

CURRICULUM VITAE

Sandra C. Finney, Ph D.

#502 315 5th Ave. N.,
Saskatoon, SK, Canada. S7K 5Z8
(306) 343 1920 (Home & Office)
grra@sasktel.net

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EDUCATION

B. Ed. (with distinction) in Elementary Education,
University of Saskatchewan, 1977.
Areas: Early Childhood Education
English Literature

M. Ed. In Curriculum Studies,
University of Saskatchewan, 1982.
Areas: General Curriculum Theory
Educational Program Evaluation

Ph. D. in Curriculum Studies,
University of Saskatchewan, 1990.
Areas: Curriculum Philosophy
Critical Theory in Education
Curriculum Policy and Development
Literacy

SUMMARY OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Elementary Schools (1974-87)

I taught most grades from kindergarten to Gr. 7, served as a Vice Principal, and also had experience as a school librarian. These experiences took place in the Prince Albert Public School System and included some years in inner city schools. I was a very growth-oriented teacher and early in my career I was selected to develop new programs and teach in an innovative primary school. Later, I taught middle years' students and developed an interest in strengthening students' critical and creative thinking abilities and in literacy.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (1987-1989)

I started my work in the provincial education ministry as a consultant hired to write a background document in Critical and Creative Thinking. I was promoted to the position of Director of Humanities supervising curriculum development in:

- English Language Arts
- Arts Education
- Common Essential Learnings (cross- curriculum areas such as Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Development, and Technological Literacy)
- Early Childhood Education.

Piloting new curricula involved a lot of interaction with the field including presenting work shops, speaking at conferences, and chairing review committees. This rewarding work gave me a great deal of insight into the kinds of resources that appealed to teachers and the types of supports they valued.

University (1991-1998)

During these years I was a faculty member in Education at Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario, and the University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan. I taught classes in:

- Educational Foundations
- Teaching Methods
- Evaluation and Assessment
- Multicultural and Cross-cultural Education
- Early Childhood Education.

Consulting (1998-present)

My husband (Dennis Schaefer) and I started our consulting firm, Garden River Research Associates: Education and Social Research and Development, in 1998 and have completed many projects for ministries and arts and cultural organizations. Our contracts have included:

- curriculum development
- teacher resources
- research projects such as one related to the needs of homeless youth
- evaluation of arts education programs.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Cross-cultural Education (Education of Indigenous Canadians):

Most of my experiences in elementary education were in schools with a high percentage of First Nations and Métis students. As well, I

- Served as Faculty Advisor to the Native Teacher Education Program, Nipissing University
- Member of the Native Advisory Council on Educational Programs, Nipissing University
- Member of the Aboriginal Head Start Training Program Advisory Committee, Early Learning Centre, Regina
- Taught Cross-cultural and Multicultural Education courses, University of Regina.

Emotional, Spiritual and Social Development for Public School Education

While with the education ministry, I supervised the development of a resource book for teachers related to the Common Essential Learnings (described above) as well as produced an accompanying video. As part of this task I did extensive research into moral education and character development. During my years in teacher education, I became increasingly aware of the need for a more holistic approach to K-12 education and particularly, in ways to meet the needs of the spirit.

During the decade 1995 -2005 I read widely and deeply in the area of the spiritual development of children and youth. My research examined ways to incorporate a focus on this area within public education without violating the separation of church and state. I was invited by the Saskatchewan Education Ministry to revise the original curriculum framework related to personal and social development and update the area to reflect recent research. I strengthened the area by adding a focus on developing emotional intelligence and included the dimension of spiritual development in the new framework.

Critical and Creative Thinking:

I wrote the provincial background paper *Critical and Creative Thinking for Saskatchewan Schools* (1987). This involved extensive research and was also grounded in my classroom experiences. I also developed a resource and video for teachers that included this focus along with other cross-curricular areas. I developed a revised framework for critical and creative thinking for the province of Saskatchewan's K-12 curriculum between 2005-08. It included a new focus on Communitarian Thinking which described goals and a process for helping students learn to think together—supporting each other and building on each others' ideas in order to solve problems and strengthen community.

Arts Education:

In addition to supervising the development of curricula for Arts Education in the province of Saskatchewan, I have had continuous interest in arts education and its value to young people. Together with Dennis Schaefer of Garden River Research Associates, I

evaluated a number of arts programs in our province including ArtsSmarts and Artists in Residence in Schools.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Klenz (Finney), S. (1987). *Creative and critical thinking for Saskatchewan schools*. Saskatchewan Education: Regina, SK.
- Finney, S. & Orr, J. (1995). "I've really learned a lot but...": Cross-cultural teacher education in a racist society." *Journal of Teacher Education*, 46 (5).
- Finney, S. (1998). "The sky, the earth, my heart, the people": An ecological dimension to critical pedagogy in teacher education. *Teaching Education Journal*, 9 (2).
- Finney, S. (1999). *Evaluation of the English Language Arts Curriculum (Grades 1-5)*. Saskatchewan Instructional Development & Research Unit (SIDRU), University of Regina: Regina, SK.
- Finney, S. (2000). *Early Literacy: A Resource for Teachers*. Saskatchewan Education: Regina, SK.
- Finney, S. (2001). *Classroom Curriculum Connections: A Teacher Handbook for Personal-Professional Development*. Saskatchewan Education: Regina, SK.
- Finney, S. (2008). *Renewed Objectives for the Common Essential Learnings of Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) and Personal and Social Development (PSD)*. Saskatchewan Ministry of Education: Regina, SK.
- Finney, S. & Schaefer D. (2009). *Findings and Recommendations related to ArtsSmarts Saskatchewan 2008*. Saskatchewan Arts Board. Regina, SK.
- Finney, S. (2013). *Strong Spirits, Kind Hearts: Helping students to develop inner strength, resilience, and meaning*. Rowman & Littlefield Education, Lanham, MD.
- Finney, S. & Thurgood Sagal, J. (2016). *The Way of the Teacher: A Path for Personal Growth and Professional Fulfillment*. Rowman & Littlefield Education, Lanham,

MD.

