Dear VIU Board,

I am pleased to report on my leave taken throughout June to November 2019. In June and July, I worked tirelessly to complete the first full draft of my PhD dissertation, which was submitted on August 15th, 2019. In the months that followed, I made all necessary minor revisions and submitted my dissertation in full on November 15th, 2019, entitled *An Exploration of British Columbia’s TVET Instructors’ Perceptions that Influence their Curriculum Choices.*

I am thrilled to share with you the news of my successful PhD defence which took place at SFU Harbour Centre (amidst a snowstorm) on January 16th, 2020.

When I joined VIU (then Malaspina College) in 1997, I did so with a Provincial Trade Certificate and City & Guilds equivalency credential from the UK. With much support and encouragement over the years from the VIU community, and in particular BCGEU Long Term Assisted PD, I have since completed the Provincial Instructors Diploma, Diploma in Adult Education, a Master of Education: Curriculum Studies (SFU), and lastly, I am very proud to have achieved a Philosophy Doctorate in Curriculum & Implementation Theory (SFU).

Without the support of the BCGEU assisted leave committee my academic achievements would not have been made possible. I assure you that my PD hours were invaluable and used effectively throughout my educational journey. I am enormously grateful to have had your support and this important leave.

I have inserted the Abstract of my study below. In addition, please find attached a copy of my full dissertation with my permission for you to publish it in full, or in part.

Thank-you kindly,

Dr. Sally Vinden
Abstract

Instructors’ perceptions, values, and belief structures influence their curriculum decisions and may fundamentally overlap, contradict, and/or conflict, leading to a confluence of curricula cultures within the classroom. This study investigated Trades and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) instructors’ perceptions to gain a better understanding of how those perceptions give rise to cultures of curriculum, particularly those that inhabit postsecondary TVET in British Columbia (BC). A total of 37 TVET instructors from BC participated in this study. Collectively, the participants represented a total of 10 Red Seal trades. Joseph’s (2000) conceptualization of curriculum as culture was used as the theoretical lens to investigate vocational instructors’ general perceptions regarding (a) their role as a teacher, (b) the intellectual capacities of their students, and (c) the purpose and future needs of vocational education. Q Methodology (Stephenson, 1935) was selected as the optimal research approach. Q factor analysis resulted in a four-factor solution, revealing the correlation of participants’ shared curricular beliefs and values as four statistically distinct perspectives. Factor array tables and interview transcripts were reviewed to interpret and name the viewpoints as expressed by the participants grouping together in each factor: Factor 1 – the constructivist crew, Factor 2 – the canonical cluster, Factor 3 – the experiential team, and Factor 4 – the 21st century progressives. Two major findings were gleaned from this study. First, tensions exist between the theoretical underpinnings of competency based education and training (CBET) and the curricular beliefs held by Factors 1, 2 and 4. Factor 3, however, is found to be in broad agreement with the goals and pedagogies associated with CBET. Second, distinct views held by each factor are theoretically opposed to those of other groupings, creating incompatibilities and divisions within the education system. The findings from this study have implications for future research, practice, policy, and theory and lend support to other curriculum studies in both mainstream education and TVET. My intention is for these findings to bring forth awareness of the largely unexamined theoretical confusion that I found to exist within the BC TVET system and to provide a reference point for stakeholders’ discussions and future curricular decisions.