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ABSTRACT

Current approaches to anti-oppressive education in Saskatchewan and in Canada are in dire need of re-evaluation. Outdated approaches to “inclusiveness” include multicultural celebrations, ethnic food fairs, and “nonracist,” “non-oppressive” strategies. Spoken word poetry has emerged in recent years as an engaging, powerful, anti-oppressive tool that has demonstrated a currency among youth. Through semi-structured qualitative interviews with five spoken word artists from varying backgrounds and experiences of oppression, this thesis attempts to describe what it is like to engage with this art form as an anti-oppressive outlet, and what personal and social benefits may ensue. The author, a spoken word artist and racialized person himself, uses existing anti-oppressive theories and auto-ethnographic reflection as interpretive tools in this phenomenological study, which also includes participants’ poetry. Based on the study results, the author builds a case for the advent of spoken word poetry into Saskatchewan secondary educational programming.

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DEDICATION

For young poets. That you may cure the world.

EPIGRAPH

“Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen...”
(Anne Bishop, on how to become an ally, 1994, p. 97).

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