Selected Conference Presentations

Experiencing Philosophy X: The Semiotics of Experiential Education. Workshop presented (with S. Blenkinsop) at the 38th Annual International Association for Experiential Education conference, Las Vegas, NV, USA, November 2010.


Deschooling the Outdoor School: Exploring Deschooling Theory For Experiential Educators. Workshop presented (with S. Blenkinsop) at the 35th Annual International Association for Experiential Education, Little Rock, AR, USA, November 2007.

Research Interests

Conceptions of language and labeling in alternative education; experiential and alternative education; youth studies; Deschooling, free-schooling and un-schooling theory as applied to pathologization of youth; Ecological education in K-12 and higher education systems
Pathways of Pathology and Promise in Alternative Education

ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the ways that pathologization, deficit model thinking, and negative school labels (i.e., learning disabled, at-risk, problem behaviour) are given institutional life within the relationships between students, staff, administrators, and policy makers at various levels of the alternative education hierarchy in British Columbia, Canada. A qualitative case study research design was selected to provide flexibility in data collection, and methods used include interviews, program observation, document collection, and focus groups. Data was analyzed using a three-tiered process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Findings consist of a series of paradoxes in relationships operating on multiple levels of the alternative education system: between students and staff at an alternative program, and within the language and labels used by professionals working in managerial/administrative positions at the high school, alternative program, local school board, and provincial ministry of education. Educational professionals in the province are seen to accept and resist processes of youth marginalization, such as deficit model thinking and pathologization, within the alternative education system. These contradictions, suggested by Ivan Illich to be inherent to large, modern social institutions, imply deeper ideological problems within the educational endeavour and the society at large. Implications for the educational institution, educators and administrators, students, and alternative programs are discussed in the final chapter, along with limitations and suggestions for future research.

Academic Record

Doctor of Philosophy – Curriculum, Theory and Implementation, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Dissertation – Pathways of Pathology and Promise in Alternative Education

Master of Science – Kinesiology. Sport and Exercise Psychology, Arizona State University


Bachelor of Arts – Psychology. University of Colorado at Boulder

Peer-Reviewed Articles


Peer-Reviewed Research Abstracts
