**RP GRANT APPLICATION**

**NAME:**

Patrick Howard, PhD

**CURRENT POSITION:**

Associate Professor, Education (Tenure-track)

School of Education Health and Wellness

**CBU FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBER OR RESEARCH WORKER START DATES:**

Patrick Howard - start date at CBU - July 2009

**TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT:**

*Re-orienting the Literacy Classroom for the Values of Sustainability: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Curriculum Content*

**RESEARCH BACKGROUND OF PROPOSED PROJECT:**

A growing concern for the myriad environmental, social, and economic problems facing the world community has led to an increasing awareness of the role of education in allowing people to address these pressing issues. Education is central to two recent international efforts to address an impending global crisis. *The Earth Charter* (2001) and the *Decade for Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014* (UNESCO, 2004) challenge all people to consider the socio-ecological, ethical, local and global dimensions of human life. The proposed research will inquire into how literacy education programs can be responsive to an emergent socio-ecological vision.

In Canadian schools the study of ecology and education for sustainable development (ESD) has largely been a subset of the science curriculum. Most often, it is a biological approach with a strong focus on efficient use of resources. However, to instill the “values of sustainability” (UNESCO, 2004) we must move beyond science while being inclusive of scientific knowledge. McKeown (2002) asserts, “ ESD involves studying local and, when appropriate, global issues. Therefore, these five (i.e., knowledge, skills, perspectives, values, and issues) must all be addressed *in a formal curriculum* that has been *reoriented* to address sustainability.”(p. 16, emphasis added). My use of the term sustainable indicates an operational definition of ecological sustainability predicated on a pedagogy of ecological literacy (Barlow and Stone, 2005; Howard, 2006). Finally, my understanding of sustainability is informed by the theoretical framework of place-conscious education (Gruenewald, 2003) drawing on insights from phenomenology (van Manen, 1997), critical geography, bioregionalism, eco feminism and other place conscious traditions.

It has been proposed that teaching for sustainability is richer when it is tied to and flows from the local culture (Stefanovic, 2000). A very important part of this research will be to inquire into if, and how, urban and rural literacy classrooms exhibit different dimensions of place-conscious education necessary to teach for the values of sustainability.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF PROPOSED PROJECT:**

This proposed research project has five (5) key objectives.

* To critically inquire into literacy teachers’ understanding of the “values of sustainability”
* To critically inquire into the existence of potential tensions and correlations between the middle and secondary school literacy curriculum and the “values of sustainability”
* To determine by way of comparison how urban and rural literacy classrooms may address issues and themes of sustainability and the environment
* To identify bioregional and other literature that supports teaching for the “values of sustainability”
* To determine the ethical and theoretical rationale for connecting literacy theory and practice with the lived, social, and ecological dimensions of sustainability

Re-orienting education to teach for the values of sustainability (Hopkins, 2009; Hopkins and McKeown, 2005) requires an in-depth inquiry into how curriculum guides, textbooks, classroom practices, and teacher beliefs, as the main conveyors of curriculum in the classroom, may become tools in the perpetuation of values in conflict with values educators seek to promote. Critical discourse analysis will allow any such contradictions to emerge by inquiring into the relationship between language and discourse in the construction of the social world (Gee, 1999; Rogers, 2004). Textbooks, authorized learning resources, including novels, current classroom practices, and teacher beliefs will be analyzed to determine embedded cultural assumptions that may or may not support education for the “values of sustainability.” Secondly, research will be undertaken to discover imaginative bioregional literature that fosters the values of sustainability by deepening an awareness for the living landscapes in which we dwell. The research will help determine if, and how, urban and rural literacy classrooms exhibit different dimensions of place-conscious education necessary to teach for the values of sustainability. Finally, it is an objective of this research to conduct a rigorous conceptual analysis of the diverse perspectives on and practices of “education for sustainable development.”

**RESEARCH METHODS OF PROPOSED PROJECT:**

The research project will employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the critical analysis of curriculum texts, teaching resources and materials in the literacy classroom. CDA will be used to analyze the texts, discourses and teaching practices to describe, interpret and explain how teaching for the “values of sustainability” gets taken up in urban and rural middle and secondary schools. Fairclough’s (1995a, 1995b) idea of “cruces tension points” as moments of crisis when things are changing provides opportunities to deconstruct practices that are oftentimes naturalized and therefore difficult to notice. The analysis of curriculum materials, texts and resources will be organized under four main headings: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure (Chouliarki and Fairclough, 1999). The research will survey curriculum materials in literacy classrooms and resource centers in two provincial jurisdictions – one urban Nova Scotia school district and one rural school district in Newfoundland and Labrador.

A key component of the research will be interviews conducted with a sample of six (6) literacy teachers to gain insight into teachers’ beliefs about sustainability and literacy learning, choice of literacy materials and teaching resources. This part of the inquiry will rely on three sources of data; face-to-face interviews, questionnaires and experiential material derived from close ethnographic and phenomenological observations. Critical discourse analysis of the interviews, questionnaires and observations will be conducted for insights and situated meanings (Gee, 1999) of pedagogical value.

Finally, to support the empirical data collected, in a third research phase, I will conduct cultural and ecological conceptual analysis that is grounded in lived experience. The use of the diverse traditions of critical pedagogy (Freire and Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1988), bioregionalism (Sale, 2000; Berthold-Bond, 2000), place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003; Sobel, 2004) and phenomenology (van Manen, 1997; Stefanovic, 2000) will contribute to advancing an understanding of how literacy education may be conceived to reflect the values of ecological sustainability.

**POTENTIAL RESEARCH OUTCOMES OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

The research seeks to better understand what it means to ‘re-orient education for the values of sustainability” as explicated by UNESCO and taken up by Dr. Charles Hopkins (2009) of York University and UNESCO Research Chair for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). It has been five years since the launch of UNESCO’s *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005 -2014*. There has been very little research into the role of the literacy classroom in promoting and/or negating teaching for the “values of sustainability.” Literature is central to the education of the young. Literature invites us into conversations about purpose, values, and selves in ways that enable us to collaborate with others in shaping our understanding of ourselves and the world.  This research will allow for a better understanding of how the choice of literature and how it is currently taught in middle and secondary classrooms, both urban and rural, supports the re-orientation of education for the values of sustainability, or re-affirms taken for granted assumptions and cultural beliefs about human-environment relations.

I will be submitting research results and scholarly articles to both Canadian and international refereed academic journals. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the research, it allows the findings to be of interest and potentially published in a number of educational research journals including; *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, *Educational Studies*, *Interchange, English Education*, *Language and Literacy*, *Canadian Journal of Education*, *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, Journal of Curriculum Studies, Educational Researcher*.

It is my intent to attend conferences and present papers based on my research findings. The Canadian Society for Study of Education (CSSE) conferences will be held at the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University in 2011, and the University of Victoria in 2013

**CURRENT STAGE OF PROPOSED PROJECT:**

This research project is in the proposal stage. It is expected to begin in Spring/Summer 2010.

**CURRENT STAGE OF THE ETHICS BOARD PROCESS:**

An Ethics review is being prepared for submission to the Research Ethics Board of Cape Breton University.

**FUNDING RECORD OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:**

This project has not received funding from any other sources**.**

**RESEARCH AND SCHOLRLY OUTPUT OF APPLICANT:**

**Refereed Contributions (R)**

**R** Howard, P. (2008). Ecology, Phenomenology and Culture: Developing a language for

sustainability. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education. 2,* (4). 302 -310.

**R**  Howard, P. (2007). The pedagogy of place: Re-interpreting ecological education through

the language arts. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*.2 (1). 109-126.

**R** Howard, P. (2006). In search of a living literacy: Language, literature and ecological

sensibility. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Alberta. Edmonton, AB.

**R** Howard, P. (2005). Nurturing sense of place through the literature of the

bioregion.(Electronic version). *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture.* <http://reconstruction.eserver.org/053/howard.shtml>

**R** Howard, P. (2004). ‘[D]estined always to be on the edge of things;’ Prolegemenon to a

dialogic of transdisciplinarity in curriculum theory. *JCT: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing.* 20(4). 45-62.

**R** Howard, P. (2003)*.* “Walking the talk in assessment”: Deconstructing standardized tests

in the English language arts. *English Quarterly.* 35 (3, 4). 24-28.

**R** Howard, P. (2003). Looking back together: Phenomenology and the nurturing of the

reflective lens in student writing. *Language and Literacy: A Canadian Educational e-journal*. [www.langandlit.ualberta.ca](http://www.langandlit.ualberta.ca)

**Other Refereed Contributions**

**R**  *Writing takes place: Place relatedness and the writing process.* Paper presented as part of “Place and Curriculum Inquiry” symposium at the CSSE Conference. University

of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, 2004.

**R**  *Finding a place to begin: Pedagogy and the meaning of place-based teaching in the*

*language arts.* Paper presented at the WestCAST Conference. University of

Alberta, Edmonton, AB. February 2004.

**R**  *As near to heaven by sea: Place and placelessness in the literature of Newfoundland and*

*Labrador.* Paper presented at the biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. Boston University. Boston, MA. June 2003.

**Non Refereed Contributions**

Howard, (2008). "Leaning into the Light" A Review of Carina Henriksson's

Living Away From Blessings: School Failure as Lived Experience. *Phenomenology and Practice.* 2, (1). http://www.phandpr.org/

Howard, P. (2004). Toward a living literacy: Ecological sensibility and environmental

education. *Taproot: The Academic Journal for the Coalition for Education Outdoors.* Winter.

Howard, P. (2003). In search of a new story: Environmental education and ecological

sensibility. *Environmental news*. Environmental Research and Studies Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB. 3(1). 1-2.

**Forthcoming Contributions**

Howard, P. (accepted). Pedagogy and the poetic: Ecological sensibility and the language arts.  *Journal of Environmental Education.* 15.

**INTERNAL FUNDING FOR OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS RECEIVED BY APPLICANT (Past 6 years):**

In Fall 2009, I received the start up research grant for new faculty in the amount of $2000.

**EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS RECEIVED BY APPLICANT**

*“In Search of a Living Literacy: Language, Literature and Ecological Sensibility”* (2006) research project for doctoral dissertation funded by SSHRC - $57,000.

**APPLICATIONS MADE TO EXTERNAL FUNDING AGENCIES FOR THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL PROJECT THAT WERE UNSUCCESSFUL (Past 3 Years)**

This research proposal has not been previously submitted to external agencies for funding.

**EXPENSES FOR PERIODICALS, BOOKS AND OTHER LIBRARY RESOURCES**

CBU library does not have an extensive collection of resource materials to support this research in education for sustainability. It is my hope to acquire texts, practical teacher resources and periodicals to build CBU’s holdings.

An estimated cost of $500.00 has been budgeted.

**EXPENSES FOR COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER ACCESSORIES**

Not applicable

**EXPENSES FOR TRAVEL**

An important aspect of this research is to determine the types of novels, teaching materials, and activities used in a rural/remote classrooms and how theses curricular choices/practices reflect or challenge the values of sustainability and to determine by way of comparison how teachers in a more urban setting choose novels, teaching materials, and activities for the same or different purposes. Conducting research (interviews, observations) in classrooms with teachers in rural/remote coastal Newfoundland and in urban classrooms in Nova Scotia will allow a broader sense of the types of literary experiences being offered in classrooms across two disparate contexts.

I intend to conduct research in Newfoundland during my non-teaching term in Winter semester 2011 when middle and secondary schools are in session.

Research will be conducted locally in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality in Fall 2010.

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| Date of Travel **NS**  Oct 2010 | Details | Amount |
| Day 1 | Research in Sydney and area | 30.00 |
| Day 2 | Research in Sydney and area | 30.00 |
| Day 3 | Travel to North Sydney Resource Center | 30.00 |
| Day 4 | Travel to North Sydney Resource Center | 30.00 |
| **Total** |  | **120.00** |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date of Travel **NL**  Feb 2011 | Details | Amount |
| Day 1 | Sydney, NS – Port aux Basques , NL  Marine Atlantic | 123.50 |
| Day 2 | Port aux Basques, NL– Baie Verte, NL  457 km @ .44/km | 210.08 |
| Day 3 | Research – interviews, observation |  |
| Day 4 | Research – interviews, observation |  |
| Day 5 | Baie Verte, NL – Port aux Basques, NL  457 km @ .44/km | 210.08 |
| Day 6 | Port aux Basques, NL – Sydney, NS  Marine Atlantic | 123.50 |
| Incidentals | 9.00 /day x 6 | 54.00 |
| **Total** |  | **721.16** |

**EXPENSES FOR TRAVEL (FOOD AND LODGING)**

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| Date of Travel **NL**  Feb 2011 | Details | Amount |
| Day 1 | Accommodation/Meals | 150.00 |
| Day 2 | Accommodation/Meals | 150.00 |
| Day 3 | Accommodation/Meals | 150.00 |
| Day 4 | Accommodation/Meals | 150.00 |
| Day 5 | Accommodation/Meals | 150.00 |
| Day 6 | Accommodation/Meals | 150.00 |
| **Total:** |  | **950.00** |

**EXPENSES FOR CBU STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:**

The “Research Objectives” in this proposal clearly outlines five (5) distinct objectives for the research. Two student research assistants are required and will be instrumental to carry out the research objectives. The student researchers employed as part of this research program will be post baccalaureate teacher education students who will have research skills commensurate with their academic experience.

The salary to be paid the assistants is based on a $12.10 hourly wage for 10 hours per week over a 10 week period in the Fall semester 2010. The assistants will be responsible for surveying an extensive catalogue of literacy curriculum materials in both jurisdictions Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. This will involve locating the materials at the CBU curriculum resource collection and also conducting research at the local school district’s Curriculum Resource Center and by accessing government on-line collections of authorized curriculum resources. The volume of materials on the authorized curriculum literacy resource lists for grades 7 to 12 is extensive, and the surveying of these documents will require the assistant of student researchers. .

I have a contact, Ms. Georgina Lake, in Learning Resources, Department of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador who will assist in helping access curriculum documents and resources in that province.

The students will also be trained in the rudiments of Critical Discourse Analysis to allow for a focused screening of materials and the identification of relevant curriculum and resource materials for further and more in-depth analysis.

In the third phase of the research, the students will conduct a survey of bioregional literature using the university library and on- line databases. The search will allow for the future development of a resource catalogue of bioregional literature to be used in teacher education courses and in literacy classrooms by teachers throughout the middle and secondary curriculum in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

**EXPENSES FOR DUPLICATING COSTS:**

I anticipate there will be duplicating costs associated with the survey of curriculum materials in the library, the district resource center, on line and in the school. Relevant sections of teacher manuals, samples of teaching materials, student literature anthologies, and curriculum documents will be copied to facilitate a close analysis at a later time. Much of this work including transcription of interviews will be completed by the student research assistants.

An estimated cost of 300.00 is budgeted for duplicating and office supplies.

**EXPENSES FOR DISSEMINATION**

There will be mailing, postage and courier expenses associated with this research project. It is my plan to collaborate with teacher volunteers prior to my face to face visit with teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. As these teachers develop relevant lesson plans or teach materials in which an environmental or sustainability theme is the focus, it is my intention that these materials will be made available to me. I anticipate that there will be mailing and courier expenses involved.

An estimated cost of 100.00 is budgeted.

**EXPENSES FOR MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS:**

Interviewing will be an important source of data for this research project. To that end a portable digital recorded is necessary to facilitate an accurate recording of the interview sessions.

An estimated cost of 135.98 is budgeted for this item.

Also, as teacher swill be meeting with me outside their regular work hours and taking time out of their busy work schedule to share their lesson plans and their planning strategies, I would like to include a nominal amount for “Volunteer appreciation”. It is my intention to meet with the teacher volunteers over a working lunch as a way of showing my appreciation for their time, effort and commitment.

An estimated cost of $150.00 is budgeted for this item

**RELEVANT SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

Below is a tentative timeline for the proposed research project.

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| --- |
| **Spring/Summer 2010**: Conceptual analysis and research on diverse perspectives and practices in education for sustainability |
| **Summer/Fall 2010:** July/August -Hire and train student research assistants  September/ October - Survey of curriculum documents and resources NS and NL  October/November - Research with urban teachers in Sydney/CBRM  October/ November - Research bioregional literature |
| **Winter 2011:** Research with rural teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador  Analysis of data  Preparation of articles for publication |
| **Spring/Summer 2011**: Submission of articles for publication |

**LIST OF REFERENCES**

Barlow, Z and Stone, M. (Eds.) (2005). *Ecological literacy: Educating our children for a*

*sustainable world.* San Francisco, CA; Sierra Books.

Berthold-Bond, D. (2000). The ethics of place. *Environmental ethics.* 22. 5-24

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*dimensions of life into a science of sustainability.* New York: Doubleday.

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Bergin & Garvey

Gee, J. (1999) *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Routledge

Giroux, H. (1988)**.** *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning.* South

Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey**.**

Gruenewald, D. (2003). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place

conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal***.** 40 (3). 619-648.

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*Canada.* 49,(4). 42-46.

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Guidelines and Recommendation for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability. *Education for Sustainable Development in Action Technical Paper no. 2*. Paris: UNESCO. Available online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001433/143370E.pdf>.

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Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Alberta: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

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*and ecological imagination.* New York: Peter Lang.

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Lawrence Erlbaum.

Sale, K. (2000). *Dwellers in the land: A bioregional vision.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia

Press.

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Barrington, MA: Orion Society.

Stefanovic, I. (2000). *Safeguarding our common future: Rethinking sustainable development*.

Albany: State University of New York Press.

van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive*

*pedagogy.* London, ON: Althouse Press.