



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

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**“University Assessment Practices
through a Lens of Feminist Pedagogy”**

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Wednesday, October 30, 2019
11:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Kathy Sanford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Todd Milford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)
Dr. Timothy Hopper, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, UVic (Outside Member)

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Dr. Amirali Baniyasadi, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

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Abstract

Assessment is crucial for students' learning. The theory and practice of assessment, however, has received little attention in the literature on critical feminist pedagogy, due to difficulties in reconciling the notion of *feminist pedagogy* with that of *assessment*. This study aims to address that issue by exploring forms of assessment in higher education language learning that align with feminist principles. This research employs both case study and autoethnographic approaches. Data were collected from interviews with six university instructors and from the researcher's own teaching journal. All participants were full-time faculty at a department of modern languages and literature at a large Canadian research university. This study addresses three questions: 1) What forms of assessment do instructors in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures use that comply with principles of critical feminist pedagogy? 2) What tensions exist for instructors related to assessment in higher education? 3) How can these tensions be addressed using a feminist reconceptualization of assessment? The study revealed that implementing graded summative assessment, especially when teaching large classes, creates pressure and discontent for university instructors. It was also found that formative teacher's feedback, peer and self-assessment, complete/incomplete option, and diagnostic assessment reduce competition between students and serve to mitigate the power imbalance between students and teachers. Suggestions are provided to address the discontent and pressures reported by the participants and to reconceptualize assessment practices to bring them into alignment with feminist pedagogy.

Keywords: assessment, feminist pedagogy, university, higher education, evaluation, grading, policies