



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

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

of

**SCOTT GERRITY**

MA (University of North Carolina, 1992)  
BA (Eckerd College, 1985)

**“Recognizing and Navigating the Relational Landscapes of Self in Action:  
How Higher Ed Educators Construe the Value and Purpose of the  
ePortfolio Process”**

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Monday, August 12, 2019  
10:00 am  
Clearihue Building  
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Kathy Sanford, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)  
Dr. Tim Hopper, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)  
Dr. Darlene Clover, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic  
(Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Kathy Snow, Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Stan Dosso, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

Instructors in higher education are being asked to introduce electronic portfolios (ePs) into their teaching without prior knowledge or experience on how to do it effectively. They struggle with conceptualizing how the eP process connects pedagogy, assessment and student engagement within their courses and programs. Research has shown that instructors need to experience the eP process first hand, within meaningful and situated contexts that enable professional learning. This study explores how instructors make meaning of the eP process in relation to their own professional learning, and subsequently how they construe the eP process's pedagogic purpose and value for their students. In this context, professional learning is defined as a relational engagement between identity, knowledge construction and professional practice that leads to a transformative understanding of learning as embodied and holistic.

Based on a review of the literature on the eP process and theories of professional learning, a group of instructors in higher education were engaged in a shared self-study of the eP process within a narrative inquiry methodology. They used images, video, word clouds and other artifacts to explore and build awareness of the values and beliefs that have shaped their teaching practices. Participants concluded that the eP process promotes multiple competencies linked to "readiness", the ability to assess new situations and move forward in new environments. Intrinsically formed through iterative cycles of reflection and engagement, "readiness" is a dispositional stance or type of knowing-in-action that can help students bridge the gap between conceptual knowledge learned in classrooms and situated, relational knowledge required for professional practice. The study implications are that the eP process can be used as tool for professional educators to examine their own practices, in order to imagine new ways of learning for their students.