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

of

ALEXIS BROWN

MA (University of Victoria, 2011)
BA (University of Calgary, 2007)

“Creating Trans-Systemic Spaces in Critical Literacies Education with Indigenous Adolescents”

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Monday April 19, 2021
9:00am (PDT)
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Deborah Begoray, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Sylvia Pantaleo, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)
Dr. Jan Hare, Department of Indigenous Education, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Trudy Cardinal, Department of Elementary Education, University of Alberta

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. John Borrows, Faculty of Law, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
**Abstract**

The study of critical literacies education (CLE) (Freire, 1970; Janks, 2014) with Indigenous adolescents is significant to working towards a more culturally responsive curriculum (CRC) that supports Indigenous learners within a broader Western context. As well, a focus on creating CRC within culturally relevant education (CRE) for Indigenous adolescents should also foster culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP) (McCarty & Lee, 2014) that works towards reconciliation (TRC, 2015). Significant to the development of authentic CRC for Indigenous learners is the need for an interchange of Western Knowledge (WK) and Indigenous Knowledges (IK) in order to find a new space – a trans-systemic space – that opens up a “dialogue of the assumptions, values and interests each holds” (Battiste, p. 105, 2013). Using the theoretical frameworks of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1986), Gee’s (2015) concepts of d/Discourse, and Indigenous ways of knowing and learning (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Battiste, 2002), the purpose of this case study was to explore how a trans-systemic space in CLE can be created for Indigenous adolescents. The research took place in an Indigenous Cultural Program (ICP) located in an alternative high-school in the interior of British Columbia, Canada, with 16 Indigenous adolescents, two members of the school staff, an Indigenous artist-in-residence, and an Elder. Data were collected during a Critical Media Literacies (CML) course that ran from January to May 2017. The findings from this study highlight characteristics of CLE in a trans-systemic space (storytelling; family and community; and personal and cultural multimodal expression), along with the benefits (pride and acceptance in self, family and community; growth and development of cultural competencies; and self-growth and healing) and the challenges (emotional labour; navigation of cultural protocols; and re-traumatization) of engaging in CLE with Indigenous adolescents.