I contend that Euro-Western physical activity pedagogies define and obscure the physiological knowledges that sustain the epistemic authority these pedagogies hold and thus curate how early childhood education research and practice can mobilize physiological knowledges. In this dissertation, I integrate feminist science studies, post-developmental pedagogies, and post-qualitative education research to argue that early childhood education can generatively engage (with) physiological knowledges while attending to how fat(s), muscle(s), and movement matter amid intentional and situated pedagogical practices.

Drawing upon a pedagogical inquiry project focused on movement with preschool and toddler-aged children and educators, this dissertation details how fat(s), muscle(s), movement, and physiological knowledges were encountered, foregrounded, questioned, and complexified in one child care center in Canada. Throughout the four articles that comprise this project, I position Physiological Sciences as a settler colonial epistemological structure that is highly consequential for early childhood education. I argue that because I am a white settler trained in the conventions of Physiological Sciences, I am complicit in this knowledge system and must work to unsettle the epistemic authority Physiology exerts in education. The articles present four interventions that aim to confront predominant Euro-Western practices for thinking with Physiology in early childhood education research and pedagogy.

In the first article, I situate my project within post-qualitative education research, asserting that post-qualitative research can mobilize physiological knowledges with non-essentialist, answerable methodological practices. The second article elaborates two pedagogical propositions aimed at taking physiological knowledges to account with post-developmental early childhood education pedagogies. I focus on how muscle(s) mattered in our pedagogical inquiry with children and educators in Article 3 and outline ‘muscling’ as the ongoing work of thinking muscles with pedagogies. Finally, in Article 4 I explore how thinking with post-developmental fat(s) might reconfigure existing educational entanglements with fat(s) through tentative, risky, uncertain, and situated pedagogical practices of making and relating with fat(s). Together, the four articles contribute to ongoing conversations in early childhood education concerned with how pedagogies might complexify predominant Euro-Western scientific knowledge systems, take seriously the materialities of flesh, and generate alternatives to neoliberal health and fitness-oriented programming in early childhood education in Canada.

Keywords: *post-developmental pedagogies, early childhood education, fat, muscles, movement*