

**Reconciliation in Action and the Community Learning Centres of Quebec:
The experiences of teachers and coordinators engaged in
First Nations, Inuit and Métis social justice projects**

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Graduate and Post-Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of a Masters of Arts in Education

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Abstract

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) called for all provinces and territories in Canada to develop curriculum related to residential schools, most ministries of education began the process of reform. Despite this Call to Action, Quebec remains the only province that has yet to publicly commit to or develop any curricula related to residential schools. In this context, this study examines the Community Learning Centre (CLC) network, which has empowered English schools across Quebec to participate in projects that address the Calls to Action, encouraging social justice and reconciliation. It examines the experiences of teachers and CLC coordinators who have participated in CLC projects between 2012-2016. The findings indicate that there is increasing frustration among teachers concerning the absence of residential school history from the Quebec curriculum. Findings also indicate many pedagogical benefits of teaching for social justice. Finally, the study identifies challenges and best practises, and provides recommendations for program and curriculum development in the movement for reconciliation in education in Quebec.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the Algonquin people, whose beautiful unceded territory I live and work on. I am an uninvited guest to this land, and this dedication is my acknowledgement, honouring and deep gratitude towards the traditional keepers of this land.

This thesis is also dedicated to my students. To my Cree, Métis, Inuit and Algonquin students: thank you for teaching me about your communities, your strengths and your ways of living in the bush. I never knew how to pluck feathers from a “nisk”, or hunt for moose. Thank you for teaching me some of your Languages, but most of all, for trusting that I respect and care for you deeply. To my non-FNIM students: Thank you for learning alongside me, for being open, honest and insightful. For becoming allies of FNIM peoples, for writing countless letters to the Prime Minister, for marching to Parliament Hill year after year, for speaking at events and conferences and finally, for giving your time and passion to make Canada the place we all want to call home.

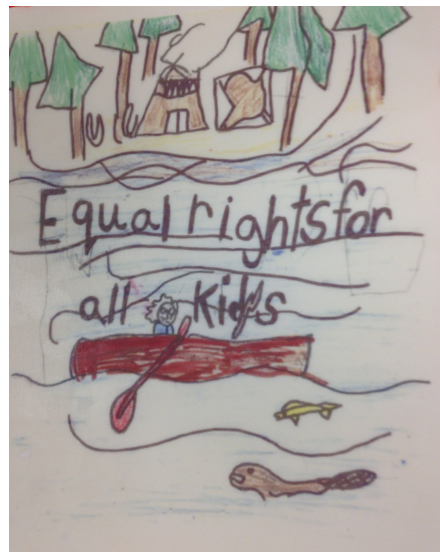


Image 1: “Equal rights for all Kids” by Owen

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My journey towards this completed thesis could be described as arduous and courageous, liberating and almost...impossible. During my seven years as a graduate student, I've been a full-time elementary school teacher. During these years, I've taught over two hundred grades 4, 5 and 6 students and mentored thirteen new teachers. I have raised two children alone, one of whom has special needs. I was hospitalized due to severe arthritis, for which I continue to take weekly injections. In 2013, I was hit by a car while I cycling home from work and fractured my shoulder in two parts, causing ongoing implications to my mobility and health.

My reason for beginning these acknowledgements in this way is a tribute and testament to the profound importance of community. In the paragraphs that follow, you will read about the people who supported and inspired me during these joyful yet difficult years.

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List of Abbreviations

CDA- Community development agent (the current term for CLC coordinators)

CLC- Community Learning Centres

SJ/REC- The Social Justice and Reconciliation projects that the CLC supported,
between 2012-2016

Ed4Rec- Education for Reconciliation

FNCFCS- First Nations Child and Family Caring Society

FNIM- First Nation, Inuit, Métis

LEARN-Leading English Education and Resource Network

MELS- Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sports

POH- Project of Heart

PRT- Provincial Resource Team

QEP- Quebec Education Program (Curriculum)

TRC- Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Key Terms

Residential schools for FNIM people in Canada operated from 1870 to 1996 and there were over 130 residential schools were located across the country. These government-funded, church-run schools were set up to eliminate parental involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of FNIM children. More than 150,000 FNIM children were placed in these schools often against their parents' wishes. Many were forbidden to speak their language and practice their own culture. While there is an estimated 80,000 former students living today, the ongoing impact of residential schools has been felt throughout generations and has contributed to social problems that continue to exist.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was organized by the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The commission was part of the response to the abuse inflicted on FNIM peoples through the residential school system, and the harmful legacy of those institutions. The Commission was officially established on June 2, 2008, and was completed in December 2015.

A Note about Language Use

Throughout my thesis, I have chosen to use the term “First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM)” to describe people who are Indigenous to Canada. Although the term “Indigenous” is currently in popular usage and the term “Aboriginal” is what is used in the Constitution, after consulting with several First Nations, Inuit and Métis community members, I chose the term FNIM. At times, research participants used other terms, which I did not change. Additionally, the CLC Network used the term “Aboriginal Initiatives” until recently, when the dossier was renamed “Education for Reconciliation” (Ed4Rec).

My friend and well-respected activist Cindy Blackstock helped guide me through this decision process. Cindy is the Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, a scholar, and member of the Gitksan First Nation. In reply to my query about language use, here is what she wrote:

I use Indigenous internationally, Aboriginal to describe all three groups in Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis for more specific references. There is an idea that Indigenous should be used domestically as some believe it is less colonial, but I find their arguments unconvincing. Both Indigenous and Aboriginal have western derivations. I would rather use the one that recognizes rights and title in the Constitution.

I also consulted with First Nations, Inuit and Métis teachers and activists that I work with at my school. They felt strongly that the word “Aboriginal” has many negative connotations associated with it in many communities. Out of respect for them, but also cognizant of Cindy’s advice regarding the term “Indigenous,” I chose First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM). I thank all who took the time to guide me through this process.

Chapter 1: Introduction

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) closed in June 2015, after a five-year cross-Canada consultation process, it released 94 Calls to Action. One of them, Call to Action 62, urged each province and territory to “make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students” (TRC, 2015). The TRC also emphasized the necessity for all Canadians to learn about the importance of historical relationships, treaties and land claims, arguing that while education was at the heart of the residential schools problem, it is also a key part of the solution.

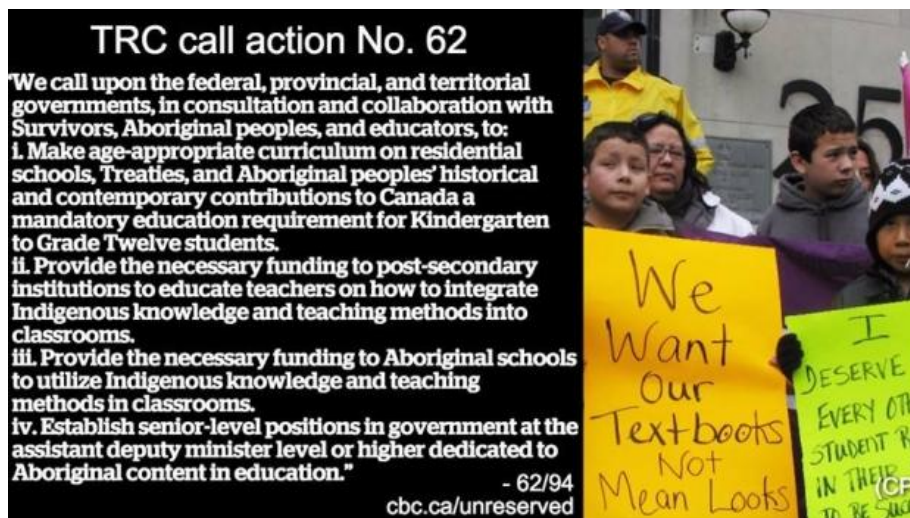


Image 2: Call to Action No. 62, www.cbc.ca/unreserved

Before the Calls to Action were published, many provinces and territories had developed curriculum that included residential schools, other impacts of colonization and the contributions of FNIM peoples’ to Canada. In both Saskatchewan and Alberta, for example, all students in provincially run schools learn about residential schools in their Grade 4, 7, 8 and 10 Social Studies courses. They also learn about treaties from Kindergarten to Grade 12 through the

provincially mandated treaty education curricula. Manitoba has an initiative called “From Apology to Reconciliation” that became part of the Grade 9 Social Studies curriculum and Grade 11 History curriculum in 2011. Prior to this, students learned about residential schools, but teachers had less training and fewer materials and resources. The other provinces, with the exception of Quebec, have varying strategies and levels of public commitment, but all are moving forward. Moreover, all three territories have mandated Grade 10 curriculum in which students learn about residential schools (Kairos, 2015).

In response to the Calls to Action, Kairos, a Canadian faith-based ecumenical organization that works for social change, launched a campaign called “Education for Reconciliation”. As part of this campaign, it created a “Report Card” on Provincial and Territorial Curriculum on Indigenous Peoples as a baseline to assess progress in achieving reconciliation through education in schools across Canada. According to this Report Card, the curriculum in Quebec includes very little content on Indigenous peoples and nothing on residential schools (see Image 3). This has not been without attempts for change, however. In 2013, the Quebec Native Women’s Association circulated a petition in connection with the TRC’s national event in Montreal, asking for the high school history curriculum to include the history of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNIM) peoples, including residential schools. They also asked that the curriculum reform take place in collaboration with Indigenous organizations and experts. Nothing came of this request. More recently, the Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide is working to urge the province to include genocide studies in the Quebec high school curriculum, with specific reference to the dark history of residential schools. In 2015, after meeting with the Ministry of Education, the group was told by a spokesperson that in Quebec, “compulsory programs do not prescribe any specific knowledge that must be acquired concerning residential schools, however,

the programs give teachers enough flexibility regarding the historical knowledge that may be taught” (as cited in Rowe, 2015).

QUEBEC			
Provincial Curriculum:	<i>Covers residential schools, Treaties and the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples</i>	Mandatory	Taught from Kindergarten to Grade 12
Public Commitment	Significant Work Required	Significant Work Required	Significant Work Required
Actual Implementation	Significant Work Required	Significant Work Required	Significant Work Required

Image 3: The Kairos report card for Quebec on Education for Reconciliation. (Kairos, 2015)

Despite the lack of mandated curriculum in Quebec, the Kairos Report Card does acknowledge work happening within the Quebec-based network of “Community Learning Centre” (CLC) schools, which work with all nine English school boards across the province. Remarkably, despite the absence of a mandated curriculum, Quebec has become a leader in the implementation of the Calls to Action, through the work being done across the CLC network. Since 2012, thousands of Quebec students and teachers have learned about the historical and current relationships between FNIM and non-FNIM people in Canada through social justice and reconciliation projects (SJ/REC). In CLC Schools, there is an active and rapidly increasing use of resources such as, Project of Heart (POH), Legacy of Hope Foundation’s *100 Years of Loss Kit*, the Kairos Blanket Exercise and participation in First Nation Child & Family Caring Society (FNCFCS) campaigns (see Table 2 for a description of these projects and organizations).

This thesis draws upon my experiences as a classroom teacher at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School (PETES) in Gatineau, Quebec and my involvement in the CLC Aboriginal network. Since 2010, my students and I have been exploring aspects of Canadian history that are

not formally included in the provincial curriculum. During these studies, my students and I have come to learn about both past and current inequities that FNIM peoples often face and we have undertaken social justice actions towards reconciliation. Over the years, we participated in several letter-writing campaigns to the Prime Minister to address inequity in First Nations education. We also worked with Cindy Blackstock and the FNCFCSS to bring attention to issues of discrimination in healthcare and social services for First Nations children living on reserves. My students and I travelled to several schools to teach students and teachers about residential schools and current inequities that many FNIM communities face today. The work that my students and I have done was recognized nationally when we won the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of the Child “Child Supporter” Award in 2012 and the Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce Award in 2014, for being advocates for the safety, health and well being of FNIM children and youth.

One of the reasons our work was recognized nationally was because of the involvement of the CLC Provincial Resource Team (PRT). When our school joined the CLC network in 2011, I began to work with Sabrina Bonfonti, the PRT member holding the Aboriginal Initiatives dossier. Sabrina reached out to me specifically because I had been involved in reconciliation work prior to the creation of the Aboriginal dossier. Sabrina and I spoke about how to share the SJ/REC projects that I was doing with teachers in the CLC network of schools. Therefore, in 2012, I presented my work on “Shannen’s Dream” and POH to teachers at the annual CLC conference in Montreal. As a result, over five hundred students and teachers participated in POH, working with a FNIM elder and artist to create a piece of artwork to commemorate children who lost their lives in residential schools. The CLCs also partnered with the TRC Education Day event in Montreal in 2013 where the reconciliation work of Quebec schools was showcased. In 2014, we partnered with Kairos, to create a “Blanket exercise educational kit” engage students

and teachers in learning about treaties, land claims and historical relationships between FNIM and non-FNIM Canadians. This project was piloted across several CLC schools in Quebec. Finally, in 2015, the CLC's supported the "Planting Memories, Honouring Dreams" heart gardens- a collaborative campaign between the Kairos and the FNCFCFS. Currently, many CLC schools continue to include the SJ/REC projects in their classrooms and communities, feeling strongly that the education system in Quebec needs to honour and implement the Calls to Action for education. The CLC network will not wait for change to the curriculum, however- the change has already begun, and the results have been empowering, inspiring and fundamental to the education of Quebec students and teachers.

These experiences put me in a unique position to have a significant role in the development of the CLC Aboriginal dossier, and have allowed me to work with CLC teachers and coordinators for many years on SJ/REC projects. My interest in teaching for social justice and, specifically, decolonizing pedagogy, became the basis for this thesis. I was interested to examine the experiences of teachers and coordinators as they engaged in the SJ/REC projects. Many teachers had reported high engagement from their students and also a shift in pedagogy in their own practise. Moreover, teachers were eager to learn more about the ongoing impact of colonization, despite the absence of curriculum to support them. Given the lack of research on teaching for social justice using a decolonizing framework, and the absence of a curriculum that supports education for reconciliation, I felt that my research had the potential to address a gap in the current literature. I also felt that the experiences of teachers and coordinators teaching for social justice and reconciliation could provide valuable insight on critical and decolonizing pedagogies. My research objectives, therefore, were to examine the experiences that teachers and coordinators have while teaching for social justice and reconciliation. Specifically, I wished to

examine what additional effects may be associated with teaching for social justice. I was also my intention to examine the challenges that teachers and coordinators have with regard to teaching SJ/REC projects and how they overcome them.

In the following chapters, I will examine the experiences of teachers, coordinators and students involved in the CLC SJ/REC projects. In chapter 2, I examine the findings of the literature, beginning with an analysis of the concept of “teaching for social justice” as a transformative practice rooted in critical pedagogy. From there, I discuss the positioning of critical pedagogy within the western paradigm, and trouble this by introducing the concept of red pedagogy. The intersection between critical pedagogy and red pedagogy provides a way for me to be mindful of the western derivations of critical theories, as well as my own biases and limitations. Finally, I examine the shifting climate in education from that of national and global citizenship towards pedagogy of decolonization, whereby Canadians have the opportunity to learn, and become unsettled, in the colonial narratives that are not often taught, acknowledged or reconciled. Chapter 3 is a detailed description of the current structure, mandate and objectives of the CLCs of Quebec, and in particular, that of the Aboriginal/Ed4Rec dossier, ending with the introduction of my research questions. Chapter 4 is a presentation of my research methodology, instruments, description of participants and data analysis. In chapters 5 and 6, I present the findings from my fieldwork, organized by themes that encompass the patterns and ideas that emerged through my data analysis. Chapter 5, entitled, “Awakening to the Truth of our History,” examines the reasons why teachers and coordinators become involved in reconciliation for education, as well as their experiences and perceptions of their student’s understandings. Chapter 6, “Working towards Social Justice and Reconciliation,” examines best practices, challenges, how these are overcome, and ways forward. In Chapter 7, I discuss my findings in the context of

teaching for social justice using a decolonizing pedagogy. I also discuss the current structure of the CLC/LEARN, suggesting that my research findings should be considered in the development of the Ed4Rec dossier. I also provide a framework for engaging in SJ/REC work, as well as recommendations for future curriculum and programs.

Chapter 2:

From Teaching for Social Justice to Education for Reconciliation

2.1 Teaching for Social Justice

Teaching for social justice occurs in a variety of educational contexts and is therefore broadly defined. It has been referred to as culturally relevant teaching, multicultural teaching, teaching for diversity, democratic teaching, citizenship education and anti-racist and anti-oppressive education (Philpott & Dagenais, 2011). Despite these varying definitions, teaching for social justice is fundamental for education that aims to illuminate systems of inequality, disparity and oppression (Shields & Mohan, 2008). Its extensive scope, cross-curricular orientation and potential to engage students in education for progressive change make it a topic of expanding research and curriculum development (Philpott & Dagenais, 2011). Below are some key aspects of teaching for social justice.

2.1.1 As a Transformative Practice

Teaching for social justice is a transformative practice, based on the assumption that informed actions can make a difference in the world (Smith, 2002). Paulo Freire (1972), a major pioneer in this field, contended that through respectful, deep and cooperative dialogue, transformation of oppressive structures could take place in both classrooms and communities. This understanding of pedagogy was in direct opposition to what he called “banking education,” whereby teachers make deposits of information which students are to receive, memorize, and repeat. The banking model of education provides a narrative experience, in which the teacher is the narrator and the student a passive listener. In this sense, the teacher is merely tasked with filling the student with narrations, rather than inspiring questions and reflective understandings that acknowledge the student’s life experiences and realities. Freire argued that “the more

students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (1972, p. 55).

In contrast to the ‘banking model’ of teaching, teaching for social justice deepens understanding, builds social capital, and enhances a sense of community (Freire, 1972). It is a pedagogical approach that critiques and challenges, transforms and empowers (Merriam, 2009). This type of consciousness-raising education motivates students to think about their place in the world from a critical perspective, and encourages transformative learning wherein students can reach deeper, richer and more textured understandings of themselves and their world (Torres & Noguera, 2008). Teaching for social justice involves expanding the point of consciousness-raising in the classroom beyond simply increased awareness, in that it is oriented toward motivating and empowering students to take action towards injustice collectively (Peters, 2012).

2.1 2. Critical Pedagogy

In the framework of teaching for social justice, critical pedagogy is a process by which we can raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power in schools (McLaren, 2003). Social justice and critical pedagogy are explicitly linked when teachers become concerned with reading history as part of a “larger project of reclaiming power and identity, particularly as these are shaped around the categories of race, gender, class, and ethnicity” (Giroux, 2006, p. 5). In this regard, schools have the power to become strategic sites to expand the human capacities of compassion and empathy, while helping students develop their sense of morality and responsibility as active and engaged citizens (Torres, 1998). Central to theories of critical pedagogy and transformative education is praxis (Breuing, 2009) that links social issues to actions. In this way, it provides the basis for students to be actively engaged in

the production of discourses that provide them with a sense of identity, community, and a commitment to be responsible and reflective about their actions (Bizzell, 1991). When engaging in this work, teachers are reflective practitioners committed to developing pedagogy that focuses on both the importance of cultural differences as well as the importance of individuals communicating across various social, cultural, and political borders (Giroux, 2006).

Classrooms where critical pedagogy is practiced examine curriculum from a critical stance, where the historical constructions of texts not only become the object of study but also of doubt (McLaren 2003). In this way, classrooms become revitalizing spaces, whereby students are required to participate in experiences that affect society rather than “consuming and regurgitating enshrined knowledge constructs” (McLaren, 2003, p. 84). Critical pedagogy is concerned with what students and teachers can do to create change and also with the cultural politics that support those practises (McLaren 2003). In this regard, critical pedagogy is a process by which educators can help students use their experiences and make changes that are liberating and transformative for themselves, their schools and the broader community (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

2.1 3. Red Pedagogy: Troubling the colonial narratives of Western-based critical pedagogy

While the contributions of critical pedagogy are undeniably important to the movement for social justice and transformative education, their derivations are based in western epistemology. Red pedagogy (Grande, 2004) is an Indigenous pedagogy that examines the intersections between critical theory and Indigenous discourse. The historical roots of red pedagogy lie in the attempts to colonize, civilize and Christianise the minds of the American Indian (Grande, handbook) and the subsequent miseducation of American Indians that persists to this day. Although many educators have advocated for “culturally based education (CBE), which recognizes the role of language and culture, red pedagogy asserts that CBE does not actually

address the “ways in which power and domination inform the processes of schooling itself” (p. 236). To have real change, Grande asserts that an analysis of colonialism and education reform must take place concurrently. Furthermore, red pedagogy asserts that although critical theorists, and specifically, critical pedagogues, question structures and systems of oppression and “take seriously the claims of struggles of colonized peoples” (p.236) their vision is grounded in western concepts of democracy and justice (Grande, 2008). In contrast, red pedagogy is a way to trouble the constructs of power within critical pedagogy itself, and as a way to diversify and broaden our understandings of critical theories, so that new questions and perspectives can be generated (McLaren, 2003). Red pedagogy reminds us that critical theorists often fail to acknowledge their own “enmeshment with the western paradigm...however this must not be viewed as a deficiency....but rather theorized as points of contention, helping to define the spaces in between the western and indigenous thought worlds” (Grande, 2004, p. 165-166).

2.2 Transformative approaches to teaching and learning Canadian history

In this section, I will examine the changes that have taken place in teaching for social justice in Canada. First, I examine the roles of citizenship education and global citizenship education, arguing that while national and global citizenship are transformative approaches, they are based on the colonial and exclusive dimensions of citizenship. Consequently, FNIM peoples in in Canada have been marginalized in the context of citizenship education. Decolonizing pedagogies, which focus on social justice and reconciliation, are way to transform and broaden our approaches to teaching and learning Canadian history.

2.2.1. Moving from Citizenship Education to Decolonizing Pedagogy and Reconciliation

Much of the discourse around teaching for social justice in Canada has grown out of the contention that schools no longer explicitly teach students to be socially responsible citizens and

that social responsibility is no longer prominent in curricula (Canadian International Development Agency, 2002). In response to this, many ministries of education have developed a framework for citizenship education (Philpott & Dagenais, 2011). In British Columbia, for example, a curriculum has been developed to help students contribute to the classroom community, solve problems peacefully, defend human rights and develop democratic principles (Government of British Columbia, 2001). Likewise, in 2002, the Ministry of Education in Québec implemented a curriculum first entitled “Moral Education,” which was later re-developed and renamed, “Ethics and Religious Culture” (ERC). ERC aims to engage students in dialogue, help them understand the phenomenon of religion and develop their abilities to reflect on ethical questions (Government of Québec, 2015). The ideals of democracy and citizenship are evident in the curriculum documents of both Québec and B.C., along with aspirations to enable students to become defenders of human rights and engage in social justice activities. More often than not, however, these admirable goals translate into once-a-month multicultural fairs and celebrations to acknowledge the virtuous acts of certain students (Philpot & Dagenais, 2011). This is perhaps partly due to the fact that “there has not been a single conception of citizenship that has formed the basis for education but rather differing conceptions which exist along a continuum from elitist to activist” (Sears, Clarke, and Hughes, 1999, p. 124).

In contrast to citizenship education, which focuses on a nationalism and civics, global citizenship is centered on fostering understanding of global issues through critical thinking and social justice (Andreotti, 2006). Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. Shultz et al. have argued that global citizenship ought to focus on “the current hegemonic relations that sustain global inequities...and

the deconstruction of colonialism” (2011). A transformative model of global citizenship is fundamentally about changed relationships, which works toward justice and equality (Carr, Howard & Pluime, 2014).

Although both citizenship education and global citizenship have the potential to be transformative for teaching and learning, neither approach addresses reconciliation or social justice for FNIM peoples in Canada. For classrooms to be sites of critical inquiry and transformation, a decolonizing pedagogy that involves learning about residential schools, impacts of colonization and current inequities is needed in the Canadian educational system.

2.2 2. Decolonizing the pedagogy and curriculum of Canadian history

Leanne Simpson, an Anishinaabeg woman, writes a narrative about her experience in mainstream Canadian schools as a child, addressing the systemic colonial depictions that are assumed and perpetuated:

My experience of education, from kindergarten to graduate school, was one of coping with someone else’s agenda, curriculum, and pedagogy, someone who was neither interested in my well being...nor interested in my connection to my homeland, my language or history, nor my Nishnaabeg intelligence. No one ever asked me what I was interested in, nor did they ask for my consent to participate in their system. My experience of education was one of continually being measured against a set of principles that required surrender to an assimilative colonial agenda in order to fulfill those principles. I distinctly remember being in grade 3, at a class trip to the sugar bush, and the teacher showing us two methods of making maple syrup – the pioneer method which involved a black pot over an open fire and clean sap, and the “Indian method” –

which involved a hollowed out log in an unlit fire, with large rocks in the log to heat the sap up – sap which had bark, insects, dirt and scum over it. The teacher asked us which method we would use – being the only native kid in the class, I was the only one that chose the “Indian method” (2014, p.6)

Simpson’s experience of the colonial model of education in Canada illustrates the need for a decolonizing pedagogy. Decolonization is a concept that has different meanings across varying contexts, simultaneously evoking a repudiation of a predominant historical narrative, a way of knowing that rejects a Eurocentric perspective for a multifaceted one, and of a social justice movement that aligns non-Indigenous with Indigenous people as allies to right the wrongs of colonial domination (Barney, K. & Mackinlay, E., 2014). Decolonization, therefore, is a way to engage and oppose colonialism and to support Indigenous struggles for recognition of their sovereignty, land, languages and cultures (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and is not simply about participating in a ceremony or a lesson about culture, but something much more unsettling. Regan (2010) argues that decolonization “involves a paradigm shift from a culture of denial to the making of space for Indigenous political philosophies and knowledge systems as they resurge, thereby shifting cultural perceptions and power relations in real ways” (p. 189). If decolonization is to achieve its primary goals of healing, restoring dignity and applying fundamental human rights for Indigenous peoples, then it must necessarily entail a “complex arrangement of conscientization, resistance and transformative praxis” (Battiste, 2000, p.21). As decolonization is an opportunity to reverse and change the process of colonization (Chilisa, 2012), education, therefore, must be the site of decolonization efforts, as education was central to the process of colonization.

Clearly, decolonization involves a curriculum and pedagogy that includes a more honest

history of Canada rather than the standard one of denial (Regan, 2010). Curriculum deconstruction involves uncovering the contextual, political and historical layers from which certain narratives emerge, and are made possible through the stories and respective national mythologies we tell one another in schools (Ng-A-Fook, 2007). As part of this process of deconstruction, Smith et al (2011) examine the establishment of Canadian schooling and contend that it is often our own institutional socialization that continues to perpetuate and develop “myths about the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal creation stories we tell (or don’t tell) each other” (p. 54). The stories of the Canadian nation as a colonial fort are deeply embedded within our historical understandings and work to rationalize and naturalize the divide separating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians (Donald, 2009). This divide is exacerbated in curriculum documents, intensifying the already systemic notion that FNIM Canadians occupy separate entities. Transforming curriculum would create space for the pedagogical value that Indigenous knowledge might bring to our contemporary educational contexts (Battiste 2011) and potentially diminish the ambivalence that many Canadians have regarding their relations to the history of Canada. A transformed curriculum that embraces a decolonizing pedagogy would encourage teachers and students to learn the narratives colonialism has asked us to forget (Ng-A-Fook, 2013).

Although the concept of decolonization in the context of education is a prevalent topic in teaching today, notions of what a decolonizing pedagogy is continue to develop, with much of the literature focused on the rationale of the pedagogy, rather than describing it or the conditions under which it can be successfully implemented. As McGregor (2012) has argued, just as the term decolonization ought to focus on Indigenous knowledge and rights to land, decolonizing pedagogy must refer to teaching and learning approaches that deconstruct mainstream historical

narratives and recognize Indigenous rights to land and sovereignty, and honour and respect Indigenous ways of knowing (McGregor, 2012). Decolonizing work involves partnerships with local Indigenous people, and although “decolonization is not a substitute for ‘human rights’ or ‘social justice... both are undoubtedly connected in various ways” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 23). Teaching for social justice through a decolonizing framework addresses the forces of cultural genocide, colonization and colonial policy that continue to shape the pedagogy and curriculum in schools (Simpson, 2004) and allow us to understand how curriculum, schools and teachers are impacted by colonial narratives and the reproduction of colonial hegemonies (Gatimu, 2009). Teaching for social justice using a decolonizing framework occurs when the unceded, traditional lands of the people that schools are built on are acknowledged, and fosters culturally *relational* teaching (Donald, 2011). Culturally relational teaching creates space for teachers and students to position themselves in relation to, and with, the stories they are learning, rather than simply learning *about* them. This requires a storied approach to knowledge that helps learners see themselves implicated in, and in relation to, what they are learning (Donald, 2011) rather than separated from it. Furthermore, teaching for social justice through a decolonizing approach involves the praxis of reconciliation. Although the work towards reconciliation in Canada began long before the federal government’s June 2008 apology to Indigenous peoples for its role in the operation of residential schools (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013), the apology is often seen as the official beginning of the movement towards reconciliation in Canada. Since this time, there have been “many shortcomings of the government’s reconciliatory gestures, underscoring how the state often uses reconciliation as an attempt to impose closure on historical injuries rather than redress injustice” (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013, p. 7). True reconciliation involves action and change, namely through constitutional power for FNIM peoples, sovereignty, and by immediate

changes in federal funding and policy to address the present conditions of poverty, disproportionate rates of incarceration and suicide, discriminatory child welfare services and inequitable access to healthcare and education, substandard housing lived by many FNIM peoples.

In recognition of the importance of a decolonizing approach, the Canadian Education Association (CEA) recommends that all schools across Canada examine how and to what extent their curricular pedagogy reflects the presence of FNIM peoples and the valid contribution of Indigenous knowledge (Castellano, 2014). Many ministries of education in Canada are “Indigenizing” their curricula to promote good relations in the interest of social justice for FNIM peoples (Scully, 2012). Indigenizing programs refers not only to including and ensuring FNIM content, contribution and history, but also addressing the specific needs and challenges of FNMI students.

In June 2015, Canada’s universities adopted a set of principles outlining their “shared commitment” to enhance educational opportunities for Indigenous students. The principles included closing the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and developing more opportunities for Indigenous students at every level. The principles also recognize the importance of greater Indigenization of the curriculum and enhanced Indigenous education leadership at all levels of the university (Charbonneau, 2015). Likewise, in Alberta, recent curriculum documents acknowledge that the current predominantly Eurocentric conventional school system presents challenges to students with different ways of knowing, and that curriculum designers need to have a better understanding of what ways of knowing means, and what it means for curricula (Alberta Education, 2015).

In Quebec, although calls for FNIM involvement in the current revision of history have been ongoing, the Quebec Ministry of Education (MELS) continues to exclude itself from the calls to action of the TRC, by developing curriculum to ensure that all children are taught about FNIM history, with a specific focus on residential schools. In response to this lack of curricula, the CLC Aboriginal network developed a framework that encourages teachers and students to engage in decolonizing pedagogy, with a specific focus on social justice and reconciliation. The SJ/REC projects created space for the teaching and learning of the history and perspectives currently excluded from the provincial curriculum. Furthermore, these projects have provided opportunities for educators across Quebec to teach for social justice, form partnerships with FNIM communities, and examine Canadian history using a decolonizing pedagogy.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I began by discussing the literature on teaching for social justice, critical pedagogy and red pedagogy and examining the ways they are related. I then explore transformative approaches to teaching Canadian history, beginning with the examination of citizenship education and global citizenship education. Acknowledging that these are often considered to be mainstays of teaching for social justice, I introduced the notion that they exclude FNIM peoples due to their nationalistic and colonial derivations. In contrast to these approaches, I examined the shift from an education of colonialism to that of decolonization, discussing this in relation to our understandings of reconciliation, curriculums, and our classrooms. I conclude the chapter by acknowledging that all education ministries in Canada have begun the process of “decolonizing the curriculum”, except in Quebec. In the next chapter, I will explore how the CLC Initiative, and the Aboriginal dossier in particular, is a way for teachers and students in Quebec to participate in the TRC Calls to Action and in reconciliation.

Chapter 3:

The Community Learning Centres (CLCs) of Quebec

In this chapter, I will discuss the history and mandate of the CLCs of Quebec and examine their relationship to FNIM communities and reconciliation. I will examine the current structure of the CLCs, briefly commenting on the recent restructuring and partnership with the Leading English Arts Resource Network (LEARN). Within this examination, I will introduce Sabrina Bonfonti, the member of the Provincial Resource Team (PRT) responsible for the Aboriginal dossier. I will also explore FNIM social justice initiatives that CLC schools have undertaken to improve and promote understanding, reconciliation and action and describe the SJ/REC projects and the partnerships in detail. Finally, I will introduce my research questions, which examine the experiences of teachers and coordinators who are teaching for social justice.

3.1 History, objectives and current structure of the CLCs

3.1.1. The beginnings and transition to LEARN

In the province of Quebec, English language-minority communities do not always have equitable access to education or health and social services (Lamarre, 2016). Funded through the Canada-Quebec Agreement for Minority Language Education and Second Language Instruction, the CLC Initiative was established to help address this gap by building partnerships between English schools and their communities. Launched in 2006 with 15 schools, today the CLC network has expanded to include more than 74 schools, located in urban, rural, and remote communities (Lamarre, 2016). Not every English school in Quebec has a CLC, but those that do are referred to as “CLC schools” and are part of the “CLC network”. The CLC Network is made up of the Provincial Resource Team (PRT), CLC coordinators, school principals and teachers (see Table 1). The PRT is made up of a director and several members who work on specific

dossiers that support community service learning, Aboriginal Initiatives, environmental projects and many others. The role of the PRT is also to support CLC coordinators and teachers by providing project ideas, resources and partnerships. Moreover, the PRT is also responsible for planning yearly conferences, which bring administrators, teachers and coordinators together to share, network and learn.

The CLC coordinators, (now called Community Development Agents or CDAs), work closely with the members of the PRT and the school principal and staff to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with community-based organizations, municipalities, local businesses, families, and community members. Each CLC school has a coordinator, who also works to support teachers in the school who are involved in CLC projects. Each CLC school is unique, and coordinators, principals and teachers strive to create partnerships that address specific needs in the school community. Community needs often encompass intergenerational, community service and FNIM projects.

Initially, the CLC Initiative was administered by the Quebec Ministry of Education (MELS), under the Secteur Services à la communauté Anglophone. In 2014, however, the CLCs became part of LEARN, a non-profit organization that serves the public and private Anglophone, and Aboriginal, Youth and Adult Education sectors of Québec.

3.2 The CLC Aboriginal Initiatives (recently renamed “Education for Reconciliation”)

3.2.1. Intentions and Vision

Historically, the CLCs have supported Anglophone and FNIM communities by “helping to meet the needs of learners, their families and the wider community, with an aim to support the holistic development of citizens and community through lifelong learning” (Laugevin, 2010, p.4). For many teachers and students, the CLC model allows them the freedom to embrace

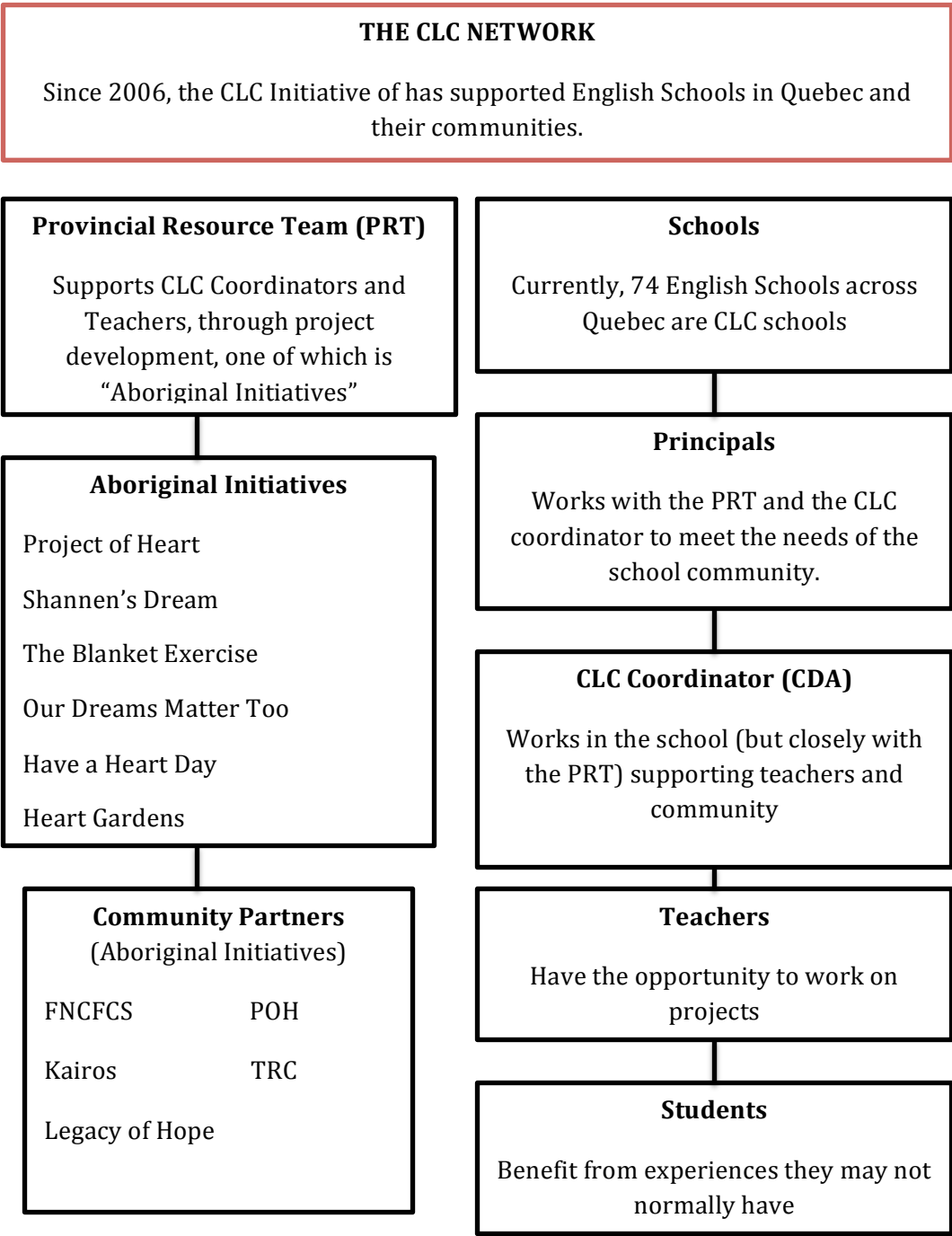


Table 1: The CLC Network. This table shows the organization of the CLC Network in Quebec. The PRT works to support teachers and coordinators and has several specific dossiers, one being “Aboriginal Initiatives.” The PRT introduces project ideas to coordinators, who work in the schools, to support teachers and students and form community partnerships. Teachers may also work directly with the PRT for support and resources. Students benefit by having learning opportunities they would normally not experience.

curriculum content and experiment with pedagogy that is considered “outside the margins” of the standard curriculum, providing opportunities “to learn things that would otherwise not be possible” (English Montreal School Board, 2012, para. 5). The programs supported by the CLCs encourage relationships beyond the walls of the school and encourage students and teachers to engage in cross-curricular community-based activities. Many of these activities encompass participatory projects that not only serve a purpose in the community, but also work to transform inequitable social structures, as they involve students participating in social justice projects with a goal to enact social change.

3.2.2. Sabrina Bonfonti and the Aboriginal Dossier

The Aboriginal initiatives dossier has developed within the CLC initiative since September 2011 and reflects the essence of CLC philosophy in that it leverages school-community partnerships (CLC, 2013). The dossier was created when Sabrina Bonfonti was hired to be part of the PRT and discussed adding an Aboriginal dossier to the existing work of the CLCs. Sabrina holds a MA in Human Systems Intervention from Concordia University. Prior to joining the PRT, Sabrina lived and worked in the Subarctic in Shefferville, QC, with the Naskapi Nation, on youth programming and cultural continuity. Although originally hired to work on drug and crime prevention, Sabrina recognized that cultural continuity was key to the prevention of crime among FNIM youth. Given this experience, Sabrina was tasked with the Aboriginal and Intergenerational dossiers, as well as other responsibilities such as supporting CLC coordinators in clusters of schools. Although the initial intention of the Aboriginal dossier would be to support CLC schools with high populations of FNIM students, the dossier became focused on advocacy for all students to learn about residential schools, colonial history and participation in reconciliation. Believing that inspiration and emotion is the way to engage people, Sabrina When


asked her colleagues at the PRT if they knew any teachers who were doing reconciliation work in the CLC network. She was referred to me, and we met in the fall of 2011 to discuss projects that could be introduced to the network.


In the spring of 2012, Sabrina introduced Project of Heart (POH) to a group of teachers, coordinators and principals at a conference on Montreal. She did this by showing them a video that my students had made about their journey through POH. When the video ended, many people in the room were moved by emotion, as many had never before heard about residential schools. Sabrina asked them to join the movement for reconciliation and, that spring, we launched POH across CLC schools in Quebec, with me presenting work from my own classroom. Each year since, more schools have participated, and more projects have been done. Table 2 describes the social justice reconciliation projects (referred to as SJ/REC projects, or “the projects”) and the schools involved, while Table 3 shows the increase in school participation in the projects between 2012-2016. The SJ/REC projects are directly related to the CLC framework by involving FNIM communities as participants in the evolution of schools and communities (Laugevin, 2010). Specifically, by supporting students in learning about FNIM cultures and by building relationships between non-FNIM and FNIM communities, the CLC provides a context for decolonizing pedagogy in their schools. These partnerships build capacity for non-FNIM Canadians to better understand their relationship with FNIM people and to take actions toward reconciliation. Many of the SJ/REC projects fall into one of these four areas:

- ◆ Cultural Awareness through contact with an Aboriginal person or organization
- ◆ Knowledge of Aboriginal history and/or contemporary issues through curriculum
- ◆ Reconciliatory relationships established

- ◆ Extra-curricular projects to expand or share knowledge developed

Table 2: The CLC SJ/REC projects

<p>CLC SJ/REC Projects</p> <p>Schools/Years Involved</p>	<p>Description of Projects and Partner Organizations</p>
<p>Shannen’s Dream</p> <p>Schools 6, 7, 9, 11</p> <p>(2012)</p>  <p>The image shows the 'Shannen's Dream' logo with the tagline 'safe and comfy schools. equitable education.' Below the logo is a quote: 'School should be a time for dreams. Every kid deserves this.' -Shannen Koostachin. Underneath is a photograph of Shannen Koostachin speaking at a microphone. At the bottom, it says 'Help end the underfunding of First Nations schools. Show your support at www.shannensdream.ca'.</p>	<p>Shannen Koostachin, a youth education advocate from of the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, had a dream: safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for First Nations children and youth. Many First Nations schools receive less funding per student than provincial and territorial schools, and no funding for things like libraries, computers, languages or extracurricular activities. Many also do not provide a safe and appropriate learning environment, and may pose serious health concerns, including mold contamination, high carbon dioxide levels, rodent infestations, sewage, and inadequate or lack of heating. Shannen worked tirelessly to try to convince the federal government to give First Nations children a proper education. Unfortunately, she passed away in a car</p>

	<p>accident at the age of 15 before her dream could come true. But it did. On June 22, 2012—the day Shannen would have graduated—construction started for a new school in Attawapiskat. The new school opened in August 2014 (CBC).</p> <p>The Shannen’s Dream campaign is led by The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFCS). FNCFCS provides research, policy, professional development and networking support to in caring for First Nations children, youth and families. Cindy Blackstock is the Executive Director of the FNCFCS</p>
<p>The Blanket Exercise</p> <p>Schools 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11</p> <p>(2014)</p>	<p>The Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that teaches the Indigenous rights history that is rarely taught. Developed in response to the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples—which recommended education on Canadian-Indigenous history as one of the key steps to reconciliation, the Blanket Exercise covers over 500 years of history in a one and a half</p>



hour participatory workshop. Blanket Exercise participants take on the roles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Standing on blankets that represent the land, they walk through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. They are directed by facilitators representing a narrator (or narrators) and the European colonizers. Participants are drawn into the experience by reading scrolls and carrying cards, which ultimately determine their outcomes. By engaging on an emotional and intellectual level, the Blanket Exercise effectively educates and increases empathy.

The Blanket Exercise was developed and is supported by Kairos, a Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives (founded in 2001) organization that affects social change through advocacy, education and research programs.

Project of Heart
 Schools 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11
(2012)



Project of Heart is an inquiry based, hands-on, collaborative, inter-generational, artistic journey of seeking truth about the history of




Aboriginal people in Canada. Its purpose is to examine the history and legacy of residential schools in Canada and to seek the truth about that history, leading to the acknowledgement of the extent of loss to former students, their families and communities. Participants in the project journey on a 6-step process, which begins with research and learning about residential schools in Canada, meeting and listening to a survivor share their stories, and commemorating the children who lost their lives through an artistic response. Project of Heart seeks to connect past injustices with current ones, calling on Canadians to take social justice actions, such as becoming aware and involved in issues surrounding MMIW, child welfare, education on reserves and Indigenous rights.

TRC Education Day
 Schools 2, 6, 7, 8, 11
(2013)

As the TRC travelled across Canada hearing the stories of residential school survivors, National events were held in major cities. As part of the TRC's National Event in Quebec,

	<p>elementary and high school students participated in Education Day, where they had the chance to experience activities geared towards introducing them to the history and effects of residential schools in Canada. The CLCs partnered with the TRC for this event, with students sharing their stories and feelings about learning about residential schools. The CLCs also created and showed a video of the activism and learning they had done around residential schools. Other students shared messages about what reconciliation meant to them.</p>
<p>Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams</p> <p>Schools 2, 6, 7, 9, 11</p> <p>(2015)</p> 	<p>Celebrated in May and June, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams invites individuals and schools to join in reconciliation by planting heart gardens in their communities. Heart gardens honour residential school survivors and their families, as well as the work of the TRC. Each heart represents the memory of a child lost to the residential school</p>

	<p>system, and the act of planting represents that individual's commitment to finding their place in reconciliation. This campaign is organized by the FNCFCS and Kairos.</p>
<p>Our Dreams Matter Too Schools 6, 7, 9, 11 (2012)</p> 	<p>Our Dreams Matter Too is a walk and letter-writing event supporting culturally based equity for First Nations children. In 2016, there were 21 Our Dreams Matter Too walks across Canada, and over 1,300 walkers!</p>

(Information was found on the following websites: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/>, <https://fncaringsociety.com/> and <http://www.poh.ca> <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>)

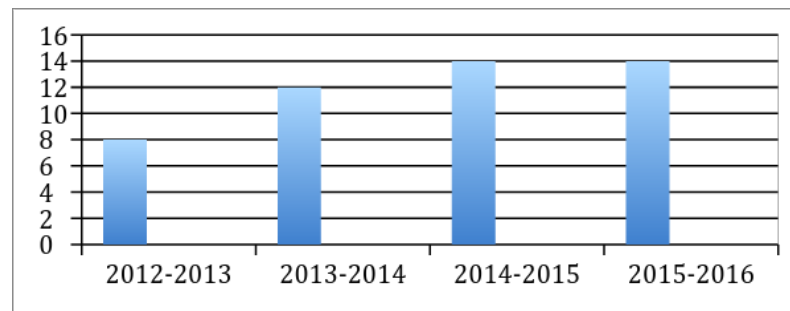


Table 3: Increase in schools participating in SJ/REC projects 2012-2016

3.3 A Personal Call to Action

My position as the teacher who worked directly with Sabrina on the development of the projects in the Aboriginal dossier uniquely positioned me to conduct this research. My involvement from the early days in 2011, and my participation in several CLC conferences, workshops and SJ/REC projects gave me the opportunity to meet teachers, coordinators and administrators who were beginning to include this work in their schools. I was fascinated by the stories that I heard from the teachers and coordinators who were doing the various projects. I felt strongly that their experiences were valuable to understanding aspects of teaching for social justice, specifically teaching with a decolonizing pedagogy. I was also interested in what factors cause teachers to become involved in projects when working in the Quebec context, and what challenges they face due to the fact that the curriculum excludes FNIM colonial and residential school history, consequences and inequity in current structures. I wanted to explore how the CLC was providing opportunities for students to learn history that was not included in the curriculum, and the experiences of teachers engaged in the work. I was keen to address issues of student learning around matters of social justice, and particularly curious about what teachers understood reconciliation to be, personally and professionally. To me, doing research on social justice and reconciliation was my own personal “Call to Action”.

3.4 Research Questions

My main research objective was to examine the experiences of teachers and coordinators who are teaching for social justice and reconciliation in CLC schools in Quebec. My main research question is, “What are the pedagogical experiences and reflections of teachers and coordinators regarding their involvement in the CLC SJ/REC projects?”

Other questions are:

- What are the additional effects associated with this teaching and learning?
- What are the constraints and/or challenges with regard to teaching SJ/REC projects and how are they overcome?
- What are some “best practises” associated with teaching for social justice and reconciliation, in specific regard to the CLCs?

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

In this chapter, I introduce my epistemological rationale and explain how my research design is grounded by my social constructivist view of knowledge. I relate the qualitative design of my data collection instruments to this epistemology, and link social constructivism to my choice of grounded theory for my data analysis. I explain the recruitment process and describe each instrument (survey, interviews and focus groups) in detail. I also introduce each interviewee and focus group participant describing his or her context and experience. Finally, I summarize the process I used to analyse the data and introduce the broad themes of my research.

4.1 Epistemological Rationale and Research Design

To conduct this research, I chose to use a qualitative methodology based on my epistemology of the social construction of knowledge. It is my view that knowledge is socially constructed, and that researchers and participants are explicitly linked in this construction (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Social constructivism “assumes the relativism of multiple realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understandings of participants’ meanings” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510). Therefore, I view the data in this thesis as the stories and realities of my research participants and have interpreted them with this understanding.

In view of my role as a teacher and participant in the CLC Aboriginal initiative, my aim was to involve teachers and coordinators in the research process. The teachers and coordinators I worked with are among the first in Quebec to engage their students in reconciliation activities and therefore have a professional stake in the ideas presented in this thesis. This is another rationale for my use of social constructivism, as it assumes that the researcher does not conduct research *on* people, but rather *with* people (Heron & Reason, 2001). The teachers and coordinators involved in my study are an integral part of the research process, which is reflected in my research design. The survey, interview and focus group

questions are flexible and allowed for evolving questions and conversations during the interview and survey process.

To ensure the trustworthiness of my findings, I began with my belief in connectivity. My research design is rooted in my position that:

1) My research instruments are aligned with my research questions and are theoretically grounded in my conceptual framework and that:

2) Establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study does not suggest arriving at consistencies across all data sources (Patton, 2002).

The information gained from each participant relates to each person's reality and is therefore unique to him/her. The resulting differences do not point towards a lack of credibility; rather, inconsistencies can uncover deeper meanings that can be explored. Moreover, through triangulation, in the form of a survey, conversational interviews and focus groups, each of my instruments encouraged participants to engage in the process with reflection and narrative, emotion and expression of lived experience. Furthermore, each of my instruments was developed to foster a high degree of comfort and connection between the participants and me as the researcher. My instruments, therefore, with the exception of the survey, were open-ended, unstructured and allowed for a high degree of fluidity. The survey questions were designed to be largely open-ended and space was purposely given for the participants to divulge their own unique understandings, impressions and opinions.

The following is a general list of developmental objectives that I referred to in drafting all of my instruments:

- To establish rapport, connection, and gratitude at the outset that will continue to be weaved through the instruments.

- To provide simple, clear instructions.
- To ensure that all questions nurture participant's experiences and stories.
- To continually connect back to research questions for trustworthiness.
- To use plain language and define terms if necessary.
- To respect time and fatigue; make every question meaningful so that numerous questions are not asked.

4.2 Research Fieldwork

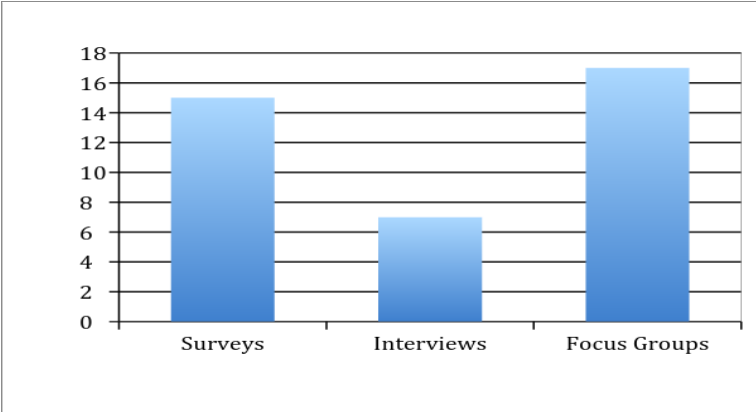
This study was conducted across a diverse geographical area in Quebec. Most of the teachers and CLC coordinators who participated in different aspects of the study worked on at least one of the CLC SJ/REC projects within the last five years (see Table 2). I chose to use three specific instruments to collect my data, as each instrument offered me a unique perspective on teacher and coordinator experiences, allowed for triangulation of the data and also provided several opportunities for me to engage with a diverse range of teachers and coordinators across a wide geographical area. My data collection instruments included a survey, interviews and focus groups. Grounded in my social constructivist epistemology, all questions were flexible and allowed for evolving questions and conversations during the data collection process. In the sections below, I will explain each instrument and elaborate on the process and the participants involved.

4.2 1. Participant Recruitment

It had been my intention to attend the annual CLC conference in Montreal in January 2016 to invite coordinators and teachers to participate in my research, however, because there were ongoing labour relations in Quebec at that time I had to modify my methods. Sabrina Bonfonti,

(whose role at the PRT was described in detail in chapter 3) acted as a networking resource for me, as she had access to the teachers and coordinators who had done the SJ/REC projects throughout the province. Sabrina was not a participant or a questioner in this research, but rather a facilitator in my research process. In February of 2016, Sabrina emailed the CLC Aboriginal network of teachers my introductory letter, implied consent and the link to the online survey. The survey included a “recruitment invitation for the interview”; that is, if they were interested in doing an interview, participants could contact me by email. I did not chose the interview participants, therefore, as each one of them asked to be part of my research. Sabrina also made arrangements for my focus groups, contacting the CLCs who had participated in the projects with an invitation to be part of the focus groups. Once Sabrina had established the teachers and coordinators who wanted to take part, she organized the meetings (time/date) and connected us via Video conferencing. Sabrina was present for all focus group conversations, as the information that the teachers and coordinators were providing was beneficial to her work at the PRT, mainly for reporting purposes. Sabrina and I were both very aware of the risks of bias, and we worked hard to ensure that this would not be an issue. In total, I had 39 participants, representing 7 school boards and eleven schools (see table 4).

Table 4: Number of research participants in this study



4.2 2. The Survey

I began the field research with an on-line survey, as it allowed me to gather data from a diverse group of participants, and enabled me to analyse the data before beginning the interviews. The survey was constructed using Fluid Survey, a license for which is held by the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services (CRECS). Participants responded to a one-time online (or hard copy) survey that took them 20-40 minutes to complete. The survey consisted of a mixture of 19 open and closed questions and focused on teacher's experiences in participating in SJ/REC projects and on their impressions concerning their own pedagogy and the learning outcomes. Although I had hoped to have 40 respondents of the survey, in the end I was satisfied with having received 15 completed surveys. Three high school teachers, eleven elementary teachers and one CLC coordinator completed the survey. All participants were assured of complete anonymity, and for the sake of readability, I have given each survey respondent a pseudonym.

4.2 3. Interviews

As I analysed the data from the surveys, I used the information to modify some of my prepared interview questions. The conversational method was important, as I endeavoured to understand the deep experiences of teachers and coordinators who teach for social justice and reconciliation. I began by conducting one-on-one conversational interviews with 6 teacher participants and 1 CLC coordinator. The interview participants volunteered to be interviewed and were from a range of schools (5, 9 and 11). Their years of teaching experience ranged from one to twenty-seven years. The interviews were conducted at the time and location of their choosing. Six of the seven interviews were conducted face-to-face and took 25- 60 minutes each,

either in the participant's classroom or home. The one exception was an interview I conducted by way of a videoconference hook-up.

Using my interview guide, I invited the teachers to reflect on their experiences teaching for social justice and their teaching of the reconciliation process. I also asked the interviewees to reflect on their own pedagogical understandings of decolonization, and on what they considered to be the experiences and learning outcomes of their students. Although I had prepared a list of 20 questions, each interview followed its unique course, and not all questions were asked. In most cases, other topics were discussed and spontaneous questions emerged. The interviews were recorded with permission, and I have used pseudonyms to refer to the participants. Below I describe who they are, their background and their respective roles as teachers.

Clare:

Clare is a twenty-five year old woman who has been teaching for two years. Her first year teaching was spent in Asia, teaching Kindergarten. She became a teacher to try and do her part in the world, and to help make social change. Clare feels strongly that teaching is all about "being human" (3:23) and that she has a role to play in that humanity. Clare's current class includes a diverse range of learning styles, needs and cultures, with approximately half of her students identifying as FNIM. Clare was excited to join the SJ/REC projects (Shannen's Dream, POH, Have a Heart Day) so that she could inspire and reach all the learners in her class. She feels that being able to participate in social justice projects so early on in her career has shaped the teacher she is becoming.

Petra:

Petra is a teacher in her fifties who made the transition from government to teaching four years ago. She had always wanted to be a teacher, but never felt that the time was right, as she was

raising children and had bills to pay. Petra explained that she has always felt an intense connection to First Nations people, and always wondered about “what had happened to them” (4:54). She remembers thinking about this even as a child. She was aware of the injustice and racism inflicted on FNIM and also the strong connection to the land and the earth that so many Indigenous communities have. Her career in government involved the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy and she worked with First Nations while working on the roundtable. Petra finally decided to become a teacher at age fifty to realize her dream to work with children, to make a difference in our country and to inspire a love of learning. Petra has participated in POH and Have a Heart Day.

James:

James has been a CLC coordinator for eight years and is currently a regional coordinator, managing several CLCs. James’ philosophy of education is that “there is so much to learn” (3:45). He sees his role as a coordinator as powerful, as he can educate teachers, who can then educate their students. James only became aware of FNIM issues about five years ago, through CLC conferences. He immediately felt drawn to the work, and since then, he has worked passionately to share the knowledge and work in partnership with the local First Nation nearby. James grew up near this First Nation community, on the other side of the river, and never understood the tension he felt between the communities. Now he does. James has participated in several CLC SJ/REC projects, including: POH, Have a Heart Day, Shannen’s Dream, Our Dreams Matter Too, The Blanket Exercise and TRC education day.

Valerie:

Valerie has been teaching for twenty-two years and believes that everyone can learn and deserves an opportunity to learn. She also believes that learning should be exciting, inspiring and

powerful. She has always been interested in teaching to the social-emotional needs of the learner and remembers when her school first started to receive Cree students coming from the north. Valerie remembers how lost they were, and how much she wanted to help make them feel at home. She was absolutely horrified when she first learned about the Indian Residential School system when she was in her forties. Valerie is a lifelong learner with two master's degrees and has recently become a principal of an elementary school. She has participated in POH, Have a Heart Day and Our Dreams Matter Too.

Hazel:

Hazel is twenty-six and has been teaching for three years. She became a teacher so that she could help shape her students into becoming global citizens. She strongly believes that our future is dependent on having people who can think critically and take action when they believe something is wrong. Hazel grew up near a reserve in Ontario. She remembers how so many non-FNIM people in her town had such negative opinions of the reserve, full of stereotypes. She remembers vividly when her friend, who lived on the reserve, told her about his experiences with racism and the police. She recounts how he told her that, "they tell me it is a random check, but they pull me over four to five times each week" (22:35). Hazel feels that these experiences shaped her understandings of the racism that exists in Canada. She has participated in POH, Have a Heart Day, Our Dreams Matter Too, TRC Education Day, Shannen's Dream and The Blanket Exercise.

Sandra:

Sandra has been teaching for eleven years, and works with many FNIM students. She strongly believes that we must be the change we wish to see in the world, and teaches to the needs of every child. She also believes that it is up to teachers to teach their students about what is

happening in the world so that they can make decisions based on credible information. She also feels that her desire to teach about oppression and justice also has to do with her own “minority” background. “There is a lot of discrimination and racism around the world, and for me, I want to fight against that. I want to make a difference. I want to teach these kids that you have to be kind and respect people for you they are, regardless of their religion, their colour, their culture or where they were born” (18:40).

Emily:

Emily has been a high school teacher for eighteen years. She enjoys project-based learning but often feels confined by the curriculum and by ministry and board-sanctioned exams. Emily also believes strongly in teaching for social change, and in understanding the consequences and impacts of history. Emily never learned about residential schools until university and does not want her students to experience the same lack of knowledge.

4.2 4. Focus Groups

Following the seven individual interviews, I conducted a series of focus groups in May and June 2016 that involved teachers and coordinators across the CLC network. As stated above, my colleague, Sabrina, organized the logistics of the focus groups (timing, videoconferencing instructions) as she has access to all of the coordinators across the network. The participants were emailed a list of guiding questions before the focus groups and were free to speak to the questions, or to share anything else they felt would be important. The focus groups, which were conducted by videoconference, included a total of 8 teachers, 9 coordinators and 1 principal. They were from a wide geographical region. They were also diverse in the sense that they were high school and elementary teachers as well as CLC coordinators with a varying amount of teaching experience that ranged over 30 years. Although all CLC schools that had participated in

the SJ/REC projects were invited to participate, coordinators and teachers from ten CLC schools volunteered to participate in the focus groups. The teachers and coordinators who volunteered to participate had different experiences within the context of both the CLC and the projects themselves. All focus groups lasted approximately one hour in duration and were video-recorded with the permission of all participants. To preserve anonymity, pseudonyms are used in reference to individual participants in the focus groups and the schools they work at have been given a number. Below, I briefly describe the members of each focus group.

Focus Group #1: Schools 1, 8

This focus group included two CLC coordinators, Kera and Betty. Kera is a CLC coordinator at an isolated school that is close to an Innu reserve. Kera strongly believes in the principles of working together for social justice and change. Betty has been the CLC coordinator at an isolated school for the past four years and had never done any reconciliation or FNIM projects before becoming involved two years ago.

Focus Group #2: Schools 2, 5, 6

This focus group included three CLC coordinators and three teachers. Ted, a coordinator for eight years, feels that the CLC model is all about social change and works at a school that is in a town where there was a residential school. This has made it very important that he work with the local Friendship Centre to improve the relations between the FNIM community and the settler population. Phil has been a CLC coordinator for five years and works with teachers to bring a wide range of projects to their classrooms. Ada and Molly have been teaching together for many years, and have always been interested in teaching their students about global issues. When they learned about POH at a CLC conference, they knew they had to get involved, and ever since, it has become part of their curriculum. CLC coordinator Martine, and eighteen year veteran teacher

Megan, have worked together on POH and were so moved by what it brought to their students that they have done it four years in a row.

Focus Group #3: Schools 4, 10, 11

This focus group included three CLC coordinators, one principal and two teachers. One of the CLC coordinators, Guy, was new to the CLC role but was interested in learning about the projects. First year teacher Lilia is one of two First Nations teachers in her entire school board, and is working to develop a program to teach the curriculum through an Indigenous perspective. The principal of the school, Amanda, is working with her staff on integrating Indigenous pedagogy into all aspects of teaching. Another CLC coordinator, Renee, was very passionate about the work she had done over the years, and the partnerships and friendships her school and community had made. Also present for this focus group was teacher Angela and coordinator Jessica, both of whom have been working to integrate SJ/REC projects into the high school social studies curriculum.

Focus Group #4: Schools 3, 7

This focus group included one CLC coordinator and two teachers. The CLC coordinator, Paulie, and teacher, Johanne, are new to the community and to the CLC approach but are eager to learn. Paulie had been working in social and community services in two Innu communities for several years before joining the CLC. Johanne has worked with Naskapi and Innu students and both were hoping to learn more about the reconciliation projects in order to foster understanding in their community. Ora, a teacher from another CLC school, works with many Mohawk students, but also Cree, Innu and western nations. Ora's background is in teaching for the Cree School Board in Chisasibi First Nation. Her desire to bring about change in her students, but also in the wider community, makes her a passionate advocate for the rights of the FNIM

community.

4.3 Data Analysis

While still undertaking data collection using the three aforementioned instruments, I began data analysis. I chose to use a constructionist grounded theory approach for my data analysis, as described by Charmaz. The rationale for my use of this version of grounded theory was based on my social constructionist epistemology that knowledge is constructed by social experiences. In the social constructionist version of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006), the idea that a theory simply emerges from data is challenged, as social constructivists believe that researchers construct categories out of the data to gain interpretive understandings of the participant's experiences. Moreover, constructionists who use grounded theory see participant's views as vital to the analysis of the data (Charmaz, 2008). This methodology also appealed to me, as it emphasizes the expectation that the knowledge gained will be put to good use. (Kovach, 2005). As my research is based on experiences of teachers who are teaching for social justice, the study is of direct relevance to the community of teaching practitioners who are keen to encourage critical thinking, social justice and actions for equality. Moreover, by examining the experiences of teachers I hope my research will highlight best practises as a basis for developing critical insights and ideas about transformative education (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007).

4.3.1. Survey Analysis (February-May 2016)

I analysed the data from the surveys, coding the open-ended questions for emerging themes. For short answer questions, I simply quantified them. As I analysed the surveys through open coding, ten primary themes emerged from the data:

1. What works!
2. Why teachers/coordinators get involved

3. Barriers and how they are overcome
4. Partnerships
5. Education for Reconciliation
6. Learning connected to activism
7. Students impact- sense of belonging, engagement, empathy, anger
8. Teacher impact- fear, hope, engaged teaching process
9. Need for curriculum reform
10. Ways forward

The survey questions allowed me to further develop my interview and focus group questions in a way that supported the emerging themes, enabling me to explore teacher and coordinator experiences deeply and more meaningfully.

4.3 2. Interview and Focus Group Analysis (July-August 2016)

After I transcribed the seven interviews and the four focus groups, I read through all of the transcriptions using inspiration from Berg (2004), “as a passport to listening to the words of the text and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words” (p. 269). During the process of axial coding, I was able to connect patterns and themes that I had first coded into the ten broad categories, and establish numerous sub categories.

After careful analysis and ongoing open and axial coding, I was able to arrange the data thematically into six broad themes. Further categorizing allowed me to work the data into two sets of major thematic findings which I have presented in the following two chapters. Each chapter is titled with a phrase that captures the essence of each data set.

Chapter 5: Awakening to the Truth

In this chapter, I will present the findings from my research that I have categorized into a major theme that I call, “Awakening to the Truth”. This includes three sub-themes: the reasons why teachers and coordinators become involved in the CLC SJ/REC projects, what their experiences were while and after participating in them, and what their perceptions are of their student’s experiences. Under each sub-theme, there are two to three distinct topics that I have identified. I present my findings in narrative format, writing about the survey data separately from the interview and focus group findings. At the beginning of each sub-theme, I present a table showing quantitative results of the data discussed. The figures in the tables represent the number of participants who spoke about the topic. They do not represent the number of times each topic was mentioned. There were 15 participants in the survey, 7 in the interviews and 16 in the focus groups. I end the chapter with an overview of the findings and my reflective analysis.

5.1 Reasons for becoming Involved

Analysis of the surveys, interviews and focus groups revealed several reasons why teachers and coordinators became involved in the SJ/REC projects. I have grouped these into three categories as outlined in the table below.

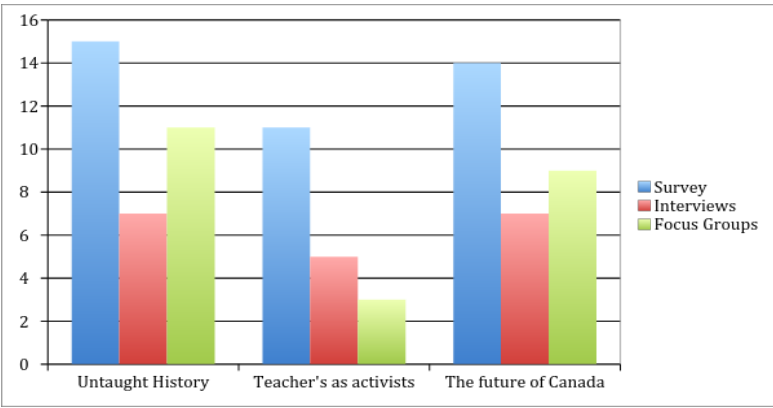


Table 5: Reasons for becoming Involved

5.1 1. Untaught history: Disrupting the Colonial Narrative

Surveys:

Teachers surveyed feel that the way that Canadian history, and specifically colonization, is taught in schools is Eurocentric and perpetuates myths about how Canada came to be. Eight out of the fifteen teachers and coordinators who participated in the survey indicated that they had not learned about residential schools until they were adults, while three learned in university, and two in high school and elementary school respectively (See table 6). Maya wrote:

I did not learn about residential schools until I was 30 years old. At that point, I had two university degrees. The fact that I had never even heard about them was absolutely astounding to me. I had been under the impression that Canada was a peaceful country...I had no idea that colonization remains a source of major oppression and tyranny today.

Nine teachers and coordinators felt that becoming involved with reconciliation projects through the CLCs allowed them to “view Canadian history from a whole new vantage point... [It] has given [me]...a whole new way of teaching just about any subject” (Paul). Eight of those surveyed also voiced deep concerns about history being one-sided, particularly in Quebec, where they feel they have to supplement the curriculum in order for their students to get the “whole picture” (Kate). Erin finds the curriculum gaps frustrating and insulting, as “there is no reference to Aboriginal peoples through the elementary curriculum with the exception of their role in the context of the fur trade and colonization, which portrays the Eurocentric interpretation of history.” Nine participants first became aware of the “missing stories” in both the curriculum and mainstream culture when they began working with FNIM students, and hearing about their experiences firsthand. The teachers who had these types of experiences found their stories eye-opening, helping them to see the “Canadian education system in another light” (Susan). The

SJ/REC projects opened up new worlds to these participants, who began to question the series of stories that history tells, thus “becoming aware of whose story is actually being told” (Cameron).

All fifteen of the participants feel that it is critical for pedagogy to change and for students and teachers to learn the truths about our collective history. Darlene, who won a Governor General’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History in 2002, wrote:

Learning about this history is the missing piece of my sense of Canada. I always knew that they [FNIM] were here first, but the sense of their experience in our culture today left a kind of unspoken space. Knowing about their experiences, learning about their cultures, gives words to what has been present but unnamed. I feel like it’s the missing part of my pedagogy. I feel happier about Canada with this stuff named, even though it is difficult.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

The interviews and focus groups provided an in-depth opportunity for me to explore teacher’s feelings about why they become involved in SJ/REC projects. Clare learned about First Nations cultures as a Grade 4 student in British Columbia, and although residential schools were spoken about, she did not meet an elder or a survivor. She was, however, “taken to a longhouse and given a traditional First Nations name for a day. It was a complete romanticisation of the culture” (15:32). For Clare, learning and teaching about residential schools and colonization became a very important part of her pedagogy, as she believes that education is what will change current inequities and understandings. Hazel felt shocked that Canadian history has been so simplified and taught from such a European perspective, and “that the educational system has been allowed to get away with skipping a huge part of our history” (13:05). Hazel believes that it is only through education that change will happen, and vehemently feels that teachers should “teach all

of history. Sure, people came to Canada but...there were already people who were here for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. Who are they? What happened to them? What are their stories and experiences?" (38:14). Both Hazel and Clare are passionate about critical pedagogy and teaching for social justice as a way to transform their own understandings and those of their students.

CLC coordinator James grew up near a reserve, but only learned about this history when he began working on POH. "Growing up, there were always tensions but no one really understood what they meant when they [members of the local reserve] said, 'you took our land'. We didn't understand because they don't tell you the truth in all those history texts" (19:26). For James, who tried to "educate himself before he opened his mouth" (6:04), teaching others has become a life passion. He remembers going home and telling his family what he had learned at a CLC conference back in 2012, and impressing upon them the importance for them to learn too. "I remembered the feeling of still not understanding how FNIM people must be feeling...but the sense that I was getting it now" (17:23). For all interviewees, becoming involved enabled them to use their feelings of anger and shock as an impetus to teach for justice, as, "in the absence of knowledge, you cannot do anything, but once you know, then you must act" (Petra, 19:02). Clearly, learning about the history that they were not taught, and feeling emotionally moved, is a reason why the participants become involved. The anger and shock that they experience is not something they want their own students to feel, and a sense of responsibility to act on their knowledge is fundamental to their experiences. "If you don't do something, if you don't say something, then you breed mediocrity. So do something. Find a way to do it" (Valerie, 23:55).

In the focus groups, nine participants also commented that this anger fuelled their desire to bring the untaught lessons of history to the forefront and spoke about their hope to teach their

students what they had never learned, even though most had taken Canadian history classes in high school and university. Martine was stunned that she only learned about residential schools and the Indian Act in her final year at University. “It was by random chance that I took this class...I had just finished a whole lot of history classes and I thought I knew Canada really well at that point. It blew me away” (46:15). Similarly, when Kera was working on her M.Ed., she discovered that many graduate students had very little awareness of residential schools, though many knew about atrocities in other parts of the world. She recounted when the Rwandan Genocide was being discussed, and one of the grad students expressed gratitude that something like that “ ‘would never happen in Canada’ ...so you could imagine her surprise when I said, ‘Oh, but it did. It was called the Indian Residential School System.’ Everyone looked at me like I had two heads” (45:03). Nine focus group participants expressed that they felt that the collective lack of knowledge in Canada has led to many of the tensions and misunderstandings prevalent today. A strong reason they became involved in the projects was because of their unwavering belief that education can work to “break down the walls of prejudice and bridge the gap” (Ted, 5:30).

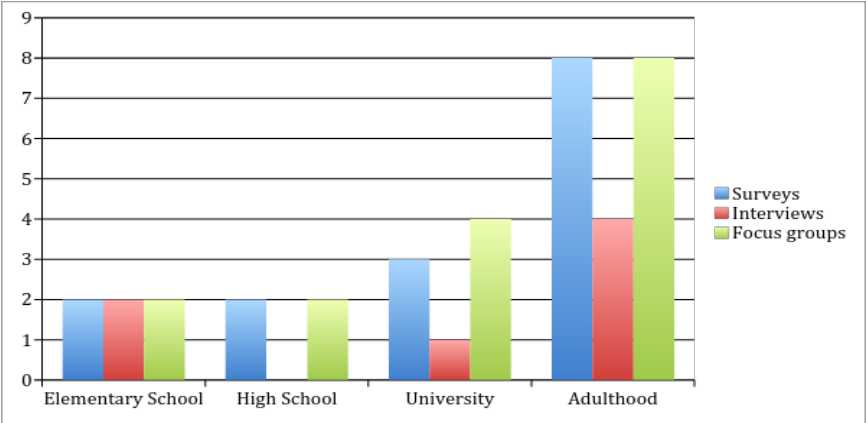


Table 6: Participant responses to the question, “When did you first learn about Indian residential Schools?”

5.1 2. Teachers as Activists: Questioning and resisting the colonial curriculum

Survey:

All fifteen participants indicated that they had a strong passion to teach for equality and social justice. Jennifer wrote that, “teaching is about activism. If one’s life isn’t dedicated to making the world a more just place, then one will never truly know themselves. Nor will they know how much power they really have.” All respondents also indicated that doing the projects gave them a true sense of how social justice engages their students, and how teaching about past injustice is the “only way to understand the current social inequities facing many FNIM communities today” (Kate). Eight out of fifteen respondents also feel that action is the most natural response to knowledge. Furthermore, many respondents revealed a belief that teachers should be engaged in activist pedagogy and have a collective responsibility to engage in social justice actions.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

All seven interviewees spoke about teacher activism, with five of them indicating a belief that activism is essential in teaching children about what is right. Hazel disclosed that she became a teacher to “create an army of people to change the world and do the right thing” (2:35). Being a role model who thinks critically about all sides of an issue and who thinks about diverse perspectives, is therefore highly important to activist teachers. Transformational education is key to “changing the way people view things on a world level, which is really what change is” (Hazel, 36:22). Teachers who work as activists believe that they are role models for their students and must “put their money where their mouth is...otherwise they may think that they have learned...and now we are done. We are not done. There is so much to do. Canada is so far behind in its history” (Clare, 24:56). Examining the curriculum critically, and teaching students

to do the same, is a factor of activist pedagogy that is important to many of the focus group respondents. Looking beyond the textbook, questioning the stories told, and believing that teachers have a responsibility to work against oppression and towards justice, were themes that were identified among ten of the focus group participants. “In our history books, we are asked, who is the first white man who discovered this place? But they never ask who led them there, who were the people who were here first?” (Renee, 5:27). Becoming an activist often happens when teachers and coordinators live near FNIM communities and work with FNIM students. For Ora, living next to a reserve and doing the CLC SJ/REC projects opened the door to her activism. “I knew about the OKA crisis, but you think it is done, you think it is over...it is behind us. After doing the blanket exercise, you know it is nowhere near done. We have so much to do. We are still so stuck” (18:30). Several focus group respondents spoke about the tensions and discrimination that exist between the FMIN and non-FNIM communities, and the feeling that they have a vital role in changing that, but it requires stepping out of mainstream pedagogy to do it. In one of the respondent’s communities, there is fighting about hunting rights between the band and the non-FNIM community and “less than friendly words tossed about” (Ted, 24:42). The coordinator and teachers at the school, committed to bettering their relations, introduced “Shannen’s Dream” to their students and then organized a march for equal education throughout their community. “It was incredible. We had the (First Nations) band, the Friendship Centre, teachers and students...the whole community came out...things like this...this is where change happens and shows us that we are all the same” (25:13). A strong sense that education has the power to be transformational was also obvious among all of the focus group participants. “I believe in leaving a mark,” Megan said. “Project of Heart was the best one...it left a mark that none of us will ever forget” (36:45).

5.1 3. Oh, Canada: Our Collective Future

Survey:

Another factor that came through strongly in the surveys was the sense of responsibility for our collective future and of building the kind of country we want to live in. All of the survey respondents indicated a fierce concern for the future, and many revealed that they became teachers to “help make Canada better” (Maya). Teacher Louise wrote that she believes her students “feel a sense of connectedness and happiness that no matter what our culture, background or identity we have, we share a deep concern for the future of the planet.” Eight of the fifteen participants indicated their dedication to nurture an understanding of justice in their students. As Johanne stated, “All kids want fairness for themselves.... the change for them (when doing the projects) is seeing how another group of children are experiencing inequality”. Darlene noticed that her students were “more inclusive about others in their thinking and that in the long run they will hopefully become engaged citizens”.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

This sense of positivity and hope was a common theme throughout the interviews, with all participants committed to being active citizens themselves, and to teaching students that they can “fix things now, rather than seeing it [residential schools] as just something sad that happened in the past. We can work on changing it, and it is empowering” (Hazel, 27:35). “Students, especially the little ones, have a very good understanding of what is fair...but really it is about getting them to see that the world cannot be fair, but it can and should be equitable...and that as future leaders, they have a role to play in that” (Valerie, 3:22). The focus group participants also had a strong conviction to teach students a sense of responsibility and leadership for the future, and that the SJ/REC projects help to bring about “social change and move the needle” (Ted,

1:53). Megan believes that teachers can be instrumental in inspiring action, by telling students that, “if they feel change is necessary they should do something in order to make change” (14:13). It appears that for teachers and coordinators involved in the projects, there is a strong sense that they are part of the solution and that “this is our collective history we are teaching about. We have a responsibility for the country that we want to live in and to create the structures that support that kind of country” (Kera, 52:13).

5.2 Teacher and Coordinator Experiences

Once teachers and coordinators became aware of the issues and involved in the SJ/REC projects, many experienced a shift in their pedagogy and an increased understanding of reconciliation. Numerous participants reported that they witnessed empowerment, engagement and empathy from their students. In this section, I summarize the experiences that teachers and coordinators had while engaged in the various projects. In particular, I examine if and how their project involvement affected their pedagogy and their understandings of decolonization and education for reconciliation.

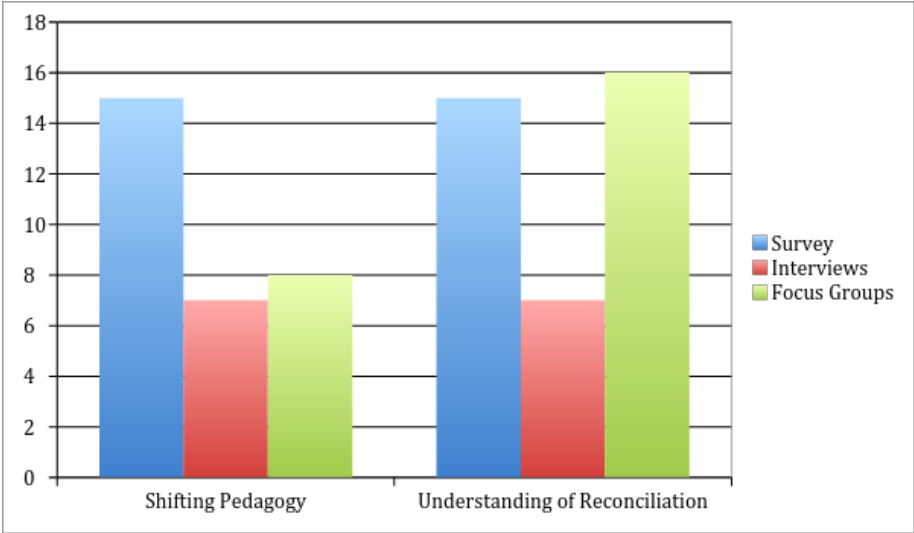


Table 7: Teacher and Coordinator Experiences of the SJ/REC projects

5.2 1. A shifting pedagogy.... teaching for social justice, from the heart.

Survey:

All respondents indicated that the SJ/REC projects affected their understanding of Canadian history and of teaching for social justice. Julie wrote:

These projects have helped me to understand of the importance of bringing painful truths to the surface and have informed my teaching practice. When I am working on these projects I feel I am involved in deep teaching. I am not so much the teacher as the person who holds space for an experience; the involvement of the heart in the learning takes the experience to a whole different level...It is a process of discovery and being.

All survey respondents indicated that the SJ/REC projects enabled them to become more informed about Canadian history as well as to see how learning about injustice engages students. Thirteen of the respondents answered that the projects have opened them up to a new way of looking at the world and twelve answered that the projects have changed the way they teach. Several indicated that the projects had introduced them to critical pedagogy, introducing them to the notions of privilege, justice and power. The respondents were asked an opened-ended question inquiring if they felt the projects affected their understanding of Canadian history, and, in particular, of current inequities facing many communities today. All teachers responded with a resounding affirmation of having learned exponentially. Maya wrote:

Doing these projects has been an education for me. Systems of racism and injustice are so apparent to me now that I have open eyes. The projects have affected my understanding of Canadian history by emphasizing how much First Nation communities are still affected by historical treaties and by residential schools. The impression I got in school was that the marginalization of First Nations people was a historical tragedy that ended

with the closing of residential schools. Project of Heart and Shannen's Dream changed my understanding of Canadian history by emphasizing that the marginalization of Indigenous people is a contemporary, rather than historical, tragedy.

Darlene said that the SJ/REC projects helped her to understand the layers of poverty and addiction that many communities and individual's experience, and Cameron wrote that the projects have "allowed me to better understand the contributing factors that lead to generations of poverty, substance abuse and marginalization of people". For Sally, the SJ/REC projects have become an integral part of her life:

My understanding of history has been deeply affected. I have become passionate about learning and reading every available book and resource. I have my own collection of pedagogical materials, history books, picture books, biographies, autobiographies and books by First Nation, Inuit and Metis people. I see First Nations and Inuit and Metis issues as the most urgent moral issues of our day.

Interviews and Focus groups:

During the interviews and focus groups, teachers and coordinators spoke about how the SJ/REC projects have changed their teaching practices and informed them of the power of teaching about inequality and struggle. For James, learning about residential schools and the ongoing impacts of colonization was like an "explosion of understanding that moved me beyond words" (12:34). James spoke about the deep discussions that teachers were having with their students in their classrooms, with some teachers commenting that they had never seen "their students so engaged and emotional" (31:16). Valerie experienced a similar sense of profoundness, which she describes as a "spiritual journey" when she first brought the projects into her classroom:

Teaching children about stories that connect us all have informed my practise deeply. You see how their eyes light up with wonder and curiosity when you are teaching them about real people. When children work with an elder, and hear their stories of sadness and pain, but also of forgiveness and resilience, many of them are changed. There is an opportunity for their sense of Canada to shift and also their sense of school and what we learn there, and how we learn it. Children respond to stories, and people (32:17).

Newer teachers, like Clare and Hazel, commented on how their experiences working with an experienced teacher on the SJ/REC projects changed their ideas of what was possible in education. In their cases, both had a mentor teacher as part of their school board's new teacher induction program. Hazel commented that having a mentor teacher who was so passionate about the projects "allowed me to see that teaching with emotion and 'heart' is not only a best practise, but is also very possible" (23:45). Clare says:

I was trying so hard to follow the curriculum, to 'check off the boxes' that I was supposed to teach the kids. And then my mentor introduced me to 'Shannen's Dream'. I started working on that project with my class, and the kids suddenly 'woke up'. Learning about a real girl who did not have a real school- who had to wear a parka in the winter because the door of the portable she had class in did not close- now that was interesting and real to them (34:15).

Similarly, Renee experienced an "awakening within my soul. The projects brought out so much emotion in me, and I...gave that to the students. The projects were transformative for me...they opened my heart encouraged my students to open up their own" (23:45). When Kera facilitated The Blanket Exercise in her community, she expressed profound feelings of emotion, healing and hope and saw a transformative experience happening to the participants. "The

Blanket exercise brought the participants sadness, but also so much love and healing...and also, a sense of hope...that we could do something to be part of the change” (34:56).

5.2 2. Deep understandings of reconciliation and decolonization

Another impact of the SJ/REC projects was the development of deep understandings of decolonization and reconciliation. If reconciliation is “making things better,” then decolonization is the process we must take to get there. Decolonization involves unsettling the typical narrative of Canada that is taught in schools and that our society is built on. Decolonization involves critically examining ourselves in relationship to the land, history and FNIM peoples of Canada. Moreover, it involves learning about past and current discrimination and acknowledging the colonial structures that continue to marginalize FNIM peoples today. Emerging from this process of decolonization comes the action of reconciling, moving forward and becoming an ally.

Survey:

The survey asked teachers what they explicitly understood reconciliation to mean. They were not explicitly asked about decolonization on the survey, as I felt the interviews and focus groups would allow me to examine the concept in greater depth. In all cases, respondents indicated that their conceptions of reconciliation developed directly from their work on SJ/REC projects, and their partnerships with elders and other teacher activists. Their responses are recorded in the table below, as quotes taken directly from the surveys. I chose to present the findings of this survey question in table format in order to convey all of the responses verbatim.

Table 8: Survey respondents Understandings of Reconciliation

It means never having to say ‘sorry’ twice. It means becoming an ally of Aboriginal People around the globe (Paul).
It is what happens when people who have been in conflict with each other resolve their

differences and make a conscious effort to live together peacefully (Jennifer).
What immediately comes to mind is education. I think the biggest way that we can foster reconciliation is by creating awareness so that Canadians know our true history. Most racism and preconceptions stem from not knowing the real history, making it impossible for people to understand each other” (Kate).
It is making an idea or a belief compatible with another or a reestablishment of friendly relations (Brenda).
It means not say sorry twice. It means working hard to rights wrongs. It means listening more than talking. It means self-educating and reading about the facts of our history. It means standing as an ally rather than an observer (Maya).
Reconciliation to me means allowing a new conversation to begin where the starting point is one of listening and respect, and honouring the suffering of the past. It is a step towards a positive outcome that honours the wholeness of aboriginal people and their experiences and treats them as equals that shapes that national dialogue on what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen. It is no one thing, but should have surprise and discovery of our common humanity and our ability to care and move forward in a positive way (Julie).
To reconcile means to work at an understanding and make stronger in relationship (Darlene).
It is a word that confuses people including myself when I first hear it-I believe its about recognizing the brutality of the past, the roles of all involved and for them e.g. the church, the governments to accept responsibility, apologize and bring about change to reconcile differences. This is true for society as a whole with a role for each individual to work hard to bring about justice and respect for Indigenous cultures and rights (Erin).
Reconciliation is about recognizing and acknowledging the past as fact. It is looking at how the

<p>cultural, moral, economic and emotional devastation has affected opinions and manners of our society and seeking to bring equality and a voice to all, with the utmost respect (Johanna).</p>
<p>Reconciliation means picking up the pieces and putting them back together the best that you can (Susan).</p>
<p>Reconciliation means knowing the truth to ensure it does not happen again. If we let it happen to one person then we let it happen to everyone. Who will be next? (Louise).</p>
<p>Reconciliation is about action. It is about our identity as Canadians. It is about being respectful and building relationships. It is about NOT ONLY learning about First Nations, Inuit and Metis people but about inviting them into the classroom and learning with them (Sally).</p>
<p>Reconciliation means that it is important to recognize and make right the mistakes we have made in the past in order to not repeat them. We cannot change what has happened but we can certainly aid in the healing and acceptance of those who have suffered” (Cameron).</p>
<p>In my opinion, reconciliation means working together to fix what has been broken (Linda).</p>
<p>To me, reconciliation is two-fold. The first component would be for Indigenous peoples to receive all necessary resources/services available to any other Canadian citizen, such as drinkable water, equal funding for schools and adequate health care services. The second component would be formal recognition of the history of indigenous peoples. For example, Indian Residential Schools would be part of the Social Studies curriculum at the primary-junior level” (Sharon).</p>

The survey responses clearly show that the participant’s understandings of reconciliation are profound and have been significantly influenced by their involvement in the SJ/REC projects. Common understandings include the concepts of recognition, honouring, acknowledging, and equality, apologizing, learning, respecting, caring and taking action.

Interviews and Focus groups:

The interviews allowed for in-depth discussions about teachers understandings of reconciliation and decolonization. Much like the survey respondents, the interviewees have similar ideas about what reconciliation is, and examples of it in action. Common themes were allyship, righting past wrongs, equity and justice for FNIM peoples, and teaching “diversity and acceptance” (Hazel, 15: 55). Valerie regards decolonizing education as a complex and multifaceted pedagogy that involves not only becoming apprised of different learning styles in the classroom, rather than a purely Eurocentric view, but also of “sitting together in circle, and recognizing our common humanity” (14:50). Hazel was reflective about the connection between apology and action, expressing frustration that “although the government has apologized, reconciliation doesn’t happen until equality is a reality in Canada” (14:22). Teaching students that saying sorry cannot occur in isolation, and that taking personal responsibility towards changing the way they act and what they do is important to Hazel. We also spoke about her understandings of decolonizing, both personally and professionally. She felt very strongly that although many schools and school boards have begun “indigenizing the curriculum”, many teachers do not have any understanding of what that is, and a course on “decolonizing curriculum would be very helpful in teachers college” (17:40). Hazel emphasized that decolonizing is more threatening, than reconciliation, as it really is about changing ourselves:

This is hard for me to even comment on as I am ...part of the power block. I have benefitted from colonization personally. I live my life the way the colonizers had in mind. When I think of my future, I think about buying a plot of land that will be mine...so to think about how I have changed myself...probably not as much as I could or I should (15:39).

Clare feels that decolonization is a concept all Canadians have a responsibility to understand, especially as a teacher. For her, it also means that she must educate her students to be aware of stereotypes, racism and bigotry that continue to be perpetuated:

For me, decolonization and reconciliation happens when we have adequate representation of the people. As a teacher, this means educating my students about the truth...we must teach about residential schools...it also means introducing them to the notion that they have many venues to voice how they feel...This teaches them that their voices are important, which is exciting...I hope this has been empowering for them. It has felt empowering for me (19:45).

The focus group discussions revealed similar perspectives on how reconciliation and decolonization are consequences of the SJ/REC projects. Kera struggled with the word “reconciliation,” accentuating that she understood why “reconciliation is there -- to repair relationships. But I feel that if you only focus on the reconciliation part, you don’t pay tribute to the resilience of Aboriginal communities...and to everything that they have been able to hold on to despite everything” (43:40). Ada and Molly asked their students what they thought reconciliation was and were amazed at the results:

We learned from them. We learned that they think reconciliation means ‘really learning the truth and knowing where you come from and what has happened’. We actually recorded their messages about reconciliation and they were broadcast nationally at the TRC education day in Montreal (8:56).

For all of the coordinators, the act of reconciliation was found within partnerships with Friendships centres, communities, elders and survivors. “You can’t talk about reconciliation

without doing the work” (Ted, 23:43). Clearly, participants saw decolonization and reconciliation as explicitly linked.

5.3 Student Impact: Pride, Empathy, Empowerment

A significant part of this study involved understanding the experience of students who participated in the projects. Teachers and coordinators were asked to reflect on what they thought their students felt, learned and experienced as they worked on the SJ/REC projects. Throughout this section, some respondent’s paraphrase comments that students made. They also spoke at length about their students’ experiences and their high levels of engagement in the projects as well as their deep sadness when learning about residential schools. Specifically, they identified that their students felt pride, empathy and empowerment, as outlined on the table below.

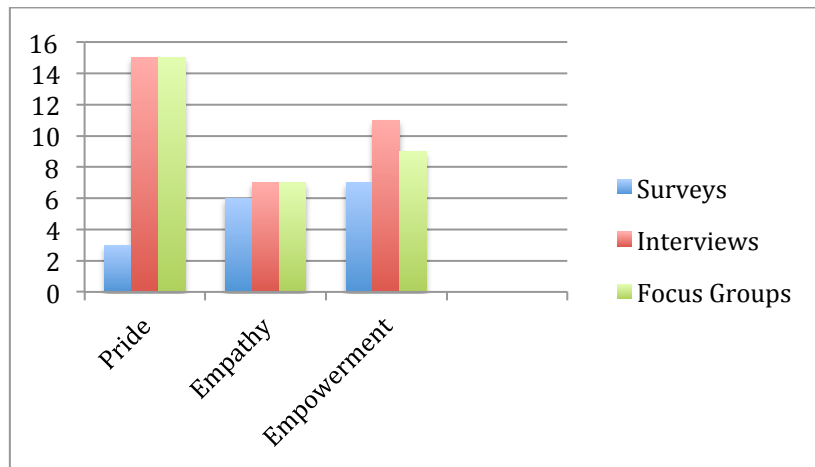


Table 9: Teacher/Coordinator Perceptions of Student experiences

5.3.1 Pride: I am FNIM

Surveys:

Teachers who answered the survey questions were asked about the impacts that they felt the reconciliation work had on their students. Ten of the fifteen survey respondents revealed that the projects “appeared to make them [their FNIM students] feel included...like finally, someone was

talking about them, and wanting to learn from them. It also showed our non-native students what kinds of things our native students have to face” (Kate). Another teacher indicated that she felt her students connected more with the one student in her class who was FNIM. For yet another teacher, the sense of pride and of “family and culture” have been noticeable changes since doing the SJ/REC projects.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

Many of the teachers interviewed worked at School 9, where the population of FNIM students ranges between 20-25%. For these teachers, there was a sense that engaging in issues and perspectives through a FNIM lens, rather than a solely Eurocentric one, gave space and voice to the FNIM students in their classes. Hazel spoke about the year that she taught a class that consisted of over half FNIM children:

At the beginning of the year, I noticed that the Indigenous children were shy, quiet, some painfully so. As we started learning about Shannen’s Dream, and about Indigenous leaders, it was almost magical. The children began sharing about their culture, bringing in bannock and goose feathers and really being proud to share who they were and where they come from. Without a doubt, it was connected to the fact that we didn’t just learn from the textbooks. We learned from the heart, and we embraced reconciliation (21:56).

Hazel went on to explain that in another class, she had a student who went home and talked to his family about what he was learning at school, and from the elder who visited his class.

He was so excited when his mom actually told him that his great Grandfather was Mohawk. He came to school wearing a hat that said, ‘Native Pride’. That to me is so significant because it shows how when we give life and space to a culture, we also cultivate a deep sense of pride and belonging (22:45).

Valerie echoed this sentiment of cultivating a sense of belonging, commenting on the “danger of the single story” that is pervasive in the traditional curriculum. “When we only teach one story...imagine how that is for them...to not hear their own stories, or celebrate their own cultures and contributions of their leaders...it is all so Eurocentric.” (33:45). Clare feels that the greatest impact of this work has been that her students are excited by FNIM culture and stories and history. She feels that this excitement has been nurtured by teaching about “human beings...not just facts and dates” (30:25). Teaching about the injustices of Canadian history while also teaching about the strength, resilience and incredible beauty and determination of FNIM culture is a source of pride and appreciation.

In the focus groups, twelve of the fifteen participants expressed that there were positive changes in their communities since embarking on the work of reconciliation. In school 10, where much of the FNIM culture had been erased, the projects were “the first building blocks of re-establishing the Indigenous community.... It has made them [the students] proud and respectful. They are all searching for that little bit of First Nations in them now. They want to be part of it” (Molly, 31:54). The experience at School 11 was similar, where Renee said that we “didn’t think we had an Aboriginal population at our school....but as teachers are learning more, and becoming more confident in addressing the issues and talking about it, some of our students are saying, ‘Oh, you know what? I have a great-grandmother, or somebody in my family, who is native and it is nice to be able to talk about it’ ” (10:16). This sense of belonging and importance has affected many FNIM students’ sense of accomplishment and worth, with James reporting that a FNIM student once said, “I may not be good at math, but I really know about my culture” (31:55). At School 6, the CLC partnerships formed between the school community and the band

and the involvement in the SJ/REC projects have broken down barriers that caused racism and stereotyping towards FNIM students and their families. Ted explains:

You can see the changes in the kids. The non-Indigenous kids are friendlier. Ten percent of our student population is Cree or Inuit or Atikamekw. You see the Indigenous kids taking pride. To me, that is important. It is bridging the gap. I use that word a lot, but essentially that is what it is. We could stay in our own little sections of the community and not do anything to help each other out, but by reaching out we are all better (26:44).



Image 4: A student reading a letter to the Prime Minister at Have a Heart Day on Parliament Hill.

5.3 2. *Empathy: I am a settler*

Surveys:

Survey respondents spoke at length about the impacts they felt the SJ/REC projects had on non-FNIM students who had never learned about residential schools and other impacts of colonization. Nine of the respondents wrote about how learning the injustices of Canada's history often caused deep feelings of sadness and empathy in their students, as well as feelings of anger that they had not learned anything about this before. In Quebec, students learn about the Iroquois and the Algonquin in the year 1500 when they are in Grade 3. These units of study are isolated from other events during the time period, and, consequently, students learn about the Algonquin and the Iroquois as categorical relics of the past, who lived in longhouses and wigwams. In Grade 4, students learn about the fur trade and missionaries, but nothing about the negative impacts that this had on FNIM communities. This sanitized version of history continues throughout the curriculum, with no acknowledgement of the creation of residential schools, treaties, the Indian Act or the displacement and starvation of FNIM peoples. When students begin learning about these issues, many become critical of why they were never taught about these things during "social studies". Maya revealed that one of her students said, "We are made to believe that we live in the most peaceful country in the world because that is what they teach us!" Seven respondents described that their students felt intense sorrow and shame over what happened, particularly around residential schools. This sadness, however, led to an ability to empathize and imagine what it would have been like to be a "child to have lost everything, their family and their culture" (Maya). Out of this sense of grief comes a desire to learn more and to do something about it:

They are disappointed and so sad about what happened to so many little children. They can't believe that the Canadian government took children from their families. They can so easily connect and empathize because they are children themselves and they can imagine what that would be like. This deep empathy gives way to a sense of empowerment and are happy to be making a positive change, through their work on the projects, and especially with Cindy Blackstock and the FNCFCS (Maya).

During the interviews, all respondents spoke extensively about the sense of shock and anguish their students experienced when first introduced to a residential school survivor:

My grade 1 and 2 students became upset thinking about what she had to go through...upset that she was hit, upset that she was taken from her family...upset that she was separated from her culture and her siblings...but children get these hard topics immediately if you allow them the chance to think about how they would feel. This is true empathy (Valerie 16:23).

James had the same experience, noting that students felt a tremendous amount of sadness, but also empathy and understanding:

When we are learning about residential schools, some non-Indigenous students have stood up and said, 'Oh my god...if I was taken away from my mom and dad and thrown away somewhere and I had to change who I was...' There is a real sense of ownership and belonging of the collective history...even though it is hard and painful (15:27).

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, teachers and coordinators continually spoke about their students not believing that this happened in Canada, and, particularly among high school students, of being outraged that they had never been taught about it. The sense of shock was

intense, but the teachers all spoke about how these feelings to created a space for hope and social justice.

After we learned about Shannen's Dream and the state of education on many reserves, my students were so upset...but we decided that we would join the Shannen's Dream movement, to stop this from happening and help to fix it, rather than seeing it as something sad that happened in the past. Let's work on changing it. This is empowering...this is learning and doing something bigger in the world (Hazel, 29:35).

At School 11, the response of the children learning about residential schools was profound, with empathy identified as the strongest emotion. Renee explains:

Everything the students said was incredible...they did not just say that they liked the activity or that it was fine. They felt it. They really felt it. They were constantly communicating their feelings about it...one of them said that we can help the healing process by 'talking about it and giving them their land back'. Another said that he was angry with the 'presidents that made residential schools'. It [POH] was such a beautiful project... (28:54).

Ada and Molly talked about similar experiences at their schools, explaining that doing POH and learning about residential schools was a shock to the students because they didn't realize this had happened and "they couldn't understand that our country did that...I have seen in their work that they really get it...they are using words like fear, loss and abuse...It is so powerful and leads itself to activism so naturally" (33:20).



Image 5:

Project of Heart tiles, commemorating children who died in residential schools

5.3 3. Empowerment: I am an activist

Surveys:

All survey respondents indicated that the projects made them aware of how learning about injustice, and acting on it, engages and empowers students. High student engagement was apparent throughout the survey, with 13 out of 15 teachers/coordinators identifying “high learner engagement and empowerment” as intrinsic results. Critical thinking, inquiry based learning, and the creation of a context for deep discussions were also identified as important outcomes of these projects, which nurture a “classroom community that centers student voice and values dialogue, informed opinion and inquisition” (Maya). Jennifer wrote that:

Students who participate in these projects are changed. I see them questioning things I know they wouldn't have before, because they have developed critical thinking skills. They are paying more attention to what is around them. Many will now send me emails or news stories about something happening because they know I'm interested; but I can also see that they are paying attention.

Seven of the survey respondents wrote that it was often the most marginalised students who became involved. Maya writes:

Many of the students I noticed who became the most passionate were the ones that normally would rarely come to school. Once we started Shannen's Dream and POH, the learning ignited them and they felt that there was a purpose to what they were doing. Suddenly, they had a reason to come to school.

Kate commented that "even the least motivated students are extremely enthusiastic and empowered", and Paul indicated that there were "fewer behavioural issues and improved grades, as well as a keen interest in things outside of their own lives" in his classroom. For Maya, working on the projects brought out all the things "we want and wish for our students- to be empowered, uplifted, thrilled, connected, caring, and empathizing." This empowerment was also mentioned by Julie, who believes that students are energized by "hearing their own voices and the voices of other children and youth...and by putting a message of care into the public domain, as it makes them feel that their thoughts and voices matter". Feeling as if their voices matter was a basis of empowerment for many students, especially those who might not be as academically engaged. Suddenly, their work mattered, and, as Louise said, "because they have been touched so deeply, it gives them a motivation to read, write and speak". Sally wrote that she has seen children "brighten up and speak so clearly about injustice. I have noticed quiet students become outspoken leaders. I have seen students become affected in a way that speaks to their emotions, not just their mind and body".

Many of the teachers also felt that another impact of the work was that learning about injustice directly affects students understanding and desire to become involved in social change. Students who are empowered by their learning take action, which promotes activism and the

“realization that even children’s voices can bring about change has empowered my students to continue being active in all facets of their society” (Cameron). Darlene wrote, “I notice that my students are more inclusive about others in their thinking. I hope in the long run that this will affect their attitudes as engaged citizens.”

Interviews and Focus Groups:

Five of the seven interviewees spoke at length on how learning about the negative impacts of colonization help students understand current inequities and motivates them to take action. One of the most significant campaigns has been letter writing to the Prime Minister, and other Members of Parliament, which supports the idea that one person has agency and can participate in democracy. Hazel describes her experiences:

When they feel that writing a letter to the Prime Minister today is actually going to make a difference tomorrow, then the students are going to work hard on that letter- they know someone will read it. It gives purpose to their work and they are way more engaged in it.

Kids know what is fair and they want to make a difference (9:54).

For Clare, the emotional response from her Grade 2 students has been equally powerful. After meeting a residential school survivor they wanted to write letters to the government but also to the survivor herself:

They were so incredibly moved by the survivor’s story, that they wanted to write her letters...one child wrote, ‘I hope that your knuckles heal...’ because she had told them that the nuns at the school would rap her knuckles if she made a mistake on the piano.

Children so easily see through all the barriers of culture and time periods. These projects have expanded their empathy, compassion, kindness and their ability to think holistically and to use their voices (40:56).

For Valerie, the Calls to Actions are urgent and about the Canada we want to be part of:

I say to my students, think about yourself. Think about when you get up in the morning and what you do and what other children do. We are all in Canada and we have leaders who say that we are all together and we are all one big Canadian family but if your little brother or cousin didn't have something what would you do? (16:17).



Image 6: Young activists on Parliament Hill

5.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the concept of “being awakened” is of great significant throughout the surveys, interviews and focus groups, across the three sub-themes.

5.4 1. Reasons for becoming involved in CLC SJ/REC projects

In all three sets of responses, teachers and coordinators expressed shock and frustration that they were not taught about FNIM issues or residential schools when they were in school. These feelings of are often what motivate teachers and coordinators to become involved in the SJ/REC

projects. In the interviews, all participants spoke about their desire to educate their students so that they would grow up learning about residential schools and other aspects of colonization. This is another reason why many of them engaged in the projects: so that history doesn't repeat itself. In the focus groups, many participants spoke about how education is the key to understanding, citing their own lack of education as a reason for lack of understanding current issues and inequities that affect FNIM peoples in Canada today. Moreover, the research revealed that teachers and coordinators feel that the Quebec curriculum has a Eurocentric lens that perpetuates current misunderstandings and tensions that exist between some FNIM and non-FNIM communities. This is why many participants feel that in teaching students they have a responsibility to act on what they learn and why partaking in social justice campaigns is seen as so rewarding and important.

The surveys also revealed that teachers and coordinators are passionate about teaching for equality and social justice. They understand that social justice engages students in ways that “textbook” work does not- words like empowerment, engagement and motivation came up repeatedly. They become involved in the SJ/REC projects in order to make a difference in current inequities facing many FNIM communities today. They understand that teaching about colonization and residential schools is what enables students to critically think about current issues in FNIM communities. Students are able to connect issues such as Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, inequities in education and social services on reserve, disproportionately high rates of suicide and incarceration and poverty to the injustices of colonization.

In the interviews and focus groups, some teachers and coordinators felt strongly that activism is central to transformational education, and that looking critically at the curriculum and questioning whose stories are told (and whose are not) are crucial to teaching for change. These

teachers are not fearful of being labelled as “activist”, but rather feel that teaching is an activist profession. Activism was a reason why many teachers became involved in the SJ/REC projects; particularly among those who live or work near or on a FNIM community. This suggests, perhaps, that participants who have some understanding of current inequities and tensions feel a sense of responsibility to become active in social justice.

Finally, while the survey respondents cited the desire to become involved as ways to nurture diversity, fairness and inclusiveness in their students, the interview and focus group participants spoke about their sense of collective responsibility for the future of Canada. These teachers and coordinators believe that the SJ/REC projects enable them to take action, and be positive and hopeful members of society. There is also a strong theme that being an active citizen is an important role for a teacher and coordinator, and that this is empowering, positive and hopeful for students.

5.4 2. Teacher and Coordinator Experiences

The surveys revealed the impact of the SJ/REC projects on teacher pedagogy, underscoring their increased understanding of Canadian history and the importance of social justice. Teachers and coordinators gain new perspectives about teaching Canadian history, and that FNIM issues are current, not historical tragedies. Also important in the surveys was how the projects affected teachers sense of pedagogy; specifically that teaching from a human perspective, through stories, was powerful not only to their students but also for their teaching practise. Witnessing the high engagement and emotional responses of many of their students also impacted teacher understanding of how learning about inequities and struggles can engage students in ways other learning does not. Similarly, the interviews and focus groups revealed a sense of informed

teaching practise, specifically around the connection between teaching for social justice and student engagement. Moreover, teachers and coordinators spoke of deep, meaningful discussions in their classrooms and increased critical thinking. Teaching about injustices and struggle leads to an increased level of engagement and emotion, and is a motivation for social justice action.

The surveys showed that coordinators and teachers who participate in the SJ/REC projects develop a sense of reconciliation that is meaningful to their teaching practise. Although the responses varied among respondents, most felt that reconciliation involved not repeating past mistakes, of healing and learning, of apologizing and forgiving and of taking action. The interviews and focus groups examined the participant's understandings of reconciliation and decolonization, and similarly to the surveys, revealed that reconciliation is about action to "right that wrongs of history and become allies of FNIM in their current struggles" (Maya). To do this, teachers and coordinators overwhelmingly agree that you must form partnerships with the FNIM community, such as the local band, friendship centre or elder.

When participants were asked about decolonization, they spoke of it as being an "unsettling of colonial narratives" (Jennifer) that ask us to relearn the stories that we have been taught in school. Decolonizing pedagogy, however, appears to be an abstract concept that many teachers felt unsure of how to put into practise in their classrooms. Some said decolonizing pedagogies should be taught explicitly in teachers college, and also as professional development.

5.4 3. Student Impact: pride, empathy, empowerment

Survey results reveal that teachers and coordinators observed an increased understanding and connection between FNIM and non-FNIM students. These connections enable non-FNIM students to learn about what their FNIM classmates and their families may have experienced.

The interviews and focus groups also revealed a sense of increased respect between FNIM and non-FNIM students, and also between communities. This suggests that a direct result of the SJ/REC projects is partnerships among communities, bands and friendship centres that can serve to bridge gaps and challenge stereotypes. Many teachers also indicated that teaching with a FNIM history perspective gave space, voice and validation to the FMIN students in their classes. They spoke of an increased sense of pride and sharing, such as when one student brought in bannock and another wore his traditional vest to school. Some participants also reported that students who had not previously self-identified as FNIM before the projects, had now revealed that they were FNIM. This suggests that some students may be discussing the SJ/REC projects with their families, who reveal that they too, have FNIM ancestry.

Survey respondents revealed that among their non-FNIM students, there was a sense of sadness, loss, empathy, anger, and shame when they learned about residential schools. Likewise, teachers and coordinators in the interviews and focus groups also reported that their students demonstrated a mix of shock, anger, increased empathy and understanding. These strong emotions gave way to hope and empowerment when students were engaged in social justice actions. Meeting a residential school survivor was especially poignant for many of the students. Hearing stories of resilience and forgiveness helped them understand that they were part of the healing and reconciliation process. According to the teachers and coordinators, increased understanding and empathy leads to a natural activism in many students. Furthermore, several teachers revealed that among the most engaged, were those who were often marginalised themselves. This suggests that the empowering work of the SJ/REC projects provide a sense of purpose to learning and to school itself, with several teachers indicating increased attendance and fewer behavioural issues when working on the SJ/REC projects.

Chapter 6: Working towards Social Justice and Reconciliation

In this chapter, I examine the key themes that emerged from the research when teachers and coordinators are working towards social justice and reconciliation. These themes are: factors for success, challenges, and ways forward. Under each theme, there are three distinct sub-themes that I have identified. As in the previous chapter, I present my findings in narrative format, summarizing survey responses separately from the interview and focus group findings. At the beginning of each theme, I present a table showing quantitative results of the data discussed. I end the chapter with an overview of the findings and my reflective analysis.

6.1 What works: Factors for Success

Teachers and coordinators identified several key areas that made teaching for social justice and reconciliation possible for them, namely resources, partnerships and support. The importance of these aspects has been identified as crucial to the successful teaching and learning of Canadian history.

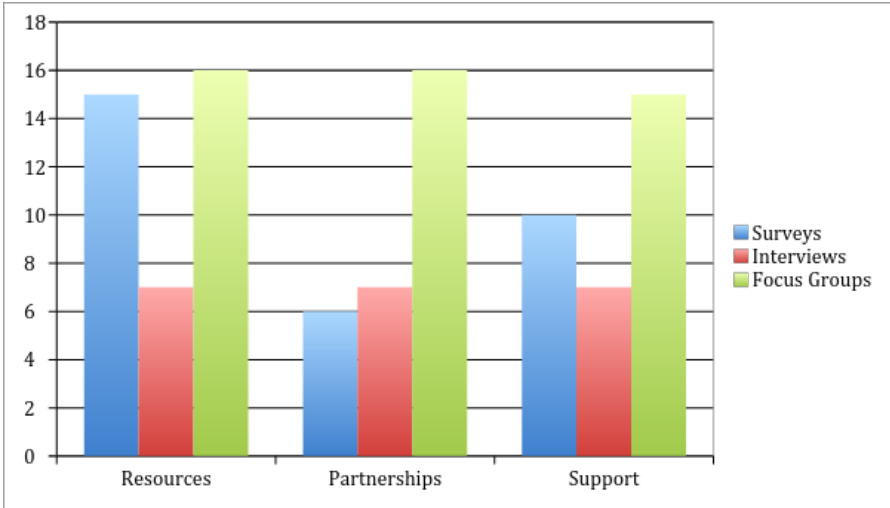


Table 10: What works: Factors for Success

6.1 1. Resources

Surveys:

Several survey respondents signalled that simple, accessible and project-based resources contributed to the success of the SJ/REC projects. (For a description of the projects that are mentioned in this section, please see Table 2). In particular, many respondents noted that picture books about residential schools were very powerful for their students, as they were “important ways to impart the truth... without me, as the teacher, being didactic or preachy” (Julie). Five survey participants mentioned the power of the children’s books, *Shi-Shi Etko and Shin-Chi’s Canoe*, as well as *Fatty Legs* and *Stranger at Home* (see Table 13). These picture books allow students to imagine what the experience of residential schools may have been like for FNIM children in a way that is relatable and meaningful. The hands-on, experiential approach that Project of Heart offers was also important, as teachers and coordinators observed that students were able to feel inspired in “a very palpable way when they are decorating the tiles for POH. The physicalness and the beauty of the tiles and the sense of giving and healing is really powerful for them” (Julie). Also important are education kits, such as “100 years of Loss” (Legacy of Hope), the “Kairos Blanket Exercise Edu-kit” (Kairos and LEARN) as well as links to websites, videos, newspaper articles, blogs and podcasts that the different organizations provide links to.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

All of the interviewees spoke about the need and importance of appropriate resources. Four of the teachers felt supported by their colleagues who had “walked before them” and made sure to “cross-reference resources” with a senior teacher or member of the local FNIM community. The sharing of books and educational activities was also a key theme, especially for new teachers, or

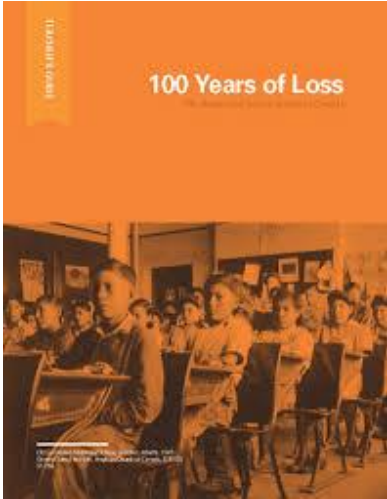
more senior teachers new to this work. Clare appreciated the picture books, such as *Shi-Shi's Canoe*, that helped “make harder concepts easier to explain” (6:24). This was also a favourite for the grade 1 students in Sandra’s class, who described her students as “captivated” (15:35) by the book. Hazel, who describes herself as committed to “helping shape students into global citizens...who think critically and who can think for themselves” (1:53), noted that it was hard for her to “get her hands on materials” (7:45) when doing POH. Hazel recently began teaching at a school where she was the only one doing this work and missed the collaboration and resource sharing from her previous school, where POH was in its 6th year. Sandra noted the importance of the hands-on nature of POH, explaining, “the tiles were very powerful for them as they understood that each tile represents a child who dies. They [the students] put in so much time and they wanted to do so many tiles” (8:15). Finally, James spoke about the importance of the resources that Kairos, the Legacy of Hope and the FNCFCS have provided, noting, “that tools are important as they are often the stepping out point” (4:57).

Focus group participants also spoke about the importance of resources that are available, simple to use, age-appropriate and teacher-ready. Those who were in remote communities were especially appreciative of the accessibility to resources made available through the CLC and the inspiration this generated for them. CLC coordinator Kera participated in the blanket exercise for the first time at one of the CLC conferences and had difficulty putting the emotional impact into words. “It was...it leaves me at a loss for words...it was very emotional...I thought wow, what an awesome way to teach people without preaching in their faces...to let them see what happened by participating” (9:42). Kera came back to her community from the conference determined to conduct the blanket exercise in her school, “not really knowing how, but I knew I had to” (14:11). Other coordinators and teachers also noted the importance of the conferences for

accessing resources, time to plan and network, and for inspiration. The continued resource support from PRT was also extremely important. So too, were the Kairos/Learn Blanket exercise Edu-kit, the 100 years of loss kit and vetted websites, videos and news stories. The series of graphic novels, *Seven Generations*, by First Nations graphic novelist and writer David Alexander Robertson, were also mentioned several times, as were the books *Fatty Legs* by Christy Jordan-Fenton and *Shin-Chi's Canoe* by Nicola Campbell.

Table 11:

Resources used by teachers and coordinators in the SJ/REC projects

Name of Resource	Description
<p>100 Years of Loss Education Kit (Legacy of Hope)</p> 	<p>In 2010-2011 the Legacy of Hope Foundation began developing an education program targeted to Canadian youth aged 11-18. This program is designed to support educators and administrators in raising awareness and teaching about the history and legacy of residential schools – effectively providing practical tools that can be implemented in classrooms. The curriculum packages are comprised of videos including Survivor testimonies, a Teacher’s Guide with six customizable Lesson Plans (12-24 hrs. of activities), teacher resources and extension activities. The Edu-kit package contains a wall-mounted timeline, and timeline in the more-compact teacher bundle is in booklet format. http://100yearsofloss.ca/en</p>

KAIROS Blanket Edu-Kit



This Edu-Kit has gathered some of the growing wisdom of educators working with the Blanket Exercise with a goal to create an Edu-Kit useful for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, for schools on reserve and off. It includes lesson plans and resources on the Indian act, residential schools, treaties, land claims, the 60's scoop and social justice issues such as Shannen's Dream.

<http://kairosblanketexercise.org/edu-kit>

Fatty-Legs and Stranger at Home

Books by: Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

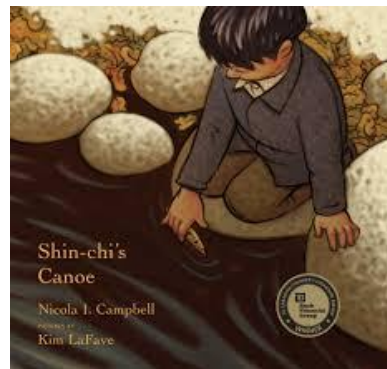
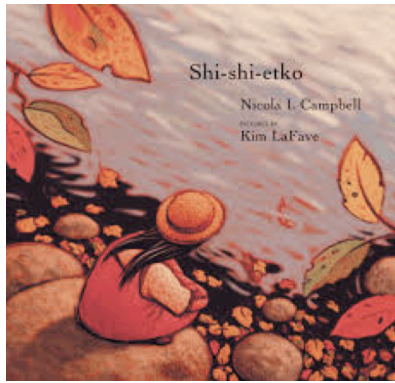


Fatty Legs: The moving memoir of an Inuit girl who emerges from a residential school with her spirit intact. Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak has set her sights on learning to read, even though it means leaving her village in the high Arctic. This inspiring first-person account of a plucky girl's determination will linger with young readers. Picking up where *Fatty Legs* concluded, *A Stranger At Home* continues the powerful memoir and first-person account of a young girl's struggle to find her place will inspire young readers to ask what it means to belong.

<http://www.annickpress.com/Fatty-Legs>

Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi's Canoe:

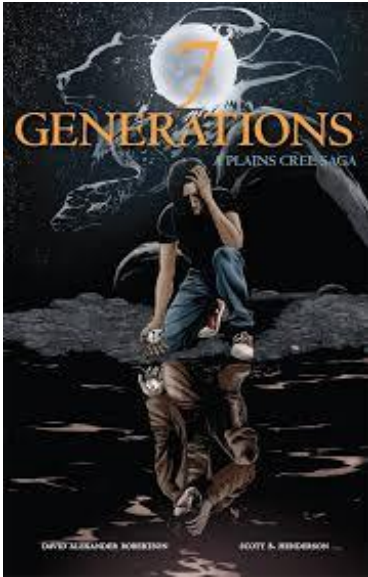
Books by: Nicola Campbell



In just four days young Shi-shi-etko will have to leave her family and all that she knows to attend residential school. She spends her last days at home treasuring the beauty of her world -- the dancing sunlight, the tall grass, each shiny rock, and the tadpoles in the creek, her grandfather's paddle song. Her mother, father and grandmother, each in turn, share valuable teachings that they want her to remember. And so Shi-shi-etko carefully gathers her memories for safekeeping.

In *Shin-chi's Canoe*, Shi-shi-etko is about to return for her second year, but this time her six-year-old brother, Shin-chi, is going, too. As they begin their journey in the back of a cattle truck, Shi-shi-etko tells her brother all the things he must remember: the trees, the mountains, the rivers and the salmon. Shin-chi knows he won't see his family again until the sockeye salmon return in the summertime. When they arrive at school, Shi-shi-etko gives him a tiny cedar canoe, a gift from their father. The children's time is filled with going to mass, school for half the day, and work the other half. The girls cook, clean and sew, while the boys work in the fields, in the woodshop and at the forge. Shin-chi is forever hungry and lonely, but, finally, the salmon swim up the river and the children return home for a joyful family reunion

<http://houseofanansi.com/products/shi-shi-etko>

<p><i>7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga</i></p> <p>Books by: David Alexander Robertson</p> 	<p>Edwin is facing an uncertain future. Only by learning about his family’s past—as warriors, survivors of a smallpox epidemic, casualties of a residential school—will he be able to face the present and embrace the future. <i>7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga</i> is an epic 4-part graphic novel. Illustrated in vivid colour, the story follows one Aboriginal family over three centuries and seven generations. <i>7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga</i> includes the four graphic novels: Stone, Scars, Ends/Begins, The Pact.</p> <p>http://www.darobertson.ca/publications/7-generations/</p>
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Please note that this chart only describes the resources mentioned by participants in this thesis. Many other resources have been used and are available to teach IRS and FNIM history.

6.1 2. Partnerships

Surveys:

Eight of the survey respondents indicated that they became involved in the projects because of a partnership with a colleague. Seven teachers indicated that they co-plan and co-teach lessons, and work together collaboratively. Sharing and networking is seen as very important, and many teachers indicated that the CLC conferences are a source of creativity and space to plan the projects. All survey respondents indicated that partnerships with organizations such as Kairos, Legacy of Hope, POH, and the FNCFCSS are seen as enriching and vital to the success of this work. Nine of the survey respondents wrote that the most important partnerships, however, are the ones made with local FNIM communities. All of the participants in the survey indicated that they felt it was “very important that Canadians form partnerships with communities” and furthermore that we “participate in reconciliation activities.” Jennifer indicated that through her

work, she has made friends with many FNIM people; “Some I do solidarity work with...the others are just my ‘friends’ that I have tea with”. The CLC SJ/REC projects have facilitated or strengthened school partnerships with elders and survivors, and therefore promoted reconciliation, as Jennifer wrote, “as long as something one is working on builds trust with Aboriginal peoples and their communities, they are reconciliation projects” (Jennifer).



Image 7: Young Activists with Cindy Blackstock

Interviews and Focus Groups:

All of the interview and focus group discussions attested to the extraordinary importance of partnerships, specifically when they were with local elders and communities. “Our FNIM students look around and see people from their cultures who are valued members of our school. Our non-FNIM students look around and see that diversity is celebrated and wonderful. How could it get any better?” (Hazel, 45:23). Partnerships with the FNCFCS were noted as being among the “most fulfilling, eye-opening and insightful experiences of my teaching career” (Valerie, 45:15).

Forming partnerships with elders and survivors are meaningful for teachers and students, and

many evolve into important friendships. Clare explained that after hearing a survivor speak about how the nuns used to hit her knuckles in residential school, her grade 2 students were sad and wanted to hug her. Teachers from school 10 spoke about powerful partnerships that have been made with a local drum teacher, as well as dancers and visual artists, who are now part of the school community. Some of the teachers and coordinators indicated that they had made partnerships prior to becoming involved with the CLC SJ/ REC projects, but the projects served to strengthen the relationships. CLC coordinator, Ted, who works at a school in a community where there was once a residential school, spoke at length about the school's "long and excellent involvement with the friendship centre and the band" (23:20). Other schools had pre-existing relationships with local elders, storytellers and artists, and attended each other's powwows and cultural days. CLC coordinators Kera and Betty, who worked together to bring the blanket exercise to their schools, indicated that the first barrier was "getting our foot in the door"(13:45). To do this, Betty and Kera called the principal of the local FNIM school and explained that they were hoping to do the blanket exercise in their schools but wanted guidance and direction from the local FNIM community. "I told him that we were hoping to increase people's awareness about the history itself and hopefully long-term, in some way, to work towards having better relations" (16:02). Kera continued, reflecting:

It's not that we have negative relations- we just have no relations...which is a shame. The teachers work so hard to prepare our students for the global community yet we know nothing about our neighbours, which is our closet cultural community. This is what makes the partnerships we form through the SJ/REC projects so important (16:32).

6.1 3. Support

Surveys:

Another important success factor was support from the PRT, from fellow teachers and coordinators and from administration. Six of the survey participants who identified themselves as new teachers (less than five years in the profession) indicated that having a mentor or associate teacher, who introduced them to the issues and supported them throughout, was fundamental to their ability to do the projects, and to do them well. Three participants noted that having a cultural worker on staff helped them form partnerships with elders and community members. The support of the CLC coordinator was also key, as this person was able to do much of the “leg work” (emailing, organising, resource-finding, funding etc.) for the projects. Also of note is the support from the PRT, in particular the support of the Aboriginal Consultant, who suggests and supplies resources, facilitates networking and provides opportunities for funding. Nine of the respondents also mentioned support from administration and school boards as being integral to the success of the projects, as this support substantiates and prioritizes the work, resources and teaching (Maya).

Interviews and Focus Groups:

Support was also a strong indicator of success for the teachers and coordinators. Hazel indicated that she had an associate (mentor) teacher who “helped a lot and enabled me to do this right from the start. It definitely inspires the way I teach. It influences the way I plan, the way I assess, the way I am with my class” (10:40). Support from cultural workers can “connect communities and teach us about different ways” was deemed valuable (Valarie, 8:12). Support from administration was also paramount, with Hazel noting, “I have worked with wonderful admin who have the courage to stand up and say, ‘This is what our school board and our school

believes. Come in and chat with us if you do not understand' ” (19:50). CLC coordinator James says that he has had a “fantastic principal who gave him ‘carte blanche’” (6:50). He also noted the importance of:

Talking to the higher-ups, educating them, getting them involved, so that when parents called the school board to say, ‘What’s the riot going on outside the school?’ the school board could say, ‘No, no! It’s not a riot! This is what we are supporting. This is a peaceful walk, or a march about First Nations education (8:56).

The need for support and resources is emphasized by Hazel’s empathic belief in the importance of “tools to help you think about what is happening, and to support it if you think it is right and to fix it if you think it is wrong. If everything else was gone from education, that’s what would have to stay” (42:49).

Support from administration continued to be a key theme through the focus groups. At school 11, the CLC coordinator revealed that a new principal shut the SJ/REC projects down, which was devastating to all involved. “The decision was fear-based. The principal didn’t understand what we were doing and didn’t take the time to understand. I think there was a fear that the projects were controversial” (Renee). All of the teachers noted that the support provided by the CLC coordinators at their schools enable them to do the SJ/REC projects they would not otherwise have done. Megan says, “Everything I was able to do was helped by the CLC network...from finding an elder, to project resources. Without this, I would not have known where to start” (37:40). She adds that, together, she and the CLC coordinator, “hit the jackpot!” (34:41). Megan describes the training provided at the conferences by the PRT as “powerful, helpful, necessary, incredible, inspirational and invaluable”. Support from parents was also acknowledged as being very important, with communication and invitation for involvement

being ways to mitigate misunderstandings from happening. CLC coordinator Ted describes it as a community effort that “brings all aspects of the community together...the friendship centre, the teachers, the parents, the elders” (41:01).

6. 2 Challenges: Lacking support, Curriculum, Indigenuity

Study participants identified many challenges, which I have grouped into three broad thematic issues. This is followed by a review of the various ways that participants have overcome these obstacles, or at least found a way to manage them. The survey did not explicitly ask teachers and coordinators about barriers and challenges, and is therefore not discussed in the following paragraphs. I did not include a question about challenges on the survey, as I felt that the interviews and focus groups would provide opportunities to examine these issues deeply.

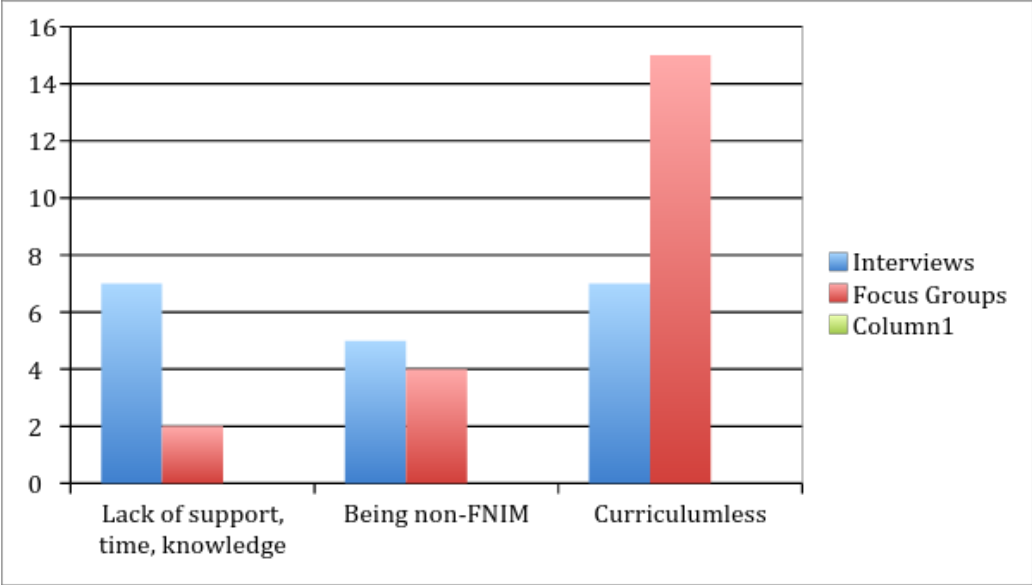


Table 12: Challenges when working on SJ/REC projects

6.2 1. Lack of support, knowledge and time

During the interviews, it became clear that several factors contributed to the challenges that teachers and coordinators had participating in the projects. Lack of support, time, and understanding (knowledge) were clearly articulated as some of the main barriers by all seven

interviewees. A strong sentiment echoed in all of the interviews was lack of knowledge, with all interviewees connecting their lack of knowledge to their own education, which did not enable them to learn the factual history of colonization, treaties or residential schools. This absent knowledge contributed to a feeling of apprehension when teaching Canadian history. James also spoke of a lack of understanding within the school community, notably among parents, teachers and even school board employees who thought that teaching from an Indigenous perspective meant “focusing too much on the FNIM students” (30:45). Petra reported pushback from some of her non-FNIM students who said, “Why do we need to learn more? Why do we talk all the time about their culture?” (21:04). Hazel identifies both a lack of understanding and prejudice as major obstacles, especially when students go home “and hear the opposite of what we teach at school. This creates a tension in the students...should I listen to my parents or should I listen to my teacher?” (18:57). Valerie sees this tension as a necessary part of the learning progress, as it creates discussion at home that a times is “confronted with ignorance. But this is part of our job, to guide them towards understanding” (29:54). Lack of support from administration was also identified as a barrier, with many connecting absence of support with misunderstanding, time constraints, standardised testing and curriculum requirements. All of the teachers acknowledged the pressure of trying to “teach everything in the curriculum” (Clare, 34:08) as a fundamental barrier to participating in the SJ/REC projects, which are not in the curriculum.

In the focus groups, lack of support and resources is not seen as a fundamental barrier as it was in the interviews. The CLC coordinators have the support of the PRT, and this made it possible for them to learn about the SJ/REC and access resources easily. Many of the coordinators did, however, experience a barrier when reaching out to local FNIM communities. Seven of the CLC coordinators spoke about time constraints, pressure to prepare students for

exams and testing, as well as lack of knowledge as obstacles:

Many teachers want to do this work. They are so passionate, so eager, so moved by the ideas I bring back from the CLC conferences. But when it comes right down to it, teachers are so pressured from so many sides. They can barely cover what they need to cover (Ted, 23:17).

Ora commented that she felt frustrated that her degree is in Canadian history, yet it has not prepared her to actually teach Canadian history. “I took courses that surveyed Canada right up to Confederation and beyond, but I didn’t learn anything about First Nations at all...how can I teach the right history if I do not have the right education?” (30:40).

6.2.2. Being Non-FNIM

Another significant barrier among the teachers and coordinators interviewed was the fear and hesitation in teaching a history that “is not mine” (Clare, 30:25) and the worry about parental backlash, particularly among FNIM families. Clare explained that she was concerned that:

The First Nations parents would think, ‘Who is this twenty-something, privileged white girl teaching about Indian residential Schools?’ but that didn’t happen. I think because it was so clear to everyone that I was learning too, and that I had formed close relationships with the parents (32:56).

Clare, like many teachers, struggled with her role as a non-FNIM teacher and worried about being culturally inappropriate, and about “presenting the facts in a way that may makes it seem like all First Nations communities are one way or another” (10:54). On the other hand, she also worried about “villainizing the Europeans, the nuns and the priests” (26:17). All interviewees strongly felt that it was necessary that they work with FNIM colleagues and elders so that they could learn to “teach the right thing, in a sensitive and respectful way” (Petra, 8:47). Regardless,

the feelings of not wanting to offend, teach misinformation or to culturally appropriate “stories that do not belong to us” (Clare, 23:45) were pervasive throughout the interviews and were an internal struggle that were evident barriers for the teachers. “In the end, I have to say that I am uncomfortable because I am white. I did not walk the path. I do not know the struggle” (Valerie, 42:20).

In the focus groups, there was a strong sense among the participants that incredible sensitivity, respect and cultural honouring are fundamental to doing reconciliation work and social justice projects. Five of the coordinators said that they would not have considered doing the SJ/REC projects without first establishing a relationship with the local friendship centre, FNIM school, elder or band council. The feelings of not wanting to “teach the wrong things in the wrong way” (Betty, 16:18) were extremely relevant and seen as mitigated by working with local community members. For CLC coordinator Paulie, being non-FNIM in a predominately segregated community is a barrier that is:

a work in progress. The impact of colonization and residential schools is not behind us, but still very present...many people here feel separated by the lines of history...it makes it difficult for us to teach a history that is not history at all...it’s impact is visual (34:55).

6.2 3. Curriculumless: nowhere to be found

The most challenging barrier for the interviewees was the Quebec Education Program. All interviewees spoke at length about the QEP’s complete lack of “factual history. History that took place” (Valerie, 32:10). High School history teacher Emily states:

The barriers we face in teaching the true history of First Nations lies directly within the Quebec Curriculum. The Quebec curriculum is much too focused on Quebec issues...and our students miss out on key events with First Nations...There is no question that the

Quebec history Curriculum is short-sighted (23:45).

This absence from the curriculum is especially difficult for new teachers who are “trying to cover everything and when something is not there and you don’t have to teach it, it really doesn’t get taught” (Clare 13:23). At all grade levels, teachers are pressed for time and struggling to include the issues they are mandated to teach, such as preparing students for provincial exams (Emily). The lack of focus in the curriculum on FNIM experiences and on the injustices of colonization is a tremendous barrier for teachers and for coordinators. For Hazel, it is problematic, as it means that:

Only one perspective is being taught – the one written in the curriculum. If teachers do manage to integrate ‘truth’ into their teaching, it benefits those students in that teacher’s class. But what about in the class next door? Or the school in the next town? What those students are learning is not the truth (23:07).

All of the teachers and coordinators felt strongly that the curriculum is not allowing their students to learn about “the most prevalent issues in Canada, past and present” (Hazel, 12:45) and by doing so, the education system is not preparing young people to be aware of multiple perspectives and true historical facts. Angela argues that the history textbook she uses has “less than a page of information that talks about residential schools. We all know about Martin Luther King Jr., and yet we don’t teach about these horrible things that happened in our own country” (34:50).

The limitations and narrow perspectives of the curriculum in Quebec are also sources of frustration for CLC coordinators. Kera spoke about how teachers often ask her to try to get the school board to mandate residential school history as part of the curriculum. “The teachers want more local content, and they want to teach not just what it was like, but the gaps in the

middle...how did they [FNIM peoples] get from the tepees to the reserves?" (37:28). Betty spoke about her deep concern that students learn about FNIM people as historical figures:

We teach students that all they did was hunt and travel by canoe. They don't learn about them [FNIM peoples] as contemporary figures. And they don't learn about how we got to where we are now. If we are going to teach kids history, we should be teaching the whole story. I don't think we are doing that, and I don't think we have to do that, because it is not in the Quebec curriculum. That is the real problem (42:42).

6. 3 Ways Forward

Teachers and coordinators were asked to think about how they understood their roles as educators in relation to teaching for social justice and reconciliation. They were specifically asked about the TRC Calls to Action, the work going on in their own schools and centres, and the concept of curriculum in reconciliation work. The participants had varying ideas about ways forward, but their responses can be characterised into three key areas for change: that the TRC Calls to Action been seen as curriculum; the continued partnerships between FNIM communities and non-FNIM communities; and the need for curriculum reform to include residential schools, colonial history, land claims, treaties and the past and present contributions of FNIM peoples.

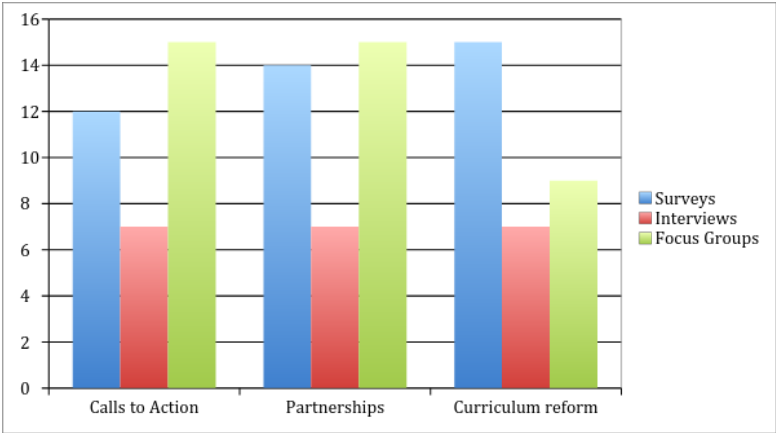


Table 13: Ways Forward

6.3 1. The Calls to Actions: Education got us here, and education is what will get us out

Surveys:

Twelve of the fifteen respondents indicated that they believed that the TRC Calls to Action should be immediately integrated into the Quebec curriculum, and all fifteen indicated that they believed that residential school history should be included in all provincial and territorial curriculums.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

The Calls to Action were a topic of deep reflection and discussion during both the interviews and the focus groups. When teachers and coordinators were asked what they felt the role of the TRC Calls to Action would be in their work, their responses signaled a sense of urgency to act on them actively, creatively and respectfully (Valerie, 43:12). Emily wrote a short play on the history of residential schools that her students performed for the entire school community; she hopes to share the play with schools across Canada. Newer teachers, like Petra, feel that in order to respond to the Calls to Action, she needs more knowledge, “but will continue to participate in activist events, to learn and to be part of a network” (42:36). Petra also feels that the Calls to Action are a way to supplement the curriculum with truth, “as I don’t want to perpetuate myths” (26:45). Valerie views the Calls to Action as a way to open up dialogue, and to make us more cognizant “by expanding our understanding of where we have been and where we are going and what we can do about it” (42:01). Hazel argues that:

Teachers need to teach by the Calls to Action. And teachers need to be the ones to insist on this...as we are the ones who see how our students want to learn and how engaged they are. Kids want to learn about this, they want to know the whole truth. They don’t want to hear the easy story. They want to hear the good, the bad and the ugly and they

want to learn about what they can do to fix it. They want to understand why and what happened in Canada (38:14).

Clare spoke at length about the Calls to Action being the road to true change, recalling a professor saying that the Calls to Action should be the beginning of a civil rights movement in Canada. Clare feels that this is an exciting and important time for truth and reconciliation and she can make her students part of it, and be able to “turn around in fifty years and say we taught FNIM history accurately and we made a difference. It’s such an honour to be part of that driving force” (42: 15). In the focus groups, the Calls to Action were seen as a key part of the framework for the Aboriginal dossier, with all participating in a variety of the SJR/EC projects within the last 5 years.

6.3 2. Partnerships: The foundation for our future

Surveys:

In discussing ways forward in the reconciliation movement, the importance of partnerships came up repeatedly, with teachers and coordinators recognizing and honouring those FNIM elders, survivors and communities who are integral to teaching and learning. Participants in the survey were asked about partnerships they had made with FNIM peoples or communities. Nine survey respondents indicated that they had formed lasting partnerships with the local FNIM community as a result of the CLC SJ/REC projects. All respondents indicated that the partnerships that the CLC had made with organizations were essential to their work. Depending on the school community, the PRT, coordinators and teachers, may all part of the development of the partnerships.

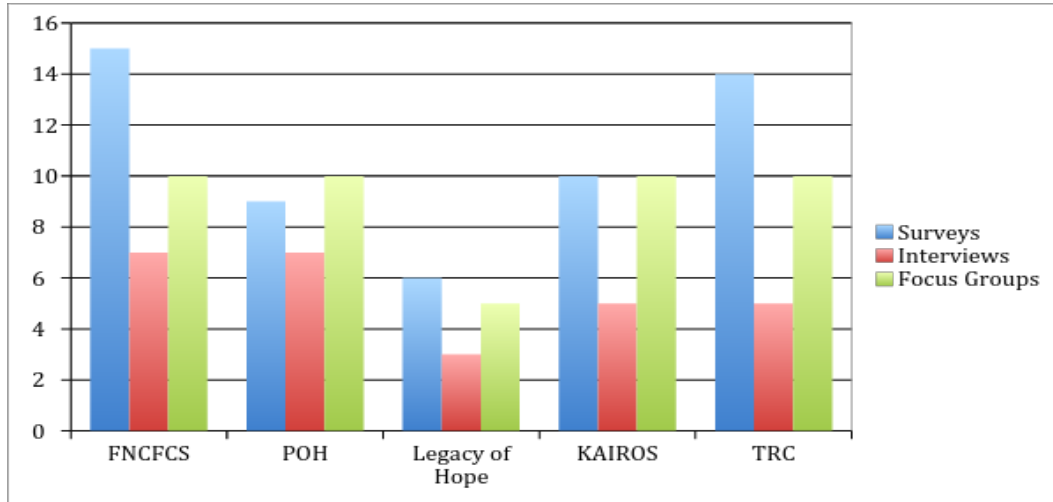


Table 14: Partnership Organizations

Interviews and Focus Groups:

Many of teachers and coordinators in both the interviews and the focus groups were cognizant of the importance of partnerships and of the continuity of them from year to year. All interviewees spoke of the meaningful partnerships that they had formed with the FNCFCS as well as with POH. Three of the teachers had used the “100 years of loss kit” produced by the Legacy of Hope, and five had used the KAIROS Edu-kit as well as resources from the TRC. Similarly, the participants in the focus groups spoke about the “absolute necessity” (Ted, 23:45) for partnerships with organizations, and with the local FNIM community. Furthermore, partnerships should be “on-going, mutually-satisfying and contribute directly to reconciliation” (Ted, 34:56).

6.3 3. Curriculum Reform: Long overdue

Surveys:

All survey respondents voiced strong convictions that the Calls to Action must be the foundation of new curricula across Canada. While much has already been done in British Columbia,

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and the territories, the Quebec curriculum is far behind, with students continuing to learn about the fur trade and New France in isolation, as if the First Nations people did not exist (QEP, 2009). Survey participants overwhelmingly indicated that residential school history must be taught in school, and FNIM content and perspective integrated throughout the curriculum at all levels. The absence of it in the Quebec curriculum is a tremendous barrier. As Kate wrote:

The history we teach in Quebec schools is extremely one-sided...and with the MELS curriculum we have hardly any time to venture outside of the curriculum to teach what is not there...I see how pressured social studies teachers are to complete the curriculum and to make sure that their students have all the tools to pass [the exams].

Interviews and Focus Groups:

All interviewees commented on the lack of FNIM perspective in Quebec's curriculum and all are strongly critical of its absence and the need for reform. Valerie declared that:

It is absurd that Quebec has done nothing to include this history. How can we teach our students factual history? History that took place...if the curriculum does not give us a mandate to do this? And who is writing our history books? We are only getting one perspective- we need more perspectives (32:10).

Hazel argued that the Calls to Action ought to be the basis of a supplemental curriculum, and that teachers need to be activists:

We have to be ahead of the curriculum...we have to be open to challenging the status quo. Education is horribly slow to change...Quebec is stuck so far behind where the rest of Canada is at, that if we only stuck to what the curriculum said we would be doing everyone a disservice. Teachers have to be ahead of that, teachers should be leading the

campaign of leading kids to change the country...we must be arguing for the explicit teaching of true history (42: 23).

Clare believes that the issues around social inequity in services, poverty, high rates of suicide, and missing and murdered Indigenous women should all be explicitly taught in the curriculum as well, and linked directly to the Calls to Action:

If you don't teach about current issues, it is hard for kids to make the connections otherwise. ...Some teachers are doing it, but the fact that it is not there means that your understanding of the past and present of Canada is based on the teacher you have, not on the importance of history. And that has to change. This should be something you have to teach (36:34).

In the focus groups, five of the high school teachers spoke about the lack of content in their curriculum, and the strain of "covering the bases" (Angela) so that their students can pass MELS exams. CLC coordinator James commented that many teachers he works with are trying their best to integrate it, but to do that they are "working around the curriculum" (20:15) and that "it should be part of the curriculum. The government needs to open their eyes and support the teachers" (22:10). Kera strongly believes that "teachers should have to teach it...because right now it is seen as an add on...it is not part of the curriculum...teachers are trying, but many aren't educated themselves-this is why it must be included at all levels of education" (44:08). All around the province, teachers are asking for this to be included, because it is "so real, that it should not be put aside. It should be right in there" (Megan, 44:10). Ted is very clear that the Calls to Action and the factual teaching of Canadian history "should have a prominent place in the curriculum. It is not even that it is a moral or ethical issue- it is what happened here. It should be part of every history class" (55:33).

6.4 Chapter Summary

In the survey, interviews and focus groups, there was much to be said about best practises when engaged in the SJ/REC projects, as well as challenges and ways forward. Looking at each of the three sub-themes separately, I present my summary and reflective analysis of each below.

6.4 1. What works: Factors for Success

The key findings about what made the SJ/REC projects successful were common across the surveys, interviews and focus groups. Support was fundamental to the projects, specifically, access to resources that are simple, accessible and project-based. Resources made available by the PRT, or by teachers and coordinators who have done the projects before hand are very useful. Survey respondents indicated that education kits that are provided or suggested by the PRT, such as the Legacy of Hope's 100 years of loss, and the Kairos Blanket Edu-kit are important and helpful. This suggests that projects led by a PRT team member are a strong factor for success. In many of the interviews and focus groups, participants spoke about the ease of doing a project that was coordinated by the PRT and the CLC coordinator. Many teachers also commented on the hands-on nature of the projects, especially Project of Heart. It appears that POH works so well because of the sequential order of steps, and the vast resources that are available on the POH website. For teachers and coordinators in the more remote areas of Quebec, the resources made available to them at CLC conferences were essential to their ability to do the SJ/REC projects. Also important was the ability to connect with other teachers doing the work and create a sense of community. Survey participants revealed that grants from the PRT were particularly helpful, and were often used to purchase picture books and pay for supplies, as well as honourariums for elders.

Another factor for success is partnerships, especially with the PRT and the CLC Aboriginal

network. The network that was developed through the SJ/REC projects enabled teachers and coordinators to work towards a common goal, such as the TRC Education Day in Montreal in 2013. That year, CLC schools that participated in POH came together to share their work, and a video was made about the experience and was shared widely across the province. Other essential partnerships are those with FNIM communities, but again, support through the PRT is fundamental for most coordinators and teachers to establish this. The PRT is able to support teachers and coordinators regarding names of local elders, funding for honourariums, and referral to teachers in the network who have successfully built partnerships with FNIM communities. It appears that once a partnership has been established, the SJ/REC projects help build trust between non-FNIM and FNIM communities. These partnerships build respect and create allyship. Often, the elders and survivors who work with the schools become part the school community; the SJ/REC projects, therefore, are not “one-off’s” that teachers and coordinators do and then forget. They are the seedlings of change, friendship, and long-lasting partnerships.

Other partnerships that were identified as being overwhelmingly important were those with the FNCFCS. The campaigns such as “Shannen’s Dream”, “I am a Witness” and “Our Dreams Matter Too” provide teachers and coordinators with hands-on resources, and facilitate collaboration with other activist teachers. The partnerships that the FNCFCS has cultivated with teachers and coordinators have a significant role in the success of the SJ/REC projects.

Finally, the support provided by the PRT was mentioned by many of the CLC coordinators. Having a project leader, who presents the project, provides support and a cumulative activity is a model that has been successful to the spread of the SJ/REC projects across Quebec. Teachers spoke of the support from the CLC coordinator at their school, as being someone who could help them access resources and who has experience with the projects, and established partnerships

with the communities. Experienced teachers in the network are also essential to the success of the projects, with the PRT asking them to share their knowledge at conferences, or connecting them with other teachers via video conference. Newer teachers spoke at length about the support from a mentor teacher at their school, who gave them the confidence, knowledge and pedagogical understanding to do the projects.

Other important support mechanisms include corroboration from school administration and school board representation. At one school, the SJ/REC projects were cancelled when a new principal arrived. It appears that a lack of understanding of the importance of the SJ/REC projects, as well as a fear of political backlash or parental misapprehensions were at play. Several of the teachers and coordinators indicated that they had tremendous support from their administration, all of which suggests a casual connection between strong administration and school board involvement with the CLC and support for the SJ/REC projects.

6.4 2. Challenges: Lack of support, curriculum, indigeneity

There are several challenges when doing this work. In the interviews, many teachers spoke about insufficient time, support, confidence and understanding as key barriers. Insufficient time was mainly linked to the pressure to prepare students to write standardized tests. MELS requires all students from Grades 2 and up to write math exams and Grades 4 and 6 students also write Language Arts exams. High school students write exams in all academic subject areas. Coordinators felt that the lack of engagement from some teachers at their schools had to do with the pressures they are under to fulfill curriculum expectations and prepare their students for the exams.

The absence of FNIM history and perspective in the curriculum is a significant challenge, as teachers at all grade levels do not feel as though they can even cover the actual curriculum. A

lack of knowledge was problem for teachers and coordinators due to their own educational experiences vis-à-vis Canadian history. Frustrations about studying Canadian history at university and not learning about residential schools or the Indian Act were expressed repeatedly and regarded as challenges that teachers and coordinators face.

Another challenge for many of the interview and focus group participants is not being FNIM themselves. It appears that there is a significant sense of fear and hesitation when teaching a history that is viewed as “not my own”. Several teachers and coordinators expressed worry about being “culturally inappropriate”, or by not recognizing differences between nations and conveying a “pan-Aboriginal” approach rather one that respects and distinguishes one nation from another. This signifies the crucial obligation that teachers and coordinators have to work with local FNIM communities, rather than in isolation. Also significant to this theme was the fear of a negative reaction from FNIM families within the school community. One teacher worried that the parents of FNIM students in her class would question her ability to teach about residential schools. She decided to write a letter to the parents explaining that she was learning herself, and welcomed their involvement. She also made it explicit that she was working with an elder who was a residential school survivor. This willingness to be open and honest allowed the teacher to extend a hand to FNIM families and say, “I want to learn from you.” This points to the important differences between teaching *about* FNIM peoples, history and culture and instead learning *from* and *with* FNIM people and communities. Exploring the experiences, feelings and struggles of survivors must be done *with* survivors and their families.

The greatest challenge, however, was the lack of FNIM history and perspective in the Quebec curriculum. Almost all teachers and coordinators conveyed frustration and anger that Quebec continues to focus exclusively on Quebec history, and furthermore, that it excludes factual

history about FNIM. The absence of this history (and current inequities) from the curriculum makes it difficult for teachers to give time to the SJ/REC projects, and is viewed as problematic to student learning.

6.4 3. Ways Forward

Twelve of the fifteen survey respondents indicated that the TRC Calls to Action concerning education should be integrated into the Quebec curriculum. All respondents felt strongly that residential school history should be included in all provincial and territorial curricula. This was also the case in both the interviews and the focus groups, with teachers and coordinators stressing the urgency of curriculum reform in Quebec. It appears that for these teachers, the Calls to Action could be and ought to be, the basis of a new social studies curriculum in Quebec. Although the Quebec curriculum is a substantial challenge, the SJ/REC projects are a way for teachers to engage in the change that the TRC advocates without the support or validation of MELS. This is indeed how the Calls to Action have spread across Quebec, with the CLC leading the way. Clare felt that the Calls to Action were a framework for not only the SJ/REC projects, but also could be the basis of a civil rights movement in Canada.

Partnerships are also integral to education for reconciliation in Quebec, and for the SJ/REC projects themselves. Partnerships with FNIM communities, elders, survivors, and organizations, as well as those with non-FNIM activist groups such as Kairos and Project of Heart, are vital to the SJ/REC projects. It appears that for most of the participants, it is the CLC, and the PRT specifically, that arrange and initiate the partnerships. Once established, the continuity of the relationships develops through the work of the individual coordinators and teachers in the school community.

All of the participants in this study stressed that curriculum reform in Quebec is long overdue

and vital for reconciliation. Provinces and territories in the rest of Canada have curricula that include residential schools, the Indian Act and other consequences of colonization, and many teachers and coordinators feel that Quebec has a responsibility to act. Seven coordinators expressed frustration that many teachers want to engage in the SJ/REC projects, but because it is not mandated anywhere in the curriculum, many of them see it as an add on; something they would like to do, but just don't have the time for.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Calls to Action

In this chapter, I will discuss my research findings on the experiences of teachers, CLC coordinators and students who participated in SJ/REC projects in Quebec in relation to the literature on social justice and transformative education. As I will argue, my study of their experiences points to the significant benefits that teaching for social justice, specifically in regards to reconciliation and decolonization, has for teachers and students. I offer several approaches for best practise as well as suggestions for the future of the CLC/LEARN Ed4Rec dossier. Finally, I offer recommendations and reasons for educational reform in Quebec.

7.1 Teaching for Social Justice with Critical pedagogy and Red Pedagogy

My research findings suggest that many teachers and coordinators believe in the power of teaching for social justice, and specifically in illuminating systems of inequality, disparity and oppression (Shields & Mohan, 2008). In many cases, participants spoke of how learning about residential schools was shocking, but necessary, and raised awareness of the current inequities and racism towards FNIM peoples in Canada. A key aspect of for teaching for social justice is that it is a transformative practise, based on the assumption that informed actions can change the world (Smith, 2002). As many of the teachers and coordinators in my study confirmed, they, and their students had transformative experiences while working on the SJ/REC projects. These transformative experiences deepened understanding, built social capital (in many cases the marginalized students became the most engaged), and enhanced a sense of community among students, teachers and the CLC network. Unlike the banking model of education (Freire, 1972), the SJ/REC projects involved critical thinking, inquiry, and developed richer, more textured understandings of themselves and their world (Torres & Noguera, 2008). By engaging in critical pedagogy, participants in my study involved their students in profound discussions and

transformative learning about the stories often told about Canada. The concept of praxis (Brueing, 2009), or linking social issues to actions, was critical to the deep understanding and empathy that many students developed. Many participants felt that it was the opportunity for their students to act on their knowledge that was most engaging:

What was most amazing about the projects was that students did not just get depressed when they learning about the suffering of so many FNIM people and families. Yes, they got sad and shocked and angry, but they were happy that they were learning. And they had so many questions. But probably the most urgent and common one I heard over and over was: What can we do to change things now? (Maya)

My findings suggest that students experience high levels of engagement when learning about social justice and reconciliation. Teachers spoke about how they noticed their students experiencing increased emotional engagement, compassion and empathy. Several recounted that their students were more engaged than they'd ever been, with higher attendance rates, improved writing and reading skills, deep reflection and critical thinking. It appears that social justice engages students in ways that other learning fails to and contributes to the transformative power of education. Moreover, classrooms where critical pedagogy is practiced examine curriculum from a critical stance (McLaren 2003), and are enable students to question and critically reflect about what they are learning, and what they don't...and why. Many teachers and coordinators in my study are unwavering in their critique of the Quebec Education Ministries opposition to reform the curriculum and adopt the TRC recommendations.

As much as critical pedagogy helps frame the research, the concept of red pedagogy (2004) is particularly useful when examining the experiences of teachers and coordinators. Several of the research participants spoke about their recognition of the colonial discourses that shape their

classrooms, communities and curriculums. To truly work against inequity, teachers and coordinators realize that decolonizing the curriculum is a process that ought to extend to critical theories of educational systems themselves. I argue, therefore, that the SJ/REC projects have the potential to enable participants to experience a process of decolonization, or “unsettling the settler within” (Regan, 2010):

I always called myself a critical pedagogue. But now I realize that critical pedagogy is rooted in a white, male, Eurocentric system. Part of the decolonizing process that I am experiencing is that there are many stories to be told, many ways to tell it, and that most current policies and systems in our country are based on one story, one way, one perspective. These projects have opened me up to a whole new way of looking at the world (Maya).

As this study has also revealed, the SJ/REC projects have a major effect on teaching and learning. Teachers described feelings of “deep teaching,” (Julie) “emotional connectedness with students” (Sally) and “a filling in of missing pedagogy” (Darlene). For many teachers, topics of social justice and reconciliation likewise have both personal and pedagogical impacts, and that learning about residential schools was the beginning of a process of “decolonizing” themselves:

All of a sudden, my eyes were open. I looked around and realized how everything we do is impact of colonization. That colonization is not what happened before, but it is happening right now. The way we teach, the way we arrange our desks, the way we tell students they must learn a Eurocentric history and even the way we assess them. There is nothing indigenous about any of that. Where are their stories? Their ways of knowing? It is an absolutely amazing experience to wake up and realize what you knew before has changed. And changed for the better...a change within (Jennifer).

Along with the process of decolonizing, come the responsibilities of allyship. Many teachers and coordinators stressed the importance of linking residential schools with current inequities in federal policies regarding housing development on reserves, child welfare services, healthcare and education on reserve, and murdered and missing Indigenous women. The combination of learning about the past and relating it to current inequities is a strong indicator of teacher and student involvement in social justice action. If learning is connected to action, transformation is born.

7.2 Transformative approaches to Canadian History

The CLC-initiated SJ/REC projects have inspired transformative approaches to teaching and learning Canadian history in the province of Quebec. The traditional ideas of citizenship, that is, those that enable students to aspire to be active citizens in their democracy (Philpot & Dagenais, 2011), are not evident in any of my research findings. What is evident, however, is the questioning of the ideals of national citizenship, and the concept of Canada as a nation itself. If anything, the SJ/REC projects problematize the ideals of citizenship education, asking teachers and coordinators to confront difficult facts about Canada as a country and accept our collective history. This is where the concept of decolonizing pedagogy becomes necessary to understand, and the role each one of us have in decolonizing ourselves as individuals. In Canada, ideas of decolonization have garnered a wide range of interpretations, including a repudiation of the typical colonial narrative, an embracing of FMIN knowledges, learning about land claims and treaties, and finally a social justice movement that aligns non-Indigenous people with Indigenous peoples to rights the wrongs of colonization (Barney, K. & Yang, 2012). The opportunities that teachers, coordinators and students have had while participating in the SJ/REC projects are decolonizing experiences that do not just teach them something, but fundamentally change how

they think. The projects also give space to the valuing, rather than systemic devaluing, of FNIM ways of living, as described by Leanne Simpson (2014). She recounts her tale of going on a class trip to the sugar bush, which is a fond memory many Canadian children have. But for Simpson, it her experience devalued the Nishnaabeg way of making maple syrup, and a positioned the European way as the best way. Simpson recalls how this experience at school made her feel “continually measured against a set of principles that requires surrender to an assimilative colonial power” (p.6).

My research strongly shows that the CLC SJ/REC projects bring value, appreciation, respect and honouring to FNIM ways of knowing and traditions. They also reveal the forces of colonial genocide, the traditional lands that our schools are built on, and possibilities of working as allies with FNIM peoples and communities. The SJ/REC projects are about stories of people; thereby engaging in culturally relational teaching that creates space for teachers, coordinators and students to position themselves with and in relation to the stories and the people they are learning about (Donald, 2011). The SJ/REC projects respect Indigenous knowledges, which have brought value to the contemporary educational contexts (Battiste, 2001), whereby students and teachers are encouraged to learn the narratives that colonialism has asked us to forget (Ng-a-Fook, 2013). Discovering and embracing non-colonial ways of knowing, learning, thinking and teaching are strong emotional themes:

We (the non-FNIM) have also lost so much. Canadians in general have lost out on a rich part of who we are as Canadians. Culture, drumming, sacred medicines, carved hand-held Inuit maps, advocacy and healthy living. Sometimes I am simply overwhelmed at the profound losses of colonialism (Sally).

This study has shown that it is possible for individuals to work in transformative spaces,

challenging, questioning and resisting the current provincial agenda. Teachers and coordinators of the CLC are true champions in this sense, as they work for a Ministry of Education that gives no value to the work that they are doing. The advocacy work of the CLC has created a network of teachers and coordinators who are committed to spreading the Calls to Action across the province, and this is important and revolutionary work. However, in order to deconstruct curricular colonialism and critically examine the grand Canadian narrative (Stanley, 2006), a rewriting of curriculum is necessary and socially just (Smith, 1999). Across Canada, this has begun in all provinces and territories. In all of them, that is, except Quebec.

7.3 Recommendations and Calls to Action

At the beginning of my research journey, I hoped it would contribute to the movement towards reconciliation and social justice and to the sharing of information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and FNIM, as called for in the TRC Calls to Action report. It was also my intention that my research would support and substantiate the ongoing work of the CLC Ed4Rec initiative in the province of Quebec. I also hoped that it would contribute to the development of new curriculum in the provinces of Quebec. In this section, it is my intention to review my findings in relation to these hopes, and make a number of recommendations and “calls to action” that could inform the reconciliation for education movement in Quebec.

7.3.1 Best practices for Social Justice and reconciliation

Several key areas for best practises emerged from the research, namely partnerships, access to resources and support. Partnerships with organizations, such as Project of Heart, Kairos and the Legacy of Hope are important. The project-based learning activities and education-kits have enabled teachers and coordinators to bring residential school history to their classrooms, and

should therefore continue to be distributed.

The need to belong to a community of activists is also essential to reconciliation. In my research, all participants spoke about their work with the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society and Cindy Blackstock. Her work with teachers and students is a very powerful example of how change can take place in all of us. Cindy's work brings justice and equity to First Nations children by involving non-FNIM Canadian school children and youth in campaigns like Shannon Dream and Jordan's principle. The source of inspiration that these campaigns bring to teachers and students, the organization of key events (Have a Heart Day, Our Dreams Matter Too) and the opportunities for Canadians to become involved is a positive, hopeful and socially just model, are strong factors for success.

When teaching about residential schools, resources should be age appropriate and culturally relational to the traditions of the local FNIM community, if at all possible. Teaching and learning needs to be done in collaboration with a FNIM elder, teacher or residential school survivor. Children and youth must be given space to express their feelings, opinions and questions. My study findings also suggest that when teachers and coordinators work with parents, administration and school boards, there is more support and less potential for misunderstanding.

It is also imperative that relationships between FNIM and non-FNIM Canadians be the focal point of reconciliation work. Teachers and coordinators continually report that the relationships with local elders and communities changed their understandings of history and of current policies and inequities. These relationships also impact their understanding of reconciliation, specifically that it is never done and isolation, but “hand-in-hand” with FNIM communities.

Another recommendation for best practises concerns the education of teachers and coordinators. Of the 39 participants in this study, only a handful had learned about residential

schools before they became adults. Teachers and coordinators often felt that they “didn’t know enough” to teach it to their students and were very concerned about saying, doing or imparting the wrong information:

I had no idea. No idea that this had happened in the land I called my own. I have been teaching social studies for years and had not ever once taught my students about what was actually happening to Indigenous people- I had been teaching them the ‘nice’ version of our history. I can’t believe. But I didn’t know (Maya).

This points to the urgent need for this history to be included in curriculums, at all levels, across Canada. Residential schools, treaties and other impacts of colonization should also be taught in all Bachelor of Education programs across Canada, and they should be mandatory- not optional courses students can take if they are interested. These findings in my research are supported by the TRC Calls to Action, specifically number 63:



Image 8: TRC Call to Action No.63

Finally, the need to link learning about residential schools with the ongoing impacts of colonization is paramount to student understanding of current inequities. Connecting residential schools, the Indian Act and other policies of assimilation to contemporary issues that many

FNIM communities face is what motivates students, teachers and coordinators to become involved in social justice actions. Learning about unequal education funding on reserves, discrimination in child welfare services, murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, tragically high suicide rates and the appalling over-representation of FNIM men and women in prisons is fundamental for Canadians to understand how we got here, and what we can do to change it. And why we must.

7.4 CLC Ed4Rec Initiative

My study focused on the social justice and reconciliation projects that were initiated and supported by the CLC during the years of 2012-2016. During the years that my research spanned, fundamental changes have taken place within the CLC and specifically, within the dossier. Aside from the change in name (Aboriginal to Ed4Rec), the vision has significantly changed, from that of a support role for teachers and coordinators, to a generalized set of principles that is currently being developed. Additionally, grants available to teachers and coordinators doing the projects are no longer available. This has changed the trajectory of reconciliation for education in Quebec, and will hopefully position my research to provide valuable evidence of the need for continued support for this work. In this section, I will review the outcomes of this research and make suggestions as to what has made this model work and suggestions as the CLC/LEARN move forward in their current restructuring.

7.4 1. The importance of the CLC conferences for teachers and coordinators

Many participants identified that it was at the conference where they found the inspiration, time to reflect, resources, and networking they needed to begin projects. The energy and insight gained at the conferences acted as the “fuel” which would last once they were back in their own schools and communities. The power of being “away” from the school gave space for these

inspirations to take root, rather than erode. These spaces for renewal are precious.

7.4 2. The Project Based Model

Over the years, the Aboriginal Dossier has used an experiential, project-based model on which to base the exploration of themes such as Indian Residential Schools, (Project of Heart) Equal Education on reserves (Shannen's Dream) and Land Claims, Treaties, and the ongoing effects of colonization (The Blanket exercise). All participants identified that the project-based model worked so well for them as they could easily follow the steps provided (though they were easy to modify for differences in geography or grade level). They also identified that participating in the projects at the CLC conferences was what called them to action. Participants actually got to experience the blanket exercise themselves; they got to listen to survivors and elders; they were able to hear other teachers talking about engaging students in social justice and see learning in action through videos of students engaging in the projects.

7.4 3. The Significance of the PRT and the Aboriginal dossier

It is clear from the focus groups that the SJ/REC projects have had had incredible impact and spread far and wide across the province. Many of the CLCs had not done projects related to FNIM history and reconciliation or formed partnerships with FNIM communities before the SJ/REC projects. Many CLCs were comfortable engaging in "cultural activities" such as making dream catchers or storytelling using Aboriginal legends, but most had not heard of, or much less participated in Project of Heart, the blanket exercise, Shannen's Dream or the TRC. The strength of the SJ/REC projects can be attributed to several factors, including the continuation of the projects from year to year, the building of expertise within the network and the sharing of this expertise. Most crucial, however, is the need for a resource person in the lead, suggesting project

ideas, providing resources and support, and coordinating a cumulative outcome.

7.4 4. The partnerships formed through the CLC coordinators

All of the teacher participants spoke highly of the job that the coordinators do, especially for their ability to garner resources and partnerships. All of the participants spoke of the need to form partnerships with the local FNIM community, be it through the friendship centre or through elders or parents. The CLC coordinators are key to forming these partnerships that lay the foundation on which the projects can grow. Many of these connections have resulted in meaningful, long lasting and momentous relationships with elders and survivors.

7.4 5. Accessible, free, simple resources

Teachers are swamped. I heard this time and time again. The research showed that having resources that are simple, “field-tested” and free are essential for the success of the projects. The links that the CLC have made with organizations such as Kairos and the Legacy of Hope have put resources (and training) into the hands of the coordinators and teachers. Resources that are accessible and hands-on, and projects that have a beginning, middle and an expected outcome (i.e. the creation of a commemorative piece of art) are factors for success.

7.4 6. The inherent link between the CLC, social change and community

Most of the coordinators and teachers identified that social change was an important aspect of their work, and a driving motivation to be involved in the projects. Social justice is what brings about true social change, and all of the participants were inspired by the social impact of the projects. Most of the CLC coordinators/teachers had not heard of residential schools until learning about Project of Heart through the CLC. For many, this learning opened up new doors and the opportunity to engage from and with a new perspective of land, power, marginalization

and struggle.

It is my hope that these insights may inform the CLC/LEARN as they reorganize their structure, in particular the Ed4Rec dossier. Based on my extensive work and research in Quebec, and with the CLC, I would caution them from developing a “general practice approach”. It is clear that teachers and coordinators need a PRT member in the lead. They also feel that the collaborative nature of the projects across the network, and the opportunity to build a network with other teachers and schools was of the utmost significance. The continuation of specific projects from year to year, the building of expertise within the network and the sharing of this expertise are factors that have contributed to the working of the CLC model. The fact that principals are such an important part of the CLC model and that school board representatives are included is encouraging. I would also recommend that principals and school board officials are at Education for Reconciliation training (such as the blanket exercise) and that principals who have expertise working in the field provide mentorship to those who are learning.

7.5 Curriculum Reform in Quebec and the TRC Calls to Action

Although time, support and knowledge were identified as challenges to the SJ/REC projects, the lack of FNIM history and residential school history in the curriculum is the most significant obstacle for participants in my study.

Quebec continues to resist calls by several groups, as well as the recommendations of the TRC to include this history explicitly in their curriculum. All research participants reported this is a major obstacle, but not one that is going to stop them from teaching and learning the truth. It is only through the CLCs, however, that some students and teachers have the opportunity to engage in this work. The exclusion from the curriculum means not all teachers teach it and not

all students learn it. Therefore, residential school history absolutely needs to be mandated in the provincial curriculum so that all students learn this history, regardless of the role of the CLC or the knowledge and ability of their teachers.

John Milloy (1999) refers to the Indian Residential School system as “National crime”. I would agree, and argue that the absence of residential school history in the Quebec curriculum is a provincial crime. The rationale from the ministry for it not being mandated is that there's room in the curriculum, and that it's up to teachers to teach the history (as cited in Rowe, 2015). This history should not be the responsibility of individual teachers. My research strongly shows that teachers cannot be made responsible for developing curriculum around a history that they do not know themselves. Furthermore, the province has not developed resources, professional development training or made any public statements of support for the Calls to Action.

Although learning about residential schools and taking social justice actions toward reconciliation is a moral and ethical imperative, this is not actually about teaching morality or ethics. This is about teaching the historical facts of our collective history, and should be reason enough for it to be in the curriculum. It is past time that the province of Quebec takes notice and is urgent that they respond to the TRC Calls to Action and integrate this into the K to 12 curriculum.

Dr. Marie Wilson, one of the commissioners of the TRC, recently spoke at Dawson College, in Montreal, and said:

Quebec is a province that defines itself hugely around issues of language, issues of culture and the importance of both. And yet we know, from our statistical surveys, that this province, in fact, rates the lowest in the country for its awareness of Indigenous peoples history and the history of residential schools specifically (2015).

That this is the truth about Quebec should be devastating but not shocking, given the curriculum. I argue that it makes our responsibility as coordinators, teachers, administrators and allies to FNIM peoples even more imperative. We cannot wait for our ministry to change the curriculum. We have the power to change ourselves and that we must.

One day, the Calls to Action may be the fundamental underpinning of a new curriculum in this province. In the meantime, the intentions of the Calls to Action must be kept alive by the CLC/LEARN network, and by the valiant work of teachers, coordinators, students and administrators in this province. Most importantly, they must be the lens through which we understand our roles and responsibilities as teachers, coordinators and administrators. It is my hope that this research has provided a framework to understand the power of teaching for social justice, the movement towards reconciliation and the vitality of the CLC network in Quebec. It is also my hope that there have been a number of recommendations that will be useful for policy development and sharing of best practises for the teaching of FNIM history.

In the end, it is our students that will be impacted by the curriculum that their teachers are mandated to teach. It is our students that will be called to action by the opportunities we give them to learn the truth of their histories, hear the stories of struggle and resilience of FNIM peoples, work in collaboration with them, and realize that they have the power to change the future of this country.

In this spirit, I will share a story that gives voice to Quebec students who have had the opportunity to learn this history. A few years ago, some of my students were invited to speak at a class at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. They taught student teachers about the Indian Act, residential schools and their experiences as FMIN and non-FNIM kids. When they were there, they gave the student teachers some advice:

Teach us the truth. Teach us about what really happened in our country. If you don't know what happened, learn about it. Teach us about Indigenous people and how strong and powerful there are, not just the sad stuff. Teach us where we live and the knowledge of the peoples whose land we are on. Let us feel angry and shocked and emotional about our history. Let us work to make things right. Listen to our voices. Give us the chance to be part of the change in this country.

It is my deepest wish that we will all honour their voices and desire to learn about the truths of our collective history. This is possible, if we listen to the wisdom of Grandfather William Commanda, Algonquin elder, spiritual leader, and former-Chief of the Kitigàn-zìbì Anishinàbeg First Nation, who understood that, “We must come together with one heart, one mind, one love and one determination” (as cited in Ryell, 2011).



Image 9: Project of Heart Artistic Commemoration

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Appendix A: Survey

Reconciliation in Action:

A Qualitative study of First Nations, Inuit and Métis social justice projects in Quebec

Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey is part of my research for my M.A. thesis. My thesis concerns the experiences of teachers and students who are learning about injustices that are not formally part of the curriculum. Specifically, my research concerns reconciliation and social justice projects that have been taken on by the CLC's of Quebec since 2012. Thank you for taking the time and sharing your thoughts with me. Please contact me if you need any clarification about any of the questions. Also, please take your time; there is no need to complete this survey all at once. You may save it and come back to it.

1. How many years have you been teaching?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

2. What grade levels/ages do you work with?

3. In which region of Quebec do you teach?

4. How did you get involved in reconciliation projects?

- CLC Coordinator
- CLC conference
- Colleague
- Other:

5. Which reconciliation projects have you worked on? Please check off all that apply.

- Shannen's Dream
- Project of Heart
- The Blanket Exercise

Other:

6. During what years did you participate in these projects? How long did you spend on the projects?

7. Did you learn about Indian Residential Schools when you were in school? In what grade? If you did not learn about them at school, when and how did you first learn about them?

8. Before working on the reconciliation projects, did you teach Social Studies or Native studies?

9. Has working on these projects affected your understanding of Canadian history? Please explain how your understandings have been, or have not been affected.

10. Has learning about the injustices of history, such as colonization and Indian Residential Schools affected the way that you understand the current inequities facing many Aboriginal communities in Canada today?

11. What does "reconciliation" mean to you?

12. Please check off the ways that you feel these projects have impacted you and your teaching. If you have not been impacted, please explain.

- I have not been impacted.
- I have become more informed about our history.
- I see how learning about injustices engages students.
- Learning the stories of people is more important than learning "facts".
- This has opened me up to a whole new way of looking at the world.
- These projects have changed the way I teach.

Others:

13. Do you think that Indian Residential School history should be included in every provincial and territorial curriculum in Canada?

Yes No

14. In your opinion, how important is it that Canadians?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Learn about Indian Residential Schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understand treaties and land claims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are aware of current living conditions on many reserves	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Form partnerships with aboriginal communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Endeavour to learn more about our collective history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in reconciliation activities, such as marches, vigils	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. How do you think these projects have affected your students? For example, have you noticed any changes in your students since beginning these projects? These changes could be related to behaviour, academics, attendance, engagement, etc.

16. Have you and your students participated in any social justice activities after doing these projects? Please check off all that apply.

- We participated in a march.
- We wrote letters to the government.
- We made a partnership with an Aboriginal Community.
- We invited an Elder to our school.
- We learned about the territory and traditions of the land we are living on. :
- Others:

17. In your opinion, what was the experience of the social justice actions for your students?

18. What, if any, partnerships did you make with Aboriginal people, communities or students as a result of these projects? And, if so, have any of these partnerships/friendships/relationships with Aboriginal people/communities continued after the projects were done? Please describe your experiences below.

19. Thank you so much for participating in this survey. Is there anything else you would like to share?

20. I will also be conducting interviews as well as a focus group as part of my research. I hope that you will consider taking part. These sessions will be audio-recorded. As spaces are limited, participants will be selected on a first come, first serve basis. Please email me if you would like to be part of an interview, a focus group, or both. Thank you very much!

My interview questions were developed in the context of the “conversational interview”. They are open-ended, un-structured, and encourage the participant to reflect and engage in the process. The conversation, therefore, will dictate the question flow. I welcome questions that arise from the conversation that I have not planned.

1. Thanks so much for taking the time for me to talk with you. Before we start, could you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. How long have you been teaching? How would you describe your teaching philosophy?
3. In terms of teaching for social change, where do you see yourself? Is this important to you?
4. Tell me about how you got involved in the reconciliation projects in Quebec.
5. Which projects have you been involved with and can you describe what you see as their impacts?
6. Have the projects taught you anything or changed the way that you teach?
7. How do you define decolonization?
8. What about reconciliation?
9. When did you learn about residential schools for the first time? What are your feelings about this?
10. Why did you get involved in these projects?
11. Do you see these projects as having a transformational power in and out of the classroom?
12. Can you describe your student’s reactions to the projects?
13. How has this affected them? Any special moments or things that may have stood out to you?
14. Has learning about past inequities towards Aboriginal people changed the way you understand current issues?
15. Do you think that it is important to work as an ally with Aboriginal people? Can you explain?
16. What do you see as the greatest impact of this work?
17. How do you integrate these projects into the curriculum? Do you see them as outside the curriculum? Do you feel they should be a more explicit part of curriculum?

18. How have you reached out in reconciliation with your class?

19. Would you be open to sharing some of the student's work that was done (writing, drawings, etc.) that you feel shows an impact?

20. Do you have a favourite story or quote from your classroom during your work on these projects?

22. The TRC calls on teachers and curriculum developers to ensure that Canadian students learn about Indian Residential Schools and Aboriginal history. What do you see as your part in this?

23. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about?

Thank you for being part of our focus group place.

Some guiding questions I may have for the focus groups are:

- Share your name and your place of birth and something personal about yourself
- I'm really interested in knowing about how you feel your teaching and your students learning was affected during these projects.
- Tell me more....
- Did anyone else have that experience?
- What was most profound?
- Do you feel that this work has changed you in anyway?
- Are there any questions you have for anyone else in this circle?
- How do you see yourself fitting into the decolonising process?
- What will stay with you?
- Where to next?

Appendix D: Consent Form for participation in Interview/Focus group

Title of the study:

Reconciliation in Action: A Qualitative study of Aboriginal social justice projects in Quebec

Name of researcher:

Lisa Howell, M.A. Candidate

Supervisor:

Dr. Richard Maclure, Full Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Invitation to Participate:

I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Lisa Howell and supervised by Dr. Richard Maclure.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to understand and examine the experiences of teachers who have incorporated justice-oriented projects into their classrooms; to assess the impact of learning about injustices on Aboriginal Canadians among students and to explore the extent to which learning about injustices have motivated teachers and students to undertake actions designed to address current inequities and nurture reconciliation.

Participation:

My participation will consist participating in a conversational interview with the researcher to discuss my experiences as a teacher who taught social justice projects in her/his classroom. This conversation may take place in person, over Skype or on the telephone and will be scheduled at my convenience, sometime during the months of February-March 2016. The conversation will take between 20-60 minutes. I may also be asked to participate in a “sharing circle” (focus group) with up to ten other teachers who have participated in the projects. The focus group will be held in the spring of 2016 and will take 60 minutes. During the sharing circle, I will be asked to share my experiences working with students on the social justice projects. Additionally, I may be asked to share copies of my student’s writings/drawings that convey their ideas/thoughts/concerns/questions during the scope of the projects. I will blank out the names of the students, rendering the samples anonymous.

Risks:

My participation in this study will entail that I share experiences that I have had as a classroom teacher working on social justice projects with my students. It will also require me to share my thoughts and reflections on Canadian history, the way it was taught to me, and my ideas about the curriculum and ways forward. Sharing these things may allow me to deepen my own understanding of teaching and learning, which may cause me to feel uncertain or confused about my own teaching practice. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks my participation is voluntary and all the conversations and sharing will be done to make me feel as comfortable as possible. It is always up to me to decide what I wish to share.

Benefits:

My participation in this study will contribute to an understanding of the experiences of teachers and students who are learning about the historical injustices that have exacted a toll on Canadian

Aboriginals. It will also contribute to knowledge of reconciliation and justice-oriented activities in education, with a hope towards the incorporation of social justice as an “intracurricular” goal in school.

Confidentiality:

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will be used for academic purposes, including the researcher’s M.A. thesis, publication in academic journals and books, presentations and teaching. The data might be used for related or similar projects in the future, but the data will not be used for any unrelated purposes.

Anonymity:

I understand that I will remain anonymous in the study. The researcher has explained to me that she will not use my name when she writes up or presents her research and she will also remove any identifying details. She will not tie anything I say or do during the study to my identity. I understand, however, that the researcher will identify me as a teacher in the Province of Quebec who participated in social justice reconciliation projects between 2011-2016.

Conservation of data:

The data collected (the on-line survey, recordings of interviews, transcripts, notes and student work samples) will be kept in a secure manner by Lisa Howell. After transcription, electronic copies of surveys, interviews and the sharing circle will be password protected and only Lisa Howell will have access to them. Hardcopy interview and sharing circle transcripts, student work samples and researcher notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Ottawa. Lisa Howell will retain copies of her notes and interviews indefinitely.

Voluntary Participation:

I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed. To withdraw from the study, I simply contact the researcher using the contact information listed below.

Acceptance:

I, _____ (your name) agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Lisa Howell of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Dr. Richard Maclure.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

Name of researcher:

Lisa Howell, M.A. Candidate

Supervisor:

Dr. Richard Maclure, Full Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Invitation to Participate:

You are invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Lisa Howell and supervised by Dr. Richard Maclure.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to understand and examine the experiences of teachers who have incorporated justice-oriented projects into their classrooms; to assess the impact of learning about injustices on Aboriginal Canadians among students and to explore the extent to which learning about injustices have motivated teachers and students to undertake actions designed to address current inequities and nurture reconciliation.

Participation:

If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the on-line survey found at this link: Your decision to complete and this survey will be interpreted as an indication of your consent to participate. The survey should take you approximately 20-40 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Once you have completed the survey, please submit it to the researcher. She would appreciate receiving it before *January 2016*. If she does not receive it by said date, she will send you a notice of reminder.

Benefits:

Your participation in this study will contribute to an understanding of the experiences of teachers and students who are learning about the historical injustices that have exacted a toll on Canadian Aboriginals. It will also contribute to knowledge of reconciliation and justice-oriented activities in education, with a hope towards the incorporation of social justice as an “intracurricular” goal in school.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes, including the researcher’s M.A. thesis, publication in academic journals and books, presentations and teaching. The data might be used for related or similar projects in the future, but the data will not be used for any unrelated purposes. The only people who will have access to the research data are the researcher and her supervisor. Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim in presentations and publications but neither you (nor your organisation) will be identified. In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the survey. Results will be published in pooled (aggregate) format.

Conservation of data:

Lisa Howell will keep the data in a secure manner. After transcription, electronic copies of the surveys will be password protected and only Lisa Howell will have access to them. Hardcopy surveys and researcher notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Ottawa. Lisa Howell will retain copies of her notes and surveys indefinitely.

Voluntary Participation:

You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer. Completion and submission of the survey by you implies consent.

Information about the Study Results:

Participants will be invited to view the results of the study when it is completed. The researcher will contact the participants with a link to the results.

If you have any questions or require more information about the study itself, you may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the numbers mentioned herein.

If you have any questions with regards to the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, tel.: (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

Please keep this form for your records.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa Howell, Researcher
December 2015

Appendix F: Letter of Invitation

Hello Fellow Teachers,

I hope that this finds you well and happy. My name is Lisa Howell, and I am a teacher at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School (on unceded Algonquin Territory) in the Western Quebec School Board. I

think most of you know me through my work with the CLCs on various Aboriginal Reconciliation and Justice based projects, such as Project of Heart, Shannen's Dream and the Blanket exercise. Some of you may know that I have been working on my MA in education for 5 years now, while teaching fulltime and raising my own kids. This is actually why I'm writing to you today. I'd be honoured if you would be part of my research, which I will tell you more about below.

I'm really excited to be at the research part of the project, and I need your help as my thesis concerns the experiences of teachers and students who are learning about injustices that are not formally part of the curriculum. Specifically, my research concerns reconciliation and social justice projects that have been taken on by the CLC's of Quebec since 2011. I'm interested to study the impacts of teaching about injustices (colonization, residential schools) that were committed against First Nations, Inuit and Métis Canadians. Furthermore, I would like to know if learning about this part of history impacts understanding of current inequities (education, child welfare) and if this learning fuels desire for change in the form of social justice actions.

I hope you will consider being part of my research. It is my hope that this research will contribute to an understanding of the role of social justice in schools and also in the process of decolonization.

Please find attached the survey. The survey will take between 15-30 minutes to complete and asks you questions about your experiences when doing these projects in your classroom. You may have only done one or done them all; each experience is valued and I am so honoured that you have taken part in my research. I have also attached a letter of consent, which outlines the project in further detail.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to share your thoughts with me. Please contact me if you need any clarification about any of the questions. I will resend the link to the survey in a few weeks in case you have forgotten about it!

Thanks so very much for being part of the reconciliation movement in Quebec!

Appendix G: Letter to and from Sabrina Bonfonti, PRT

13 August 2015

Dear Sabrina,

I hope that this finds you well. As you know, I am conducting research on the reconciliation and justice projects that have been done throughout Quebec at CLC schools since 2012. I am using a qualitative methodology to explore the experiences of teachers who took part in the projects (POH, Shannen's Dream, Have a Heart, The Blanket). I am hoping you can help me. I wondered if I send you an email with a link to a survey on it if you could/would forward it to the "Aboriginal email list" you keep for CLC schools. This email would be made of three parts: 1. An introduction about my work and this research. 2. An attached consent form for teachers to review and 3. A link to an on-line survey.

I am hoping to be able to send this email out to at least 50 teachers who participated in the projects.

My next question is regarding my being able to connect with teachers who have participated in the reconciliation projects for a deeper, more meaningful connection. I was hoping to be able to at the CLC conference for teachers, which I believe is in January 2016. Do you think this is feasible? Alternately, if this is not possible, I could always conduct my sharing circle on something like "goggle hangout." Thank you very much for your help with my research. I look forward to your reply!

Lisa

Sabrina's Response to me: (August 14, 2015)

Dear Lisa,

I am excited to read about your research, I think it would be of major benefit to the CLCs as well to have you do this kind of research. As the hours for my position continue to erode, I have less and less time to gather data, and have to rely more on 'doing what we've so far seen to work'. I am so happy to support this. I was planning to do spend a day or two of my time this fall following up with all of the schools that had done projects in the last three years. In June I did a short analysis of them. I'd love to go through the info with you and discuss, perhaps it would be helpful to you as well. I was planning to do internal research (interviews/survey) this fall, so perhaps we could just connect about sharing / collaboration to share info on what we're each asking etc.... because I doubt people will do two process' without feeling fatigued, but of course I want to support not impede your process! I'm sure we can work it out to mutual benefit though :) Exciting, good for you Lisa :) And, good for us - thanks! Sabrina

Appendix H: Letter of Support from CLC Director



August 20th, 2015

Subject: Letter of Support for Lisa Howell

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to express my support to Lisa Howell in conducting her research “Transformation, Reconciliation and Social Justice: A study of the revolution spreading across Quebec schools”.

I can affirm that Lisa has played an important role in establishing Aboriginal awareness in our Community Learning Centre Schools network and that her field of study on **Transformation, Reconciliation and Social Justice** will be an asset not only to our network but to all schools in the Province of Quebec.

Furthermore, my team, the Provincial Resource Team (PRT) and I will make sure to enable her process of data collection within the Community Learning Centre network, i.e. a survey and subsequent focus group.

File Number: 01-16-28

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 02/04/2016



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
 Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice
Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Richard	Maclure	Education / Education	Supervisor
Lisa	Howell	Education / Education	Student Researcher

File Number: 01-16-28

Type of Project: Master's Thesis

Title: Reconciliation in Action: A Qualitative Study of Aboriginal Social Justice Projects in Quebec

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