



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

HEATHER SPRINGER

BSc (Mount Royal University, 2008)

**“Perspectives on Capacity Strengthening and Co-Learning in Communities:
Experiences of an Aboriginal Community-Based Research Steering Committee”**

School of Child and Youth Care

Thursday, December 17, 2015

11:30AM

Human and Social Development Building
Room A373

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Jessica Ball, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Rebecca Gokiart, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Patricia Rosborough, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Cecilia Benoit, Department of Sociology, UVic

Abstract

Community-university partnerships have become more prevalent to support community-based research, especially as a collaborative approach to research with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. One practice is the activation of a community-based research steering committee to initiate, govern, and review research pertaining to their local community. Within literature related to community-based research, perspectives on capacity strengthening and co-learning from the members of a community-based research steering committee are under-represented. A qualitative case study approach was used to explore the research question: *What are the experiences of the Alexander Research Committee (ARC) members in defining and operationalizing capacity strengthening and co-learning across multi-sectoral research projects?* Nine current or past members of the ARC participated in individual semi-structured interviews and five of these ARC members also participated in a subsequent focus-group discussion. Analysis of these qualitative data indicated that foundational relationships and a conducive learning environment are key factors for a community-based research committee to experience co-constructed knowledge and learning. The findings of this study highlight the importance of an operational foundation of trusting relationships in order to establish and sustain a working environment where a community-based research committee can learn together and from each other. This study also yielded insights about how this community-based research committee predicated capacity strengthening from the understanding that 'we are all learners', with each member brought forward unique strengths, questions and growth to the research processes.