

Other Leadership Experiences and Awards

Premier's Collaboration Award (2009) – *South Slave Healthy Communities Partnership*

Premier's Excellence Award (2006) – *South Slave Community Learning Network - Trades Awareness Program*

Director - *NWT Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development* (NWTASCD), Hay River, N.T. (mid to late 1990s)

NWT Mission Staff - *Arctic Winter Games* (1992), Whitehorse, Yukon

NWT Director, *Interchange on Canadian Studies* (1991-Fredericton NB, 1990-Saanich BC)

Research and Teaching Assistant – *Computerized Sports Systems Group*, University of Calgary (1986-87)

Institutional Reports and Publications

2005 *Help! It's Homework Time: Parent Handbook (editor)*

2004 *School Improvement in the South Slave: Community Education Planning & Accountability*

1999 *NWT/Nunavut Educational Leadership Program - Evaluation Report*

1997 *Skills & Attributes of Effective School Principals in the NWT: A Community Perspective (for MEd)*

1993 *School Leadership in the NWT: A Profile for the 90's*

1993 *NWT Principal Certification Program - Evaluation Report*

Presentations – NWT Principal Certification Program plus

Image of the School Leader Role

School Leadership in the NWT

Contemporary Models of Leadership

Goals of Education in the NWT

Decision Making & Problem Solving

Building Community Learning Networks

Community Education Planning

Performance Evaluation for the Marginal Teacher

Entry Plans - A Plan of Entry into a New Principalship

Hiring Practices

Working Together

It's All About Learning



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ORAL EXAMINATION CURTIS BROWN

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
EdD

Monday, December 14, 2009
SFU Vancouver (Room 2250) at 2:00 PM

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair: TBA

Senior Supervisor: Dr. Peter Grimmett
Member: Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones
Internal/External: Dr. Marvin Wideen
External Examiner: Dr. Carolyn Crippen
University of Victoria
Faculty of Education

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN THE CANADIAN NORTH: A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

ABSTRACT

Although decades of concerted efforts and related research are available to us, there remains little in the way of definitive conclusions as to how to improve schools anywhere, let alone schools as faraway and exceptional as those found in the South Slave region of the Northwest Territories (NWT) in northern Canada. The day to day emergencies and demands of the job of teaching children, coordinating programs, supervising staff and administering a school or region tend to consume us to the point that we overlook the factors and strategies that can approach and sustain excellence in our schools.

Advocating for a group of eight school principals and seven regional office administrators and program coordinators, this research endeavoured to determine what is really important to school improvement in small and diverse multi-cultural contexts. A participatory action research design and methodology was used to engage these participant practitioners together in the 'first person' (I and us) assessment and improvement of their own practices by reviewing and reflecting on *school improvement* efforts over the past several years.

Four key themes emerged from this research in response to the research question: *Focus Is Needed*, *Relationships Matter*, *Context is Critical*, and *Servant Leadership Supersedes*. As further validated by the participants, a graphic re-conceptualization of how to improve schools is provided. In short, the foundational components of *context*, *relationships* and *focus* underpin the other key strategic elements: *servant leadership*, *multi-level alignment*, *professional learning communities* and *assessment*.

Academic Record

- 1997 - Master of Education (Educational Leadership), University of Alberta
- 1987 - Bachelor of Education, University of Calgary
- 1985 - Bachelor of Physical Education, University of Calgary

Professional Education Leadership Experience

- 1999 – Superintendent, *South Slave Divisional Education Council*, Fort Smith, Northwest Territories
- 1992 – 2002 Principal, Course Evaluator, Group Facilitator, Presenter, *NWT Principal Certification Program*, Government of the Northwest Territories - Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Yellowknife (part-time contract)
- 1996 – 1999 Director of Education, *Kivalliq Divisional Education Council*, Baker Lake, Northwest Territories/Nunavut
- 1994 – 1996 Supervisor of Schools, *Dogrib Divisional Board of Education*, Rae Edzo, Northwest Territories
- 1991 – 1994 Principal, *Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School & Elementary School* (within-a-school), Dogrib Divisional Board of Education, Rae Edzo, Northwest Territories
- 1988 – 1991 Instructor, *Eastern Arctic Teacher Education Program*, Arctic College, Cape Dorset, Northwest Territories (part-time contract)
- 1990 – 1991 Assistant Principal, *Pitseolak School*, Baffin Divisional Board of Education, Cape Dorset, Northwest Territories