



**University  
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

**LAURA VETRONE**

BA (Ryerson University, 2015)

**“Risky Business? Understanding the educational experiences of  
street-involved youth”**

School of Child and Youth Care

Monday, August 12, 2019

1:00 P.M.

Clearihue Building

Room B021

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Doug Magnuson, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Sibylle Artz, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

Dr. Cecilia Benoit, Department of Sociology, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Cheryl Baldwin, School of Education, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk, Department of Linguistics, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis research is to better understanding the experiences of street-involved youth in educational institutions. Data for this study was collected for a five wave panel study of street-involved youth in Victoria, British Columbia (N=64). I used thematic analysis as a framework for analyzing the responses to open-ended questions regarding the participants' experience with education. At the time of first interview 89% of the participants had not continued on past grade ten with an average age of 16.7 years. Salient themes throughout the analysis included not fitting in, re-engaging, and connectedness. Under "not fitting in" participants detailed strained relationships with peers, staff and teachers, difficult experiences trying to engage with their education and learning that did not fulfill their natural curiosity for knowledge. The experiences of not fitting in led to a devalued view of education. Participants also spoke extensively about trying to re-engage with their education and encountering many barriers. Their experiences re-engaging highlight difficulty fitting in within the school environment, policies that prevented their full participation and continued difficulties within the school environment. Despite this, through re-engaging with mainstream schools or alternative education programs some participants were able to find spaces where they fit. Points of connection within schools, including positive relationships, positive experiences and meaningful learning opportunities worked as a drawing in factor for the participants often encouraging their participation and attendance in their education. Participants' experiences not fitting in, re-engaging and connecting suggest that students have difficulty engaging with the "hidden curriculum." The school environment, the rigid school schedule, defined teacher-student roles, impractical formal curriculum and school wide policies and procedures all were contributing factors for street-involved youth's difficult experiences engaging with their education.