

Internal Examiner Report – Doctoral Thesis

Report due date: Jul 24, 2018

Name of Student: Richard BLACKBURN

Degree/Unit: Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Integrated Studies in Ed

Thesis title: A concept of critical feeling: a proposed basis for research in the teaching and evaluation of creativity

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this student's examination. As a thesis examiner, you will complete this form and attach a written report providing a detailed justification of your evaluation. The deadline to send **this form and your written report** to thesiscoordinator.gps@mcgill.ca is Jul 24, 2018.

Please note that a late report has serious academic and financial consequences for the student.

Evaluation of the Thesis: Complete the evaluation grid below and comment on the criteria in your written report.

Criteria for Evaluation of Thesis	Excellent Top 10%	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1. Makes an original contribution to knowledge	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Advances knowledge in the field	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Is situated in a broader context and appropriately acknowledges the larger field of research (e.g., citations/references)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Details methodology and methods	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Reports results clearly	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Justifies analyses and conclusions	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Discusses implications	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Is presented appropriately for disciplinary norms (grammar, style, coherence, cohesion)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Complies with McGill's guidelines for thesis preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall Recommendation: Select one.

Recommendation	Select ONE
<p>PASSED – The thesis is ready to proceed to the Oral Defence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your written report must include any recommendations for minor revisions to the thesis (i.e. stylistic or editorial changes). Your written report must include questions to be asked of the student at the Oral Defence. 	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<p>NOT PASSED – Major revisions to the thesis are required before proceeding to the Oral Defence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one of the Criteria for the Evaluation of the Thesis must be judged as unsatisfactory if the thesis is NOT PASSED. Your written report must include a detailed description of all the shortcomings that have informed your decision, including an itemized list of substantive issues to be addressed before the thesis can be given a PASS and proceed to the Oral Defence. <p>Note: If this is the first "NOT PASSED" assessment, the student will be given one opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis.</p>	<input type="radio"/>

DATE: Jul 10, 2018

SIGNATURE: William Straw Digitally signed by William Straw
Date: 2018.07.10 09:49:14 -04'00'

Prof. William Straw

Internal examiner's report on the dissertation by Richard Blackburn

Title of dissertation: A concept of critical feeling: a proposed basis for research in the teaching and evaluation of creativity

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

Internal examiner: Will Straw, Department of Art History and Communications Studies, McGill University

July 10, 2018

This is an elegant, sharply argued and interesting dissertation. It is organized around the development of a theory of "critical feeling" and against doctrines of education that emphasize critical decoding of pre-existing texts as a principal pedagogical method. The thesis moves with skill between a rigorous review of existing literatures, a steady project of theory building, reflections on the author's own multiple practices, and more "creative" passages which recount and reflect on the author's own experience.

In the hands of another writer, these various components might gel incompletely or interact unsuccessfully. To this author's credit, these movements between tone and form unfold in ways that are both engaging and successful in the project of conceptual development that is the thesis' main enterprise. More so, even, than the candidate's MA thesis (which I supervised), this dissertation does not treat the author's own creative work as a "truth" which proves the theoretical claims, but, more forcefully, as participant, with the theoretical elaboration, in the posing and resolution of questions.

The author's own engagement with a wide variety of literatures – from the classics of pedagogical theory to significant theoretical interventions of the 20th century and on to more recent theories of affect and actor-network relations – is solid and well-organized. If many of the earlier works have already "landed" in the recent interventions of Massumi and others, Blackburn doesn't simply let these later interventions do the work required to render this earlier work pertinent. Rather, he drives his own path through these lineages of thought, and the result is a work which is both a return to certain key foundational texts in educational philosophy and a fully up-to-date engagement with some of the latest thinking in this area.

I came away from the dissertation more convinced by some of its key arguments than I had in the reading of earlier drafts, and this, to me, is a sign of the thesis' success (and, perhaps, of some of the rewriting which it has undergone.) I am happy to recommend that this thesis proceed to defense.

The writing is generally fine, but there are eccentric uses of commas and occasional glitches of sentence structure that should be resolved before the final submission (see examples below).

15: "That's when I knew that teaching language arts, no longer meant teaching language art." – take out comma after "arts"

22: "Barney Glaser's, Theoretical Sensitivity, Donald Schön's, Educating the Reflective

Practitioner, Sheldon Krinsky's" – the commas between authors' names and titles, here and elsewhere in the thesis, are out of place.

67: "When I consider affect's potential to mean something. I call that stance affective inquiry." This would be better as a single sentence.

80: "A few years ago I attended a professional television writers' workshop in Los Angeles that concluded Aristotle's, Poetics remains remarkably relevant today." – sentence needs fixing.

Note 111: specify which Clinton you are referring to

144: "I first started answering this question in, The Moment of Metaphor," – take out comma after "in".

External Examiner Report – Doctoral Thesis

Report due date: Jul 24, 2018

Name of Student: Richard BLACKBURN

Degree/Unit: Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Integrated Studies in Ed

Thesis title: A concept of critical feeling: a proposed basis for research in the teaching and evaluation of creativity

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DATE : **Jul 29, 2018** SIGNATURE :



Dr. Sean Wiebe

External Examiner Written Report

Dissertation Title: A concept of critical feeling: a proposed basis for research in the teaching and evaluation of creativity

Blackburn's dissertation entitled *A concept of critical feeling: a proposed basis for research in the teaching and evaluation of creativity* makes a substantial contribution to knowledge. It is theoretically robust and an engaging exemplar of complex textual matrices that rupture assumptions about critical literacy, creativity, reading, and writing in the English language arts classroom. I think this dissertation work to be an original, provocative, and pragmatic rendering of theoretical investigations into critical feeling and affective inquiries. Blackburn is very effective at detailing theoretical genealogies as he explores the making and doing of art as a process of productionism. The literature review thoroughly incorporates the current literature demonstrating understanding of key issues and an acceptable analysis and synthesis.

Methodologically, Blackburn engages grounded theory at its messy points, attending to the spirit of its inquiry. He asks the difficult questions regarding teaching identity, the making of self, the purpose of Arts Based Research, and the value of assessment. Blackburn embeds his methodological choices throughout the text. I find this an effective way to entangle his questions and processes. It is clear in the meta narrative that a deep curiosity is driving this text forward. His work demonstrates the development of expert knowledge in the areas of research design, analysis, and synthesis. Blackburn demonstrates an understanding of the skills and critical thought processes of a researcher, is able to design, implement, analyse and interpret data, and communicate his research in a scholarly fashion.

At times Blackburn's text could be more readable. There are numerous APA errors throughout the text, all minor. Additionally, I have noted a few places where clarification is needed.

What Blackburn breaks open in assumptions about philosophy, curriculum, and teaching offers change in thinking, theory and practice that questions taken for granted notions of critical literacy. He frustrates normative assumptions expectations, and deftly illustrate a relentless commitment to knowing a metaphysics of feeling within an artistic inquiry paradigm. Importantly, Blackburn explains how documentary's production phases of scripting, shooting and editing can be taught as critical feeling's dynamic processes of feeling, seeing and saying. Blackburn's dissertation offers needed further research into the differences between criticality and creativity and how these are presented to students.

Lastly, regarding Blackburn's conclusions, there is a relationship formulated between the problem, the questions, the method, and the patterns and significance of the data. All data collection methods and procedures are appropriately justified and described. The role of the researcher in the data collection procedure is clearly described, along with the strengths and limitations that this role provides. On page 181, I appreciated his linking of Field and Elbow. He summarizes as follows: "The writer is responsible for producing the hearing, feeling and seeing affects of reader experience." As Blackburn notes, this is Langer's whole point.

Questions for the Defense

1. On page 36, you define literacy as "the signal-to-noise ratio of the writer's feel-see-say circuit." You go on to talk about the possibilities for multiliteracies from this definition. Could you please provide some clarification regarding what you mean by "the signal to noise ratio" and also provide some further amplification for positioning "storyingmaking" as the centerpiece of your literacy definition.
2. What are the possibilities of bringing together a tighter coupling of critical thinking and creative thinking? Are they really as oppositional as your treatment of them? Are there perhaps some productive tensions to be explored? In other words, what Otherness out-there makes the research act possible, but is invisible (Law, 2004, pp. 88, 97-98)?
3. When using grounded theory what are the limitations of using only personal experience as the data set for the professional incidents?
4. How can the creative processes of documentary filmmaking offer a practical model of affective inquiry as storytelling in the English language arts?
5. How does your dissertation help us understand schools better? And what are some implications for teacher education?

Minor Suggestions

1. Change the running head. Currently reads "Initial thesis submission."
2. Page 5, 2nd paragraph. No comma needed before the word reflections.
3. Page 10. The Roth citation needs a page number.
4. Page 14, paragraph 1. A comma is not needed before the word when.
5. Page 26. The following statement needs substantiation: "The dominance of critical pedagogy in contemporary language arts." It is not clear how the author has come to this knowledge?
6. On page 30 the following statement is not accurate: "Since PISA's founding in 1997, most Canadian provinces have reformed their curricula to better align with the educational outcomes PISA was set up to monitor."
7. On page 30 there is an example of Math scores declining. It would be better to have an example specific to English Language Arts.
8. Page 31. Since all provinces do assess writing, the following statement could be more accurate: "It would be useful to know how the adoption of similar discovery-based critical literacy approaches to language arts in the same curricula reforms have impacted student-writing scores. Useful yes. Possible no."
9. Page 32, paragraph 3. An article is needed before the word banking.
10. Page 33, paragraph 2. End punctuation error with respect to (Claiborne, 1974).