



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

**DANA BELL**

BSc (University of Victoria, 1996)

**“Mapping a teacher candidate’s journey through  
inquiry and into practice”**

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Monday, December 9, 2019

1:00 P.M.

Clearihue Building

Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Todd Milford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Kathy Sanford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Carol Rees, School of Education, Thompson Rivers University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Kwang Moo Yi, Department of Computer Science, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

This study examines the lived experience of teacher candidates through a professional inquiry process and the influence of that experience on their eventual teaching practice. Literature in this area typically follows teacher candidates and teachers through curriculum and instruction pedagogy coursework and then into the classroom to observe the incorporation of inquiry strategies and changes in disposition towards inquiry. This work fails to address a teacher candidate's experience through their own personal open inquiry process and whether or not that experience transfers into their teaching practice. A nested case study approach - including both quantitative and qualitative data - were used to provide insight and build understanding towards the following questions: 1) What is the effect on a teacher candidate's likelihood to employ an inquiry approach to science in their classroom following their own participation in an open-inquiry process during their teacher education? 2) How does participation in an inquiry process influence a developing teacher's understanding of teaching and learning? Teacher candidates and teachers at varying stages of practice, completed a survey and three recently certified teachers were interviewed to explore the use of inquiry in their teaching. The evidence suggests a key component to affecting the incorporation of inquiry approaches into the classroom was that personal experience with inquiry served to unsettle held beliefs and led to a change in disposition towards inquiry. This study also explores the implications for the inclusion and importance of inquiry experiences early within teacher education programs.

**Keywords:** inquiry, teacher education, science education, teacher candidates, teaching and learning beliefs