



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

DAVID MONK

MA (Concordia University, 2012)

BA (University of Ottawa, 2003)

“Turning the Tide: Learning to Change in Grassroots Activism”

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

10:00 A.M.

David Turpin Building

Room A144

Supervisory Committee:

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

Dr. Darlene Clover, Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

Dr. Budd Hall, School of Public Administration, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Daniel Schugurensky, School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Mantis Cheng, Department of Computer Science, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

There is a growing movement of indignation around the world that is calling out injustice and developing creative strategies to stand up to power and change the world. These are sparks that have flared up in the Arab spring, the occupy movement, idle no more, massive strikes in South Africa, environmental protests and many more. These movements are not isolated instances, as the mainstream media would suggest, but a growing global movement. This participatory action research tells the story of one grassroots environmental protest campaign. The protest campaign is ongoing and organized by non-native environmental kayaktivists in Coast Salish territory. It culminates each year in a five-day human powered flotilla of 100 people through the Salish Sea to connect communities and protest increased tanker traffic and a fossil fuel based economy. The research was both suggested and guided by the organizer activists. Their voices are openly represented in the research in order to reflect and appreciate their expertise and role in the research.

The story this research tells demonstrates the role and value of protest campaigns in challenging root inequalities and presents practical strategies for building capacity for a global movement of social and environmental change that connects and addresses intersectional oppression globally. It also problematizes activist settler and First Nations relations. The research situates these campaigns as important sites of public education and presents practical strategies for teaching and learning as if the world mattered. The organic and experiential approaches to learning revealed are applicable to informal, non-formal and formal educational practices.

The research challenges the incestuous, white male, Eurocentric, hierarchical control of knowledge and knowledge making that has been used for centuries to justify and hide oppression and exploitation of imperialism, colonisation and war. This research emphasizes the need for creative solutions to the planetary crisis at hand, which require a reflection on the world and our position in it from diverse cultural perspectives. This means listening and learning from the wisdom of those who have been silenced. It requires a new type of education that values wisdom over cleverness and places peaceful co existence at the centre of the curriculum. Learning in grassroots protest campaigns, such as the one represented in this case study, offer possible strategies for carrying out such education.