General Teaching Experience

September 2007  **English Teacher**
Present  St. John Brebeuf Regional Secondary School
         Abbotsford, BC

September 1999  **English Teacher / Christian Education Teacher**
June 2007  Notre Dame Regional Secondary School,
           Vancouver, BC

December 1996  **English Teacher**
March 1998  Hansol Foreign Language Institute, Seoul, Korea

September 1994  **English, Social Studies, and Religion Teacher**
June 1996  Labrador City Collegiate, Labrador City,
           Newfoundland

Positions of Responsibility

September 2002  **English Department Head**
June 2005  Notre Dame Regional Secondary School
           Vancouver, B.C.

April 2002  **Acting Vice Principal**
June 2002  Notre Dame Regional Secondary School,
           Vancouver, BC

September 1994  **Religious Studies and Family Life Department Head**
June 1996  Labrador City Collegiate, Labrador City,
           Newfoundland

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ORAL EXAMINATION

Jeffrey Stephen Lannan

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Wednesday, December 14, 2011
SFU Burnaby
Halpern Centre, Room 114
at 1:00 pm

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair:  TBA
Senior Supervisor:  Dr. Carolyn Mamchur
Member:  Dr. Celeste Snowber
Internal/External:  Dr. Linda Apps
External Examiner:  Dr. Susan Gerofsky
University of
British Columbia
Using Narrative in the Classroom:
A Pedagogy to Promote Student Engagement

ABSTRACT

Sometimes a person needs a story more than they need food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other’s memory. This is how people care for themselves. (Lopez, cited in Lewis, 2006, p. 831)

It is the purpose of this dissertation to explore storytelling as a specific pedagogy that supports student engagement. In this dissertation stories or narratives (I use the words interchangeably) are carefully chosen remembrances, that are both age and content appropriate for the student audiences. Narrative (or story) as it is used in this discussion is defined as “…the act of telling, narrating or showing the subjective experience” (Schiff, 2006, p. 21). I will present the notion that the use of stories, told at an appropriate time in the classroom, may be recognized as a powerful pedagogy that goes beyond engaging students and becomes a means of generating a sense of wonder and awe in learners, particularly at the high school level.

To support the belief that using stories in the classroom may be one specific pedagogical approach that supports student engagement I have drawn upon ethnography to conduct my work, particularly through the media of storytelling and poetry, in order to give voice to my soul’s deepest longing. Ethnographic research seems to complement this work, because “The complexity of human lives and social interaction cannot be reduced to a sterile laboratory experiment with strict control of variables characteristic of a scientific experiment. Instead, ethnography aims to study life outside of a controlled environment” (Murchison, 2010, p. 4).

The data for my research method are gathered from three sources: my own experiences as a teacher and a story teller, the words of expert teachers and theorists on the power of story telling, and a series of interviews that I conducted with three professors from Simon Fraser University. The interviews focused on the professors’ own use of storytelling pedagogy in the classroom.