

After About:

Unlearning Colonialism, Ethical Relationality, and the Possibilities for Pedagogical Praxis

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Dedication

In memory of Mary Lou Iahtail, my friend and Elder, who loved my students with her whole heart and shared her gifts with generosity, courage, and humour.

Chi miigwetch, Mary Lou. We miss you.



Acknowledgements

I am grateful to live on the ancestral territories of the Algonquin people, who have been caretakers of these beautiful lands for time immemorial. I honour the generosity, wisdom, and knowledge that they hold and share. I am committed to learning and unlearning and acting in solidarity, standing up and taking action when there is injustice and working towards equity and justice daily.

During the first year of my Ph.D. studies, I struggled with feelings of loss, scarcity, and unfulfillment. I had left a fast-paced and soul-fulfilling profession where I coordinated a classroom community of learners, educational assistants, and often student teachers. I was also a mentor coach to new teachers, facilitated the Environment club and Shannen's Dream club, and had many other responsibilities around the school. As a Ph.D. student, I struggled to feel the impact I was having on the lives of others. How was I uplifting anyone but myself? And then, my life changed. That January, my sweet Dad was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer. He died three weeks later in a hospice on a day when the tree boughs were heavy with snow. Those three weeks were the most painful and beautiful of my life, and because I was no longer managing a classroom, I was able to support my mother as she prepared to lose her life partner and was present as my Dad made his journey. The last conversation I had with my Dad was the afternoon before the morning he died. At that point, his voice was a whisper, so my ear was beside his lips. He told me that he was going on a journey to the river, on the water. I told him that sounded very peaceful. Soon after, my Dad closed his eyes and fell into a sleep that would take him. This thesis reflects the love of the outdoors and the quietness that he passed on to me.

For my supervisor, Nick, who is also my colleague and, most meaningfully, my friend.

Nick, you are a good human being with a contagious sense of curiosity and lightheartedness that sings. Thank you for genuinely seeing me as a relative and being sincere and honest. For the members of my committee, who are also much more than that: Tricia, *chi miigwetch* for your steadfast encouragement, friendship, and wisdom. Richard, you are the person who proposed I write a M.A. thesis many moons ago, and I thank you for your encouragement, and for working with me throughout another thesis and for your mentorship, candour, and consistency. Finally, to Dwayne, whose work on ethical relationality I had been reading-and resonating with- for a decade before we had a conversation. Dwayne, *kinanaskomitin* for your generosity and for provoking me to think about my thinking. Thank you for the walks we have shared that held the conversations that shaped my research. Ah hay for this and so much more.

Writing a Ph.D. is a long haul any time- but writing one during a pandemic is another story altogether. I would be remiss if I did not mention the incredible women in my “Thesez-Vous lite” writing group, namely Hannah, Claire, Carol, Heather, Morgane, Jessica, and Rebecca. Thank you each for being present- to share stories, set goals, offer encouragement, and provide connection. As you become “Dr.’s” one by one, I raise my hands- and my heart- to each of you- in awe and gratitude.

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For my dear friends Trista Hollweck and Linda Radford, who are strong, fierce, academic changemakers. You inspire me and guide me. For my big sisters, with whom I share spirit rather than blood: Charlene Bearhead, Sylvia Smith, Danielle Fontaine, and Lynn Rainboth. Your truth-telling, restorying, and relational work blows me away and grounds me in this commonplace we share. I love each of you and thank you for your light, compassion, and humanity gifts. And for my oldest and dearest friends- Louise Cave, Kari Howard, Barbara Brockmann, and Eva Almeida. Our friendships uplift me in ways indescribable.

For my Eeyou students, especially Roby, Jacob, Nigel, Michael, Jaryath, Thomas, Alex, Antoine, Jeremiah, Tyson, Pearl, and Damian. Thank you for being my teachers and opening me up to a story about Canada I had never heard. You have taught me how to see the world through new eyes, and your stories about home made me better understand my own story.

For Albert Dumont, my friend and mentor. Albert, you have been generous with your time and sharing of stories and wisdoms. Chi Miigwetch for sharing the sacred Akikodjiwan with me.

Finally, to my siblings: Lynne, Chris, Rob, and Pam, and my nephews, Matthew, and Jack. Thank you for your encouragement and for being bright lights in my life. And to my sons: Darius, Arya, and Nikolas, and my daughter, Liv. I love each of you wholeheartedly, and I thank you for the gifts you bring and share with me and this world. And finally, to Mads, my life partner, husband, and soulmate. Jeg elsker dig. Du er min mand.

Preface

“You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour, now you must go back and tell the people that this is the Hour. And there are things to be considered . . .

Where are you living?
What are you doing?
What are your relationships?
Are you in right relation?
Where is your water?
Know your garden.
It is time to speak your Truth.
Create your community.
Be good to each other.
And do not look outside yourself for the leader.”

Then he clasped his hands together, smiled, and said, “This could be a good time!”

“There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above water.

And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally, Least of all ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt. The time for the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves!

Banish the word struggle from you attitude and your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we've been waiting for.”

--attributed to an unnamed Hopi Elder, Hopi Nation, Oraibi, Arizona

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On language

I have used language mindfully throughout this thesis, particularly when referring to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. Like stories, language can empower and disempower, and I have made decisions with guidance from Cindy Blackstock, Albert Dumont and through stories that Dwayne Donald has generously shared with me.

Although the word Indigenous is now in common usage throughout Canada to describe First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, Cindy Blackstock cautions that the word Indigenous is colonially derived and suggests a “pan-Indigenusness” that does not recognize the distinct cultural, linguistic, and geographical differences between and within First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and Nations. I have used Indigenous throughout this dissertation due to its prolific use throughout the discourse, but I have also used First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and referred to the names of specific communities and Nations themselves whenever possible.

After conversations with Dwayne, I have also moved away from describing people of European descent, including myself, as “settlers” or “white people.” As Dwayne taught me, these terms perpetuate division and promote an ideology that does not help us live together as relatives. Dwayne guided me to look at the words that Indigenous peoples have for newcomers in their language and what we can learn regarding their concerns about skin colour. As Dwayne said:

In general, that’s [skin colour] not the concern in the ones I’ve looked at. The concern is much more with how the newcomers behave. What kinds of relatives are these? How do they conduct their business? The most poignant one that I’ve come across is the Sioux name...they say “Wasilyu” to describe white people. So, if you visit a Sioux community and you ask what “Wasilyu”

means, in the vernacular today, they'll say, "well, that's a white person." But if we look at the etymology of the term, what it actually refers to is "somebody who takes the best meat for himself." This is a reflection of how the white people the Sioux met behaved.

These understandings made much sense to me. Thus, I refer to persons living in Canada as Canadians, whether they are relatively new Canadians or Canadians who have been here for several generations. At times, I refer to Canadians as "non-Indigenous." I do, however, refer to the colonization and ensuing culture in Canada as "settler colonialism." This is a historical and contemporary fact about the political and economic make-up of Canada. I also acknowledge that structures of whiteness have been created, maintained, and perpetuated by colonialism, so that societal systems remain sites whereby white people take, are given, and have the opportunity to find, and often take, "the best meat".

Finally, my friend Albert Dumont, a spiritual advisor from Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg, has taught me the significance of using the term "human being" and the humility of using this term in relation to "the stunning wonders that Creator has placed within our embrace." Albert continuously provokes me to think about what human beings have to learn from the ancestors who came before us and from the beauty around us.

Abstract

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) called on Ministries of Education, Faculties of Education, school administrators, and K-12 teachers to integrate Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies across the school curriculum. The TRC explicitly emphasized that education would be the intergenerational key to reconciliation in Canada and most provinces and territories quickly implemented curricula and developed resources to respond to the *Calls to Action*. Despite this mandate and these commitments, many teachers and teacher candidates continue to report that they do not have the skills, knowledge, or confidence to teach about the history of the Indian Residential Schooling system, Indigenous knowledges, or reconciliation. Research suggests that teacher resistance to “difficult knowledge” is a crucial contributing factor toward teachers avoiding, ignoring, and dismissing reconciliation work and upholding colonial logics. Moreover, teacher candidates and teachers often rely on the inaccurate and incomplete narratives they have learned about Canadians and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. This impacts what and how they teach about these relationships, complicating the transformational changes the TRC urgently called for. How, then, might teachers unlearn these colonial stories and move from learning *about* Indigenous peoples to learning *from* them? Drawing on Donald’s concept of “ethical relationality,” this study employed a qualitative approach to conduct conversational interviews with teacher candidates, teachers, staff, and students at two research sites. This study asks, “What are the curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality to processes of unlearning colonialism?” Using a hermeneutic approach to interpret the stories shared, this study weaved within and between the landscapes of home and place. Findings reveal that teachers who experience supportive, multi-layered, and extended opportunities to unlearn settler colonialism and learn Indigenous wisdom traditions and knowledges *from* Indigenous peoples have the opportunity to understand a new story about Canadian-Indigenous relations. This study suggests that unless teachers begin to unlearn colonial logics, deeply understanding that they are implicated in ethical kinship relations with the places in which they live and with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, there is a significant possibility that curricula, professional development, and resources will not manifest in the transformational change that the TRC called for.

Keywords: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, teachers, teacher education, truth telling, unlearning, pedagogy, ethical relationality, settler colonialism, colonial psychosis, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, curriculum, Canadian-Indigenous relations, colonial culture, solidarity, professional learning, restorying, relating.

Chapter 1: Introduction

All that we are is story. From the moment we are born to the time we continue on our spirit journey, we are involved in the creation of the story of our time here. It is what we arrive with. It is all we leave behind. We are story. All of us. What comes to matter then is the creation of the best possible story we can share while we're here; you, me, us, together. When we can do that and we take the time to share those stories with each other, we get bigger inside, we see each other, we recognize our kinship- we change the world, one story at a time...

(Richard Wagamese, 2012, p. 103)

Traversing Akikodjiwan and the Kichi Zibi, past and present

The Kichi Zibi River means “great river” in Anishinabemowin. Its tributaries flow from Lac des Outaouais, north of the Laurentian Mountains of central Québec, and west to Lake Timiskaming in Northern Ontario. From Lake Timiskaming, its banks meander southeast to Ottawa and Gatineau, where it then plunges over the sacred Akikodjiwan Falls¹ and welcomes the confluences of the Rideau and Gatineau rivers. Commonly called the Ottawa River, it is connected to the history of the Anishinaabeg Nation (Morrison, 2005). Anishinaabeg people identify to their relational position with the river, referring to themselves as the *Omàmiwinini*, meaning “down-river people” (Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, 2018). At its depth, this beautiful river is 90 metres deep. Since time immemorial, this unique and vast watershed has provided trade and travel routes, meeting places, food, and water. Relations have been made, renewed,

¹ Akikodjiwan Falls, often referred to as the Chaudière Falls, has been a sacred site for the Anishinaabeg people since time immemorial. The Anishinaabeg gathered and traded along the waterways and routes surrounding the falls. For many, the waterfall’s whirlpool symbolized the bowl of a great peace pipe, and its mists as smoke rising to the Creator. The Falls are located on their traditional unceded territory, encompassing Eastern Ontario and most of Western Québec. See the map on page 3.

and restored along its tributaries.

In Ottawa, the settler-colonial Parliament of Canada sits perched atop a cliff that looks down on the mighty Kichi Zibi. These lands, and this watershed, are the unceded, unsundered, and ancestral territories of the Anishinaabeg peoples. As I write this introduction, it is the month of *biinaake giizis* (“falling leaves moon” in Anishinabemowin), when Mother Earth is honoured with the grandest of colours (Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, 2010). For twelve years, I walked and cycled across the Chaudière Bridge and over the Kichi Zibi on my way to work and back home again. Often during such travels I noticed how the mist rose from Akikodjiwan during the warmth of *Ode’miin giizis* (strawberry moon) and how the falls majestically froze during *Mindio giizis* (spirit moon), during the depth of winter. This bridge, suspended above the great river below, became more than a place to stop along my commute. This bridge spans two provinces and two cities. And yet, as Chamber (1994) writes, “a label is not what I seek, a place is not what I seek. I seek a way of becoming” (p. 25). This place continues to inspire me to seek a relational way of becoming. Standing on the bridge above the water, I am “pulled up short” wondering about what my place might be in this sacred place.

In the following sections, I share stories of my lived experiences as a teacher at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School in Gatineau Québec. Richard Wagamese (n.d.) reminds us that “we are involved in the creation of the story of our time here.” To understand the present, how might we revisit stories of the past in relation to unlearning and learning who we are in the present, and/or could be in the future? Part of such restorying begins, for this study, and for me, within learning about *Eeyou Istchee* and the ancestral lands that my Cree students have always called home. They are central to the story I wish to share with you all.

Travelling south to a school near the Kichi Zibi

Today, the river marks the colonial made boundary of the cities of Ottawa, Ontario and Gatineau, Québec. Although Québec is not explicitly recognized as a distinct society in the Canadian constitution, the term is often used to describe the unique linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of this province (Burnside, 1988). For thousands of years before the French came to what is now called Québec, the lands were cared for by First Nations people, including the Eeyou, or Cree people. They refer to their traditional territories as Eeyou Istchee, which means “the people’s land.” Eeyou Istchee expands an area of more than 400 000 square kilometres and includes the lands on the eastern shores of James Bay and south-eastern Hudson Bay and the lakes and rivers that drain into them (Grand Council of the Crees, 2021).

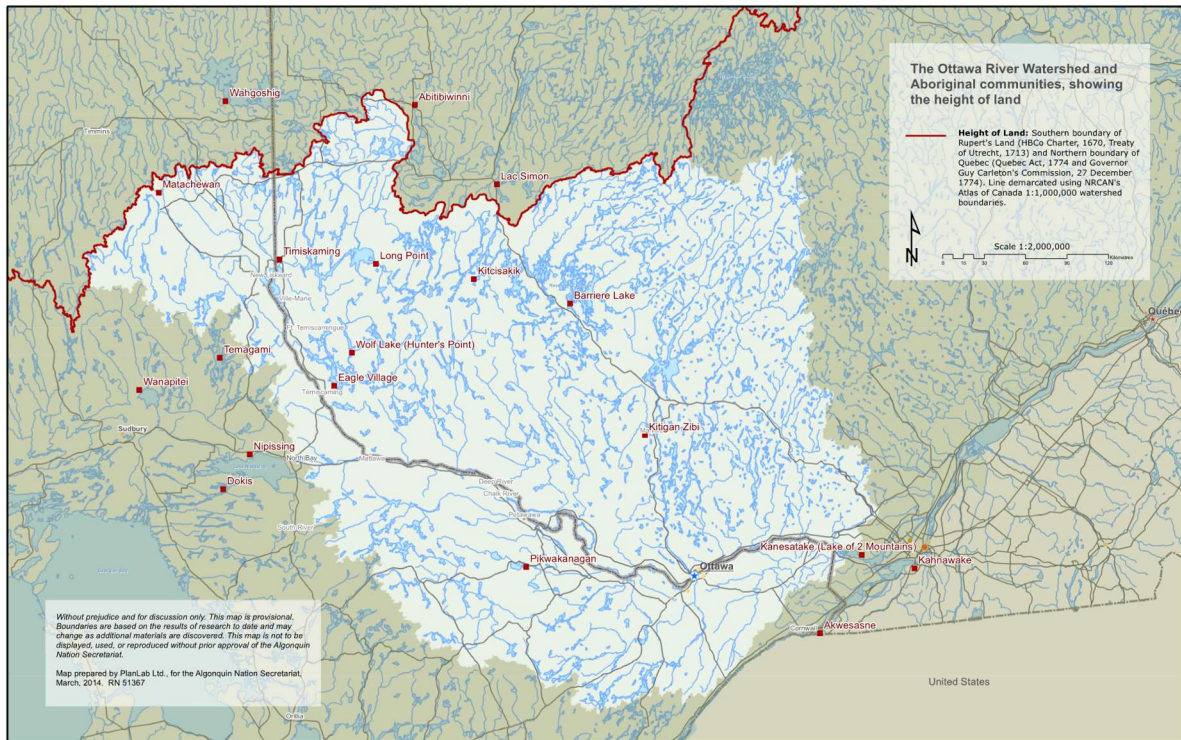


Figure 1: Ottawa Rivershed and Algonquin communities (Source: Equitable Education, 2015).

Eeyou Istchee comprises eleven Cree communities² including Chisasibi, Waskaganish, Whapmagoostui, Wemindji, Waswanipi, Oujé-Bougoumou, and Mistissini. Although the Cree School Board (CSB) administers nine schools across Eeyou Istchee, many Eeyou students travel hundreds of kilometres “down south” each school year to attend schools in the Western Québec School Board.³ Many children and youth from the communities mentioned above became students at Pierre Elliot Trudeau Elementary School, located just one kilometre from the sacred Akikodjiwan Falls. They live with their families not far from the banks of the Kichi Zibi, excitedly watching for the return of the *nisk* (geese in *iiyiyuu ayimuun*, the Cree language) from their classroom windows, anxious to return to Eeyou Istchee for the traditional hunt in April of each year. These young hunters leave their classrooms behind and travel back up the winding James Bay highway to go out on the land and take part in a century’s old tradition. They return to their traditional territories and waterways, including James and Hudson Bays and the Chibougamau, Eastmain, and Waswanipi Rivers (see figure 2 on the next page). As a teacher of many Eeyou students at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School, I wondered why many Cree families left their homes and communities each year to attend schools in “the south.” Moreover, I wondered how leaving their land, wisdom traditions, and ways of living affected them, their families, and their communities. I was also curious about what the concepts of “learning,” “schooling,” and “education” meant and mean to the Eeyou. I am grateful that I have been able to speak to Elders

² Each Eeyou community is a Nation and is administered independently through their local governments. Each Chief elected in their community also sits on the Board of Directors of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Council of the Cree Nation Government. Nine of the eleven communities are under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

³ The Western Québec School Board is located in Gatineau, Québec, on the unceded lands of the Anishinaabeg peoples, but the 30 schools and centres that the board administers encompass the areas of Gatineau, Pontiac, and Abitibi-Timiskaming regions. Many adults come from the Cree Nations to further their post-secondary education and bring their children, who attend schools in the Gatineau region.

and community members over the past fifteen years, who have generously shared their knowledge and stories with me.

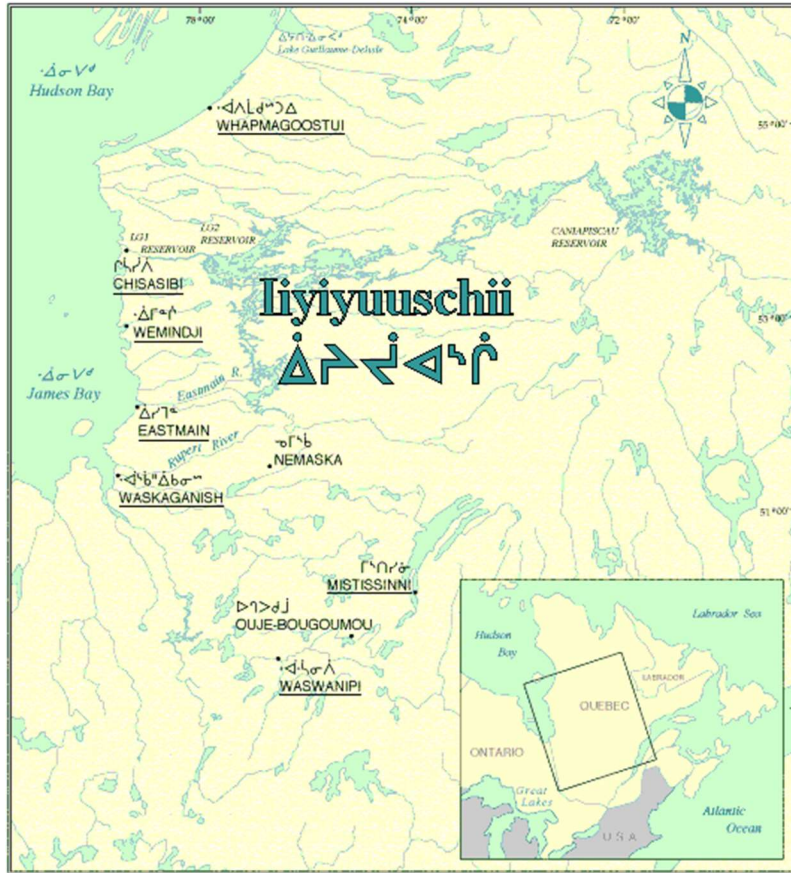


Figure 2: Map of Eeyou Istchee territory (Source: Proust et al., 2016)

Eeyou Istchee: The People's Land, the People's teacher

My kookum and joomshoom lived in the bush. They never went to school. Their parents taught them what they needed to know to live on the land. They lived in a teepee in summer and winter tents. They knew how to hunt, trap and live well. But then their kids were taken away. My Dad was taken. The white man came for them. That is why I am always scared of white people.

(Student from Chisasibi Cree Nation, 2017)

I vividly remember the student who shared this with me. He explained why many “Cree kids” do not like to come “down south” for school and do not do very well once they are here. This

particular student, whom I will call Dawson, was tall for his age. And, although he was twelve, he was in my Grade 5 class. He had moved around to many schools in the Cree School Board (CSB) before his parents decided to try school down south. The story Dawson shared with me about his *Kookum and Joomshoom* (Grandma and Grandpa in Cree) was common among my Eeyou students. These stories were a core part of their experiences at our school. It was not always the case that Cree students travelled away from their homes to attend school in Western Québec, but has become increasingly common since the formation of the CSB in 1978 as part of the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). The CSB provides financial support to students who wish to pursue post-secondary studies outside their communities (Cree School Board, 2022). Many of the Eeyou students at Pierre Elliot Trudeau School (PETES) in Gatineau, Québec, are the sons and daughters and nieces and nephews of post-secondary students attending Cégep, colleges, or universities in Gatineau and Ottawa.

How did it come to be this way? It is important to note that the era of the Cree School Board represents a small place on the timeline of Cree education and child development. For time immemorial, Eeyou parents and grandparents raised and educated their children, and they learned all they needed to know while living on the land. As hunter-trapper-gatherers, they learned the skills necessary to survive on the land in their territory (CSB, 2022). As ethnohistorian Toby Morantz (2001) writes in his book, "The White Man's Gonna Getcha":

The school was another institution from the south imposed on the Crees, like other Indians across the land. We must distinguish between education and schooling. Education for the Crees was as old as their culture; schooling, though, was a new and foreign institution. (p. 212)

For the Eeyou, many customs served ceremonial and educational roles, such as the “walking out ceremony,” when the baby’s feet are first put on the ground. This ceremony occurs near the baby’s first birthday and marks the baby’s “arrival” in the community. On this day, the child is dressed in traditional clothing and stays in a teepee with the parent(s) as the community gathers just outside. The child then walks out of the teepee into the community and onto Eeyou Istchee. Typically, boys carry a wooden gun and a sack, and girls hold a wooden hatchet. Elders and community members congratulate the baby and parent(s), and the rest of the day is spent feasting. Culture, expectations, and responsibilities are passed down through this meaningful ceremony. This *is* education. The walking out ceremony was one of the first things I learned about Cree culture, as many of my students were rightly proud of this ceremony.

Education, disrupted: Loving nests disturbed

By the mid-1840s, the first Anglican missionary and school teacher came to Eeyou territory, and within a decade, Anglicanism was firmly entrenched within their communities (Stonebanks, 2005). Catholic missionaries were also present. Many Cree parents opposed missionary schooling of their children and continued educating them on the land. The situation was made worse in the 1930s when education was imposed on the Cree, and many of their children were forcibly sent to one of the eleven Québec Residential schools that operated from 1937 to 1991 (TRC, 2015). For the most part, Cree parents deeply resented the fact that their children were separated from them and prevented from learning the Cree way of life (Morantz, 2001). In his doctoral dissertation on the intergenerational legacy of the Indian Residential School System in Cree communities, Dr. George Blacksmith (2006) related a parable told to him by one of the second-generation survivors he interviewed in his study:

My son, whenever you are out bird hunting, there is one thing I never want you to do. If you come across a bird's nest which contains eggs and the mother is not there, please do not ever touch them. Once you touch or remove them, even for a short period of time, the nest has been disturbed, the mother will be hesitant to go back to them. Those eggs will eventually be abandoned, susceptible to be harmed or destroyed by predators. The second thing to pay special attention to is this: if the mother is there never hurt her, because if you do you will forever traumatize the whole nest. When the Indian Agent came around and took our children away he disturbed many nests and traumatized many families. Many have never fully recovered from having their nest disturbed. When you observe many of the people in our community today, you see the results of a loving nest that has been disturbed. (p. 18)

The intergenerational impacts of the “disruption of loving nests” continue to resonate in Cree communities and in the lives of my Eeyou students and their families. The picture in figure 3 is of the Fort George Residential School, where many of my student's family members were forcibly taken as small children.

The Cree School Board

In 1975, the federal government transferred the schooling of Cree children and youth to the government of Québec, and, in 1978, following the JBNQA, the Cree School Board was officially constituted (CSB, 2022). Today, the CSB is mandated to provide students in Eeyou Istchee with preschool, elementary, and secondary education. As mentioned previously, the CSB also supports post-secondary education, adult education and vocational training (CSB, 2022),

which is why many Eeyou children and youth became my students. The CSB supports Cree self-determination and sovereignty with a stated mission to:

provide for life-long learning while instilling the Cree identity in partnership with our communities to allow each student to attain the qualifications and competencies to become a successful contributor to the Cree Nation and society at large. (para 2)



Figure: 3: Fort George Residential School, 1937-1981, Chisasibi Cree Nation

(Source: Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre Collections, 2022).

The majority of teachers currently employed by the CSB are Canadians who move to communities in Eeyou Istchee for employment. Although this is changing as more Eeyou teachers enter the profession, this continues the legacy of predominately white, non-Indigenous teachers teaching Cree children and youth.

The history and contemporary issues of Eeyou education and schooling are essential to consider, honour, and learn from. As a non-Cree teacher working with predominately Eeyou

students, I was keenly aware of my responsibilities in terms of my pedagogical and curricular choices. I sought to respond relationally to their concerns and teachings with an open heart and mind. Through many conversations, I learned that Cree parents want their children to learn the skills they will need to be happy, healthy, and prosperous, both in their communities and at school. For most parents, this means educating their children to be on the land and taking time away from the schooling system. I became close with several of the mothers of Cree students I taught, and one of them shared that “to learn how to live as a Cree person, our children need to be in the bush. They cannot learn these ways in school.” For the Cree, the schooling system is only part of their children’s education. Their children, however, became an integral part of my own education of unlearning.

Meeting my teachers: How I came to this lifework

It was a stifling July afternoon in Ottawa. The kind of afternoon when the air is hot to breathe and the threat of thunderstorms has gone unrealized for days. I sat in the driver’s seat of my friend Kari’s forest green Mazda sedan. The car was not the only thing I had borrowed from Kari that day. I also wore an outfit of hers from the Banana Republic. The pale rose top clung to the sweat on my back as I dug out the piercing from my nose. I flipped down the visor and stared hard at myself in the streaky mirror. “Go in there and get this job, Lisa. You need this.” I had just completed my one-year B.Ed. at the University of Ottawa and was raising two small children alone. I took a deep breath, opened the car door, and walked towards the paprika-coloured two-storey building that would become my place of unlearning for the next twelve years. You might wonder what it was I unlearned. For that, we need to go back in time to the late 1970s.

Grasshoppers and starry nights, buffalos and Indians

I grew up in the rural southeast of Ottawa, Ontario. We first lived in a small bungalow on a crescent in the predominately French town of Embrun. When I was eight years old, my mom and dad bought an acre of farmland near the village of Russell and built a house. My parents, both teachers, rented a pop-up trailer for our family of five, plus the dog, to live in for the summer as they worked on the house. Memories of my childhood are immersed in being on the land. Of running through the tall, crisp cornstalks with my younger sister. Of skating on the backyard rink that my Dad made for us each winter, practicing my twirls and figure eights under the starry night sky. Of snow forts and igloos, cold fingers, and burnt tongues from scalding hot cocoa. Of strapping on our skis at the backdoor and heading down the lane into the forest. Of the crickets chirping among the cattails in the ditches. And of crackling embers of campfires, and the songs and stories that surrounded them.

My recollections of days at school are happy for the most part. I attended a rural K-8 English Public School that followed the Ontario provincial curriculum. I have vivid memories of the first time I learned about Indigenous peoples. It was in Grade 4 social studies, and my teacher had just rolled in the giant television set with the VCR and popped in a cassette. I sat, enraptured, watching the black and white documentary about “the buffalos and the Indians,” roaming across the plains. The narrator told us that the “Indians” were people who lived in Canada a long time ago before the Europeans came. I remember asking my teacher where “the Indians all went,” but I cannot remember her answer. Perhaps I thought the buffalo had killed them, as I did not understand they were still here. I did not know they remained “from this place, of this place, and for this place” (Chambers, 1999, p. 145).

Settler colonial stories: Valiant veterans, healthcare, and Terry Fox

My settler-colonial education⁴ and upbringing taught me that Indigenous peoples were relics of the past; buffalo chasers, basket makers, teepee dwellers. I knew from my storybooks that Canada had been settled by “pioneers”; strong men and women who faced the “wilds” of



Figure 4: Me, 1977 (Source: Marie Howell)

Canada and survived despite harsh, frigid winters and muggy, bug-infested summers. I learned about the Canadian Pacific Railway and John A. MacDonald’s dream to unite Canada from east to west in history classes. Other stories of my education revolved around confederation, Medicare, the war of 1812, Terry Fox, and Canadian peacekeepers. At home, the stories of my

⁴ I use the term settler-colonialism to describe what Barker and Battell Lowman (2015) conceptualize as a distinct type of colonialism with three components; 1. The replacement of Indigenous populations with ongoing invasions; 2. The settlers stay and create their society; and 3. The settlers develop a distinctive identity and sovereignty associated with social, economic, and political practices that facilitate Indigenous peoples’ ongoing displacement, marginalization, and destruction. I will discuss settler colonialism in Canada in detail in Chapter 2.

ancestors were told and retold. My paternal great-grandmother, Rachel, was a British Home child⁵ who was sent to Canada in the late 1800s after her parents were killed in a car accident in England. Ernest Hallam, my mother's father, came to Canada with his widowed mother and four siblings after his father was struck dead on the railway in Stockport, England, in 1895. My paternal great-grandfather and great uncles all fought in World War 1, some dying on the war-torn fields of Europe, others surviving the war but dying of alcoholism back home years later.

Each story left me with the impression that my family came to Canada not by choice but by tragedy and that they worked hard to make a life for themselves here. Once here, the sacrifices of war left indelible scars. On tragedy, I recall another story: Uncle Don, my mother's brother, lived in Regina, Saskatchewan and drove a taxi cab in the 1980s. I recall our telephone ringing in the middle of the night when I was about ten years old. I heard my mother's footsteps, saw the kitchen light go on and heard her hushed voice whisper, "hello." I drifted back to sleep at some point, and my mother's muffled voice became a dream. The following morning, my parents told my siblings and me the story: a couple of "Indians with guns" had forced my uncle into the trunk of his taxi, and drove north from Regina, past Saskatoon. They left the car with my uncle in the trunk on the side of a country road. A farmer found him hours later, alive but traumatized. I remember hating those "damn Indians" who kidnapped my beloved uncle Don.

My siblings and I had heard my mother talk about "the Indians" before; she grew up on Dewdney Avenue, not far from the CPR tracks in Regina. She'd been warned to stay away from the tracks for fear of the "drunken Indians" who hung out there. The story she wasn't told was that Dewdney Avenue is named after Edgar Dewdney, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the

⁵ From 1869 through 1939 (1948 to British Columbia), 80-100 000 children emigrated from the United Kingdom to Canada to be used as indentured farm workers and domestic servants. Believed by Canadians to be orphans, only two percent truly were. My great-grandmother Rachel was one of the two percent.

late 1800s. Dewdney was responsible for quelling the dissent among Chiefs on the prairies and policies that caused mass starvation of First Nations people (Innes, 2021). Those details were not part of her story and were not part of the stories she passed down to my siblings and me.

The stories we did learn, as well as those taught in school, are what Papaschase scholar Dwayne Donald (2021) refers to as “divisive and damaging” (p. 55). In *We need a New Story: Walking and the wahkohtowin Imagination*, Donald (2021) stresses that Indigenous-Canadian relationships continue to be influenced by “colonial teachings that emphasize relationship denial” and urges us to reflect on how we might “facilitate the emergence of a new story that can repair inherited colonial divides” (p. 53). Indeed, my family’s stories and those I learned in school did deepen divides by way of incomplete and inaccurate histories. As a teacher, I witnessed the same harmful stories in the curriculum and the textbooks I was now tasked with teaching. How I might unlearn settler colonialism and resist these colonial divides and repair relations soon became the focus of my life.

A curriculum-as-lived : Unlearning colonial logics

Returning to that stifling day in July, I had a successful interview. And, I was promptly hired to teach a Grade 2 class with twenty-nine children, many of whom, I was told, were from “up north.” “Up north” became a phrase frequently used by the school community to describe the children from the Cree Nations along James Bay. Most of the children I taught lived in Gatineau with their parents or other family members who had “come south” to attend post-secondary institutions, including Algonquin College or the University of Ottawa. I genuinely wanted to connect with my students and develop trusting relationships with them. I intuitively sensed that the curriculum I was mandated to teach them, namely, the Québec Education Program (QEP), had very little to do with their lived experiences. As Aoki (1993) reminds us, the mandated

curriculum is a curriculum-as-planned and often has nothing to do with the realities of our students. Aoki (1993) advocates for a curriculum-as-lived, which he refers to as “not the curriculum as laid out in a plan, but a plan more or less lived out. It deserves the label “curriculum” as much as the plan deserves the label “curriculum-as-plan” (p. 297).

I endeavoured to create space for an emerging curriculum based on my students lived experiences, such as hunting, fishing, fire-building, and ski-doing. I invited students to create projects about their lived realities and teach the class their knowledge. They gave presentations to our class about hunting, animals in their communities, and Cree traditions such as the “walking-out” ceremony pictured in figure 5. Our class valued them as knowledge holders and teachers. We also had a Cree “word wall” beside our English one, which grew to over three hundred words. Many students in the school would come into our class to learn Cree words. For me, learning some of the language helped me make sense of the stories about the places my students came from. Learning some of their language connected me to who they were in a profound way, especially as they giggled at my accent and how frequently I forgot words.

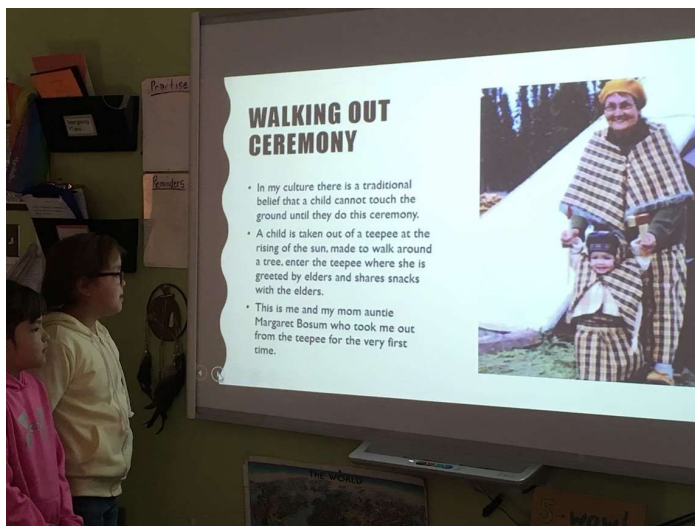


Figure 5: Eeyou students teaching us about the Walking Out Ceremony (Source: own photo).

Learning some of the Cree language provoked me to think about ways of living I had not considered before and about colonialism, the land, a null curriculum, and story. The experiences with my students changed my life. They changed the way I have come to understand curriculum, teaching, and ultimately how I now try to live as a parent, teacher, researcher, mother, and human being. My unlearning occurred through relationships with my Cree students and their families. It developed as I learned from and with them, rather than about them. And, as I understood how my story, and my past, was implicated with their stories and their pasts. I also began to understand that our futures were similarly connected. They are the reason why I am writing this thesis, in this way, at this time.

Becoming a Researcher: Learning about unlearning

After several years of teaching Cree and non-Indigenous students, I met Dr. Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society). My students and I passionately started learning and participating in the Caring Society's reconciliation-based campaigns, such as [*Shannen's Dream*](#), [*Jordan's Principle*](#), and [*I am a Witness*](#). These campaigns' impacts on student learning and my teaching inspired the research for my master's thesis. Among other findings, my research demonstrated that teachers felt called to engage with reconciliation ⁶ with their students, describing their experiences as "life-changing, soulful, and pedagogically uplifting" (Howell, 2017, p. 84). As teachers, they grappled with how to respond to discrimination and anti-Indigenous racisms while teaching in a

⁶ I use the term "reconciliation" to describe work in response to the TRC Calls to Action that redresses harms and creates spaces for students and teachers to unlearn colonial logics. The TRC emphasizes that reconciliation is a goal that will take the commitments of multiple generations and depend on all peoples' collective efforts to revitalize the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. (TRC, 2015).

province that continue to uphold a dated, harmful, and inaccurate curriculum about Indigenous peoples.

I learned more about unlearning through my work as a mentor coach to new teachers at my school and as a part-time instructor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, I work with many teacher candidates and new teachers in reconciliation and decolonizing⁷ work, both before, during, and after the release of the TRC final report. I noticed how teachers often struggle when faced with unlearning settler-colonialism. They also appeared to lack professional learning⁸ opportunities that attend to the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. I began to think about these issues very deeply, and have been fortunate to learn from Dwayne Donald at the University of Alberta for the past few years. Together, we have discussed concepts such as, but not limited to, unlearning colonialism and ethical relationality. Our conversations have informed my thinking and the framing of this study.

Research Journey

We can't and won't change the way someone thinks by telling them to. People change by changing how they live their lives, and by what they spend their time on.

(Dwayne Donald, 2019, personal communication)

My Ph.D. research, and this dissertation, have been a cumulative and continuous journey that honours my thirteen years of classroom teaching, years of coaching and

⁷ Tuck and Yang's (2012) assertion that "decolonization is not a metaphor" helped me understand that decolonization is not an *act* of reconciliation. Reconciliation may happen after decolonization. Decolonization is political and personal, but ultimately I understand it as a deep and sustained process of unlearning colonialism. Therefore, in this dissertation, I use the term "unlearning."

⁸ Professional learning is a term widely used in education to describe the opportunities, encounters, or experiences education workers are offered to promote enhanced skills, knowledge, and capabilities and practises. These are often situated within the organizations objectives and standards. Recently, exclusions inherent within professional learning, including gender, class, race, and language have been troubled by several academics (Blackamore, 2010; Brooks et al., 2020; Sotto-Santiago, 2020).

mentoring teachers, findings from my master's research, my work with Dr. Cindy Blackstock, and experiences teaching and learning with teachers who are working towards education for reconciliation. I sincerely hope it honours all of the Eeyou students and their families that I have taught. In the spirit of those relationships, I turned to Donald's (2009) concept of ethical relationality. What he calls:

...an ethic of historical consciousness. The ethic holds that the past co-occurs in the present and influences how we conceptualize the future. It requires that we see ourselves as related to and implicated in the lives of those who have gone before us and those yet to come. It is an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of our relationships with others, how our histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other, and how our futures are similarly tied together. (p. 7)

The stories shared in this dissertation reveal how an ethic of historical consciousness help teachers learn new stories about Indigenous-Canadian relations. Moreover, the stories reveal how settler colonialism must be explicitly attended to as a culture that our ways of living and understanding are immersed in. When this culture is exposed, and unlearned, the “transformational shifts” that the TRC (2015) called for to “restore mutual respect between peoples and nations” can begin to occur (p. 1). This dissertation is an effort to understand how we might make those transformational shifts in education and “schooling” as teachers unlearn colonial logics and engage in ethical relationality within the ecosystems they are part of on the lands they work and live on. My overarching research question was, “What are the curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality to processes of unlearning colonialism?” Other questions I had were: “How do the stories we learn impact

how we understand the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples?” and “What professional learning opportunities are teachers given to engage in learning about truth and reconciliation and have these opportunities played a role in teacher’s understanding of Canadian-Indigenous relationships?”

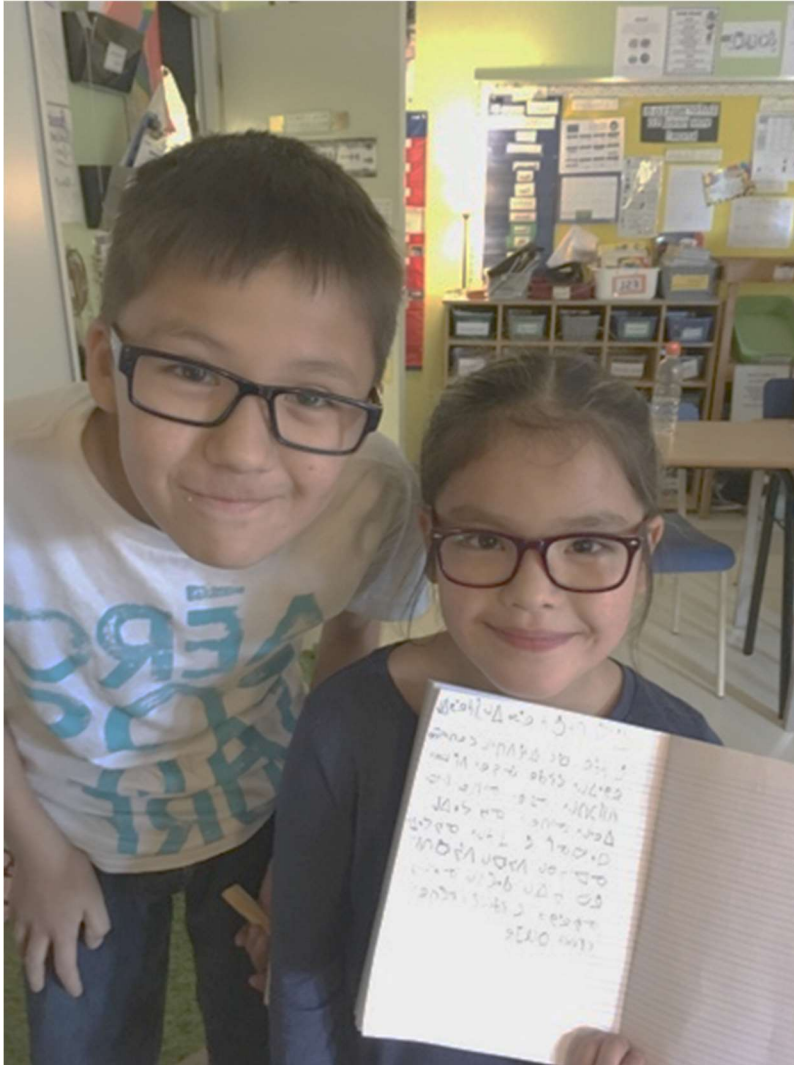


Figure 6: Students preparing a lesson to teach their classmates Cree syllabics (Source: own photo).

A roadmap of this thesis

As readers, you now know how I came to ask the research questions that frame my study. In what follows, I share the organizing framework for the rest of this thesis.

My research is situated in the humanities and therefore I draw on curriculum studies, educational philosophy, Indigenous studies, and Truth and Reconciliation Education and Research to deeply inquire into my research questions. I conducted a year-long qualitative research study that encompassed three phases. In the first phase, I conducted interviews with three teacher candidates from the University of Alberta who took Dwayne Donald's curriculum course in the Winter Term of 2020. In phase 2, I conducted research with Indigenous community members, as well as non-Indigenous teachers, including one administrator, at PETES. Phase three included a walk and a community sharing circle with six teachers from PETES and Albert Dumont, a spiritual advisor from Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg. I will explain the reasons for these particular research sites in a later section. In Chapter 2, I situate my research questions in a review of current research in the emerging field of truth and reconciliation education, specifically within teacher education and teacher professional learning. This research includes investigating and understanding what has been called "teacher resistances" (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Dion, 2016; Regan, 2010; Tupper, 2011, 2012) and what Donald (2021) has called a "colonial psychosis" (p. 56). To comprehend how teachers and teacher educators are confronting and disrupting these resistances, I reviewed and analyzed the scant literature on processes of unlearning, a term that some teacher educators in Canadian faculties of education are beginning to use to describe what is elsewhere referred to as "decolonizing work" (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018; Tupper, 2011, 2012; Ward, 2015). The concept of unlearning and the constraints that teacher candidates and teachers face regarding professional unlearning opportunities are central to understanding the teacher's stories. I end Chapter 2 with an exploration of ethical relationality, as put forth by Donald, explicitly concerning the pedagogical and curricular significance of the processes of teacher unlearning. In Chapter 3, I present my theoretical framework, which is

inspired by Donald's "About to From" model of ethical relationality (see figure 15) and the "Touchstones of Hope Processes of Reconciliation" (see figure 16). These models for un/learning inspired a framework that I have termed "Towards a new story: Teacher (un)learning" (see figure 17).

After discussions with Dwayne, I chose an interpretive hermeneutic approach to make sense of the stories that teachers shared with me, which I take up as my research methodology in Chapter 4. Hermeneutics is defined as the tradition, philosophy, and practice of interpretation (Moules, 2002) and draws attention to how interpretations are situated in research participants' lives, relations, contexts, and histories. It is a reflective interpretive inquiry concerned with our entire understanding and experience of the world. As a methodology, hermeneutics seeks to make sense of our "life worlds," which is our sense of a present world without our recognition or actions (Smith, 1991). Nancy Moules (2002) writes that hermeneutics is an:

...acknowledgment that things come from somewhere; they are not simply fabricated. However, along with sameness and recognition, hermeneutics requires a bringing forth and a bringing to language of something new. We work out this newness by working it into a world of relationships that can sustain it. In these relationships, others start to recognize not only something of themselves, but also of the world; they recognize something old and something new. (p. 3)

The relational demands of hermeneutics allowed me to dwell with(in) the teachers' stories. As I walked along the river, the stories came with me, trudging down the icy banks to feed the ducks. They inhabited and inhabit me. I present these stories in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8, along with my hermeneutic interpretations. Chapter 9 offers a final synthesis of my

hermeneutical interpretations of what we might unlearn and learn from such stories about teacher education and Canadian-Indigenous relations.

As I end this introduction, I look out of the window in my office. Some of the leaves on the maple tree that stands tall in our neighbours' backyard have started to turn to red. Some have already fallen and are stepped on as pedestrians travel along the sidewalks below. A faded paper heart on a bamboo stake stands to the right of the window. One of my Eeyou students made it in preparation for the closing ceremonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada closing ceremonies in June 2015. She carried this heart with her as she walked with other students and Elders at the ceremony, and gifted it to me afterwards. I look at it often and wonder how we might continue to move beyond the Calls to Action and take up the work of repairing the contentious divides that keep us from restor(y)ing our relations.



Figure 7: Heart Garden at the TRC closing ceremonies in Ottawa (Source: own photo).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Most of us think that history is the past. It's not. History is the stories we tell about the past.

(Thomas King, 2012, p. 5)

Paper Hearts and Curricular Reckonings

It is June 3, 2015. Many of my students have come to school dressed in new clothes. Anita is wearing a yellow summer dress adorned with petite, blue butterflies, while Aidan groans that his mom made him wear a “button-up” shirt. I chuckle and tell him that the red-striped dress shirt makes him look very studious. There is excitement in our classroom as we put the finishing touches on our paper hearts that my students will carry at the closing ceremonies of the TRC. The paper hearts, which will be fastened on bamboo stakes, are colourful and heartfelt, with messages of love and sorrow: “We remember you,” “We love you and honour you,” “You are not alone,” and “I am so, so, so sorry they took you away from your family.” These messages are for the survivors and intergenerational survivors of Residential Schools.

At 11:30 am, we board the yellow school bus and are whisked off across the Kichi Zibi to the grounds of Rideau Hall, the official residence of the Governor-General of Canada. It is a warm, bright day, and I watch the sun dance on my students' faces, a diverse group of settler Canadians, new Canadians, Eeyou, Inuk, and Anishinaabe youth. All year, we have been learning from the stories of courageous Residential School Survivors, including Mary-Lou Iahtail, a Cree Elder and Residential school survivor from Attawapiskat First Nation. Mary-Lou visited us many times, and we've developed mutual affection and intense bonds. We have also had the chance to learn from other community members and activists, including Cindy Blackstock. On a snowy day in February, we marched to Parliament Hill to join with hundreds of other students, teachers, and activists to

call on the government to “have a heart” for First Nations Children. Today, we've been honoured with the invitation to participate in the closing ceremonies of the TRC at Rideau Hall. Along with other students from across the region, my students will “plant” their hearts along the pathways at Rideau Hall, where the Survivors and Elders will walk.

At the closing ceremonies, I listen closely as we sit amongst First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders and peoples, honorary witnesses, politicians, teachers, and students. The words of Murray Sinclair (2015), the chief commissioner of the TRC, resonate:

Our recommendations should not be seen as an itemization of a national penance but as an opportunity to embrace a second chance at establishing a relationship of equals, which was intended initially and should have continued throughout. Our leaders must not fear this onus of reconciliation. The burden is not theirs to bear alone, rather, reconciliation is a process that involves all parties of this new relationship. Reconciliation is not an aboriginal problem — it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us. (para. 35)

On that day and for months afterwards, there was an outpouring of public commitments for the 94 Calls to Action to begin the process of reconciliation in Canada. Several of these calls specifically referred to education, urging Ministries of Education, Faculties of Education, school administrators, and K-12 teachers to integrate Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies across the school curriculum. The TRC explicitly emphasized that education would be the intergenerational key to reconciliation in Canada (TRC, 2015). Most provinces and territories quickly implemented curricula and developed resources to respond to the Calls to Action (Kairos, 2018). Despite this mandate and these commitments, many teachers continue to report that they do not have the skills, knowledge, or confidence to teach about the history of the Indian Residential Schooling system, Indigenous knowledges, or reconciliation (Dion 2014, 2016; Howell, 2017; Smith, 2017).

Moreover, several studies illustrate the lack of teacher candidates' perceived knowledge about colonialism, treaties, and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians (Brant 2017; Smith & Ng-A-Fook, 2017; Tupper, 2012, 2019). There is also minimal research that addresses current reconciliation resources and professional (un)learning opportunities for in-service teachers. Furthermore, research on whether resources facilitate the “restoration of respect between Nations” that the TRC deems necessary for this education to work is sparse. The current research suggests that teacher resistance to “difficult knowledge” is a crucial contributing factor in teachers avoiding, ignoring, and dismissing reconciliation work (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Dion, 2016; Howell, 2017). Donald (2020a) describes these resistances as manifestations of colonial logics, which continue to separate Canadians from Indigenous people by inadequately explaining, dismissing, and simplifying the stories of our relationships.

Redress and reparations: Beyond apologies

Truth and reconciliation, and its reckoning in curriculum studies and education, is not unique to Canada. Indeed, more than forty countries have established truth (and reconciliation) commissions in the past three decades, including South Africa, Rwanda, Australia, Sierra Leone, Chile, the Philippines, South Korea, and Canada (Ibhawoh, 2019). Other nations have opted to deliver apologies to those they harmed or on behalf of former governments who caused the harm. The Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) has recorded 644 apologies since 1996, prompting many to refer to the last 25 years as “the age of apology” (Sanz, 2012, p. 3). Most of the aforementioned truth commissions and state apologies address genocide and crimes against humanity, with many of them made to Indigenous peoples by the settler-nation states that colonized them (Organick, 2019). In many ways, the age of apology and the idea of reconciliation have become a social paradigm (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013). Settler movements for redress

have become entrenched in 21st-century neoliberal democracy, including our schooling systems and curricula, from K-12 and beyond.

This chapter provides a situated and partial historical overview of truth and reconciliation in Canada. It is situated in relation to hundreds of years of Indigenous resistance, including organizations formed to fight colonial injustices, and current movements towards Indigenous sovereignty and rights. In response, I discuss how the workings of the international age of apology, settler colonialism, and what some have called “the great forgetting” (Quinn, 1996) complicate the transformative changes required to restore relations. With these challenges in mind, I’ve chosen to focus on current scholarship from the emerging field of truth and reconciliation education research, examining the limitations, tensions, and possibilities that have been put forth in teacher education and professional learning. Finally, I’ll consider the efforts that Faculties of Education, teacher educators, and teacher education programmes have made in response to this research, including ethical relationality and unlearning.

Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, Settler colonialism, and the “Great Forgetting”

Truth and reconciliation movements come about due to acts of genocide, injustices, and human rights abuses. As mentioned in the section above, these movements are most often officiated and announced by national governments on behalf of past actions by former governments or nationals. However, before the pomp and accompanying optics of the official apology, there are often years of sustained resistance to the injustices and calls for accountability and reparations. For example, in South Africa, the truth and reconciliation commission was established after the end of apartheid (after decades of resistance and demands for equity by the African National Congress (Ayee, 2016). Likewise, in Chile, due to a strong foundation of human rights advocacy within the country supported by international networks, a truth and reconciliation

commission was established quickly after Pinochet's ousting (Bacic, 1999). Despite this, Chile's efforts at reform were hindered by the "institutions loyal to Pinochet, in particular the military, the legislature and the judiciary" (United States Institute of Peace, 1990, para. 16). Indeed, truth and reconciliation commissions and reforms are often mired in the very ideologies that caused the injustice in the first place. Canada is no exception.

The long road towards truth and then reconciliation: hundreds of years of resistance

In Canada, the "official era" of truth and reconciliation is preceded by hundreds of years of Indigenous resistance, truth-telling, and demands for equity and accountability. There are countless examples of Indigenous opposition, and I acknowledge that what follows is a very brief synopsis. I contend that resistance to settler colonialism has been ongoing since the arrival of Europeans. In the 1600s, for example, the Haudenosaunee resisted evangelization by Jesuit priests, believing, and rightly so, that the Jesuits were a threat to their way of life (Jaenen, 2008). Further west, the Métis Nation, led by Louis Riel, resisted colonizing efforts by Canada to occupy their territory for decades before the infamous Red River Rebellion in 1869 (Teillet, 2019). This was followed by the Northwest rebellion in 1885, when the Cree, Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan, and Saulteaux Nations resisted the starvation inflicted by the decimation of the buffalo (Dyck & Sadik, 2011). "This rebellion," write Dyck and Sadik (2011), "was further fuelled by Métis unrest at the failure to have their rights recognized during the Red River Rebellion" (para, 4).

These resistances and lack of recognition of rights led to the formation of several alliances and councils, including the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia in 1916; the League of Indians in 1919; the Indian Association of Alberta in 1939; the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations in 1944, and the National Indian Brotherhood in 1967. In 1971, Eeyou and Inuk activists from Northern Québec united to demand their rights for control of their land, peoples, and cultures. Their resistance successfully resulted in the first modern treaty in North America constituting a

settlement between Indigenous Peoples and a government (Desrosier, 2019), now known as the James Bay Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA).

The organizations that advocated for and defended the rights and Indigenous peoples led to the formation and inspiration of modern-day organizations and movements, such as the Assembly of First Nations in 1982, Defenders of the Land in 2008, and Idle No More in 2012. They also situated the work of Red Paper, The Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), which directly led to the mandate of the TRC in 2008. The TRC, therefore, was founded and uplifted by the spirit of thousands of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders, organizers, advocates, and human rights activists who have been resisting settler-colonialism for hundreds of years (see figure 8).

From RCAP to the IRSSA: Getting to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

In 1991, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was established to study the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples, culminating in the release of a four thousand-page report (Reading et al., 2016). The report issued four hundred and forty recommendations, including creating an Aboriginal parliament, Aboriginal authority over child welfare, and a public inquiry into the Indian Residential Schooling system (Reading et al., 2016). In response to the RCAP report, the federal government issued a reconciliation statement acknowledging the mistreatment of former students in 1998 and announced the establishment of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Miller, 2013). Throughout this time, many survivors of residential schools pursued litigation, and several class-action lawsuits were filed against the federal government, leading to the formation of the IRSSA. The IRSSA came into effect on September 19, 2007, seeking to compensate survivors, commemorate those lost, and, like RCAP, called for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was established shortly thereafter.



Figure:8: Resistance Movements in Canada, from top left: Louis Riel and the Provincial Committee in 1870 (Source: Red River North heritage, 2022); Cree and Inuit leaders at the James Bay Northern Québec Negotiations,1974 (Source: Cree Nation Government, 2022); Founders of Idle No More, 2013 (Source: Cultural Survival, 2022); Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs at a rally in Smithers B.C. in 2020 (Source: Unistoten Camp, 2022).

The TRC was a “commission like no other in Canada” travelling across the country for six years to hear from more than 6 000 witnesses and survivors (TRC 2015, p. 3). In its Final Report, the commission stated:

Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder. It requires that the paternalistic and racist foundations of the residential school system be rejected for an ongoing relationship. Reconciliation requires a new vision, based on

a commitment to mutual respect, be developed...virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered. (TRC, 2015, p. vi)

We are now close to seven years since the close of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and currently, only 11 of the 94 Calls to Action have been completed (Yellowhead Institute, 2021). An entire section of the final report was concerned with missing children and burial information. It included five specific Calls to Action regarding locating, documenting, commemorating and reburial of children in unmarked graves.

Although Elders and survivors had long told stories of unmarked graves, Canada did little to honour these calls until May 2021, when Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced that laser penetrating radar had uncovered 215 unmarked graves. These graves at the former Kamloops residential school site are most likely children. Two months later, the confirmation of 751 unmarked graves at the site of the former Marieval Residential School on Cowessess First Nation was revealed by the community. A litany of apologies, public outpourings of grief, and half-mast flags across Canada became the norm in the months afterward, prompting some to call this time 'Canada's colonial reckoning' (Leichnitz, 2021). The findings of unmarked graves triggered the establishment of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, commemorated for the first time on September 30, 2021. The observance of such a day had been called for by the TRC in 2015. Still, it was only passed into Canadian law on June 3, 2021, fast-tracked by what then-Canadian Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault called the "stark reminder of the heavy toll of our colonial past" (Bryden, 2021, para.6). There was no mention of our colonial present.

Despite the recent "reckonings" of many Canadians, settler colonialism continues to pervades political, social, and legal aspects of Canadian public policy and parlance. Our famously apologetic Prime Minister spent the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on the beaches of Tofino, British Columbia, rather than with Residential School Survivors and communities. He

subsequently apologized for this decision, explaining that he had made a “regrettable mistake” (Levitz, 2021). Other politicians have made similarly audacious decisions, such as when then Prime Minister Stephen Harper, during a speech at a G20 event, denied that Canada had any history of “social breakdown, political upheaval or invasion,” stating, “We are unique in that regard. We also have no history of colonialism” (Ladner & McCrossan, 2014, p. 200). These denials came a year after Harper issued a full apology for Residential Schools on June 11, 2008, asking for forgiveness from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples for their abuse in the schools. Moreover, during this era of reckoning and truth and reconciliation, Canada continues to litigate against Residential School Survivors, survivors of the child welfare system (Blackstock, 2021), and persecute land and water defenders (Palmater, 2021). I contend that the culture of colonialism lies at the heart of both the apologies and the seemingly contradictory behaviour of our politicians.

Settler-Colonialism as a Culture: “We need to get to the heart of it”

Blatant Colonialism mutilates you without pretense: it forbids you to talk, it forbids you to act, it forbids you to exist. Invisible colonialism, however, convinces you that serfdom is your destiny and impotence is your nature; it convinces you that it is not possible to speak, not possible to act, not possible to exist.

(Eduardo Galeano, 1992, p. 159)

As stated earlier, there is a long and sustained history of Indigenous resistance in Canada, including the creation of numerous organizations, demonstrations, blockades, education, and advocacy that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have engaged in. The Canadian public has known about both the injustices and the resistances for decades through this ongoing resistance, including non-Indigenous whistleblowers such as Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, who was a physician who worked for the department of Indian Affairs under Minister Duncan Campbell Scott. He wrote

a scathing report about the deplorable conditions in Indian Residential Schools, and some of the findings were featured on the front page of the *Ottawa Evening Citizen* on Friday, November 15, 1907 (Milloy, 2017). Despite this, Scott refused to implement any of Bryce's recommendations to improve the conditions at the schools, and promptly fired Bryce. In 1922, after years of inaction and the continuing death of children, Dr. Bryce "took up his pen in vitriolic exasperation" and wrote *The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada*, published by James Hope & Sons Limited in Ottawa (cited in Milloy, 2017, p. 95). This was widely available to Canadians.



Figure 9: Front page of the *Evening Citizen*, November 15, 1907 (Source: Caring Society, 2022)

The Canadian public has also had opportunities to learn about colonialism and Indigenous perspectives through the work of Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, who has produced over fifty documentaries since 1969 with the National Film Board of Canada. Obomsawin's documentaries include the *Incident at Restigouche* (1984), which chronicles police raids on the Listugui Mi'kmaq First Nation and *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993), which

documents what some call the Oka Crisis (National Film Board, 2022). Canadians can't say they didn't have the opportunity to learn, which I believe leads us to the heart of settler colonialism.

The bifurcation of people and the writing of a dichotomous story

In a 2019 lecture, Dr. Cindy Blackstock spoke about how colonial ideologies fuel a dehumanizing dichotomy that continues to endorse discrimination and anti-Indigenous racisms:

This is an important time in the history of our country. It is an important time when we can get to the heart of colonialism...the deeming of Indigenous peoples as savage, the deeming of Indigenous peoples as lawless, the deeming of Indigenous peoples as unable, incapable of raising their own children, provided the rationalization for what is theft and immoral behaviour under any other circumstance. When you dehumanize people by using the savage and civilized dichotomy, many things become horribly possible. (04:37)

Understanding settler colonialism as a culture and institutional practice is foundational to truth and then reconciliation in Canada, yet many Canadians don't understand what settler colonialism is and how it continues to propagate intergenerational harms. Moreover, many continue to see themselves as unimplicated. It is therefore important to articulate what settler colonialism is, how it functions in Canada, and how it "manifests in daily life, informing acts of appropriation and racism, and defending many strongly held national myths" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 24).

Settler Colonialism is a form of colonialism and is distinguishable by several key tenets which are significant to this discussion. As Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) write, "Canadian colonialism does not look like classical colonialism and the founding of overseas colonies because it is directed internally, against an Indigenous population essentially captive within the borders of their own state" (p.24). Specifically, settler colonialism has three main pillars. First, in settler colonialism, settlers come to stay in the place they colonialize. Veracini (2010) conceptualizes this

as the difference between *animus manendi*, or “the intent to stay” and *animus revertendi*, “the intent to return”. When colonizers intend to return to their own homes, they do not identify as “at home” on the land they are colonizing. In settler colonialism, the intent is to stay, make the land home, and create and support an identity around this home, which we see reflected in our national stories about the explorers and the “finding” of Canada (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015).

Secondly, in settler colonialism, as anthropologist James Wolfe (2006) identified, “invasion is a structure, not an event” (p. 388). What Wolfe is referring to here is how the invasion of colonial cultural norms and practices of the invaders become part of the social, political, and economic structures of the society. Examples of these structures in Canada include patriarchal ideologies, concepts of land ownership, and notions of progress, knowledge, and of how to go about being a human being. The third pillar of settler colonialism is the elimination of Indigenous peoples and the erasure of their presence on the land. This is done through the eradication of truths about our collective histories and by the creation of narratives about Canada that normalize and justify our presence here and our claims of being “from here”. These versions of history sanitize the violent dispossession of Indigenous lands, placing emphasis on peacekeeping, friendliness, and seemingly philanthropic benevolence of the settlers (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015).

Settler colonialism’s Moves to Innocence

In describing what they term “settler moves to innocence”, scholars Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012) put forth six strategies that settler colonialism employs to manage the “misery of guilt” that comes from “directly and indirectly benefitting from the erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples” (p.9). Settler nativism, whereby settlers claim they have Indigenous relatives and are therefore blameless in colonial eradication is the first move to innocence that Tuck and Yang address. In Canada, we’ve recently witnessed several prominent scholars and authors who had claimed Indigenous identity and profited from it without basis (Ridgen, 2021). The second

strategy, closely related to the first, is what Tuck and Yang term as “settler adoption fantasies” and describe as whereby the settler:

becomes “Indian” without *becoming*...these fantasies can mean the adoption of Indigenous practices and knowledge, but more, refer to those narratives in the settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping. (p. 14)

The third strategy, “colonial equivocation,” is what Tuck and Yang explain as settlers refer to different groups as “colonized” without relating their experiences to settler colonialism. The disregarding of settler colonialism “erases the sweeping scope of land as the basis of wealth, power, law in settler states” (p. 19). In Canada, multicultural policies are an example of this strategy, where Indigenous sovereignty is seen in opposition to these principles and values. Fourth, what Tuck and Yang coin as, “Free your mind and the rest will follow” (p.19) is the myth that decolonization is a cerebral, intellectual pursuit separate from “the repatriation of Indigenous lands and life...decolonization is not a metonym for social justice” (p. 21). I believe that social justice can lead to the repatriation that Tuck and Yang speak of when settlers support the calls for solidarity and action from Indigenous peoples, such as we saw in the case of the Wet’suwet’en land defenders (APTN, 2020). Likewise, called on by the Assembly of First Nations and the Caring Society, thousands of Canadians, including hundreds of students and teachers, have supported and sustained their support for the case before the Human Rights Tribunal regarding First Nations Child Welfare and Jordan’s Principle by demanding equity from their elected representatives (Caring Society, 2022).

The fifth and sixth moves to innocence that Tuck and Yang put forth are what they call “A(s)t(e)risk peoples” and “Re-occupation and urban homesteading”. The first refers to the many ways that Indigenous peoples are:

counted, codified, represented, and included/disincluded by educational researchers and other social science researchers. Indigenous peoples are rendered visible in mainstream educational research in two main ways: as “at risk” peoples and as asterisk peoples. This comprises a settler move to innocence because it erases and then conceals the erasure of Indigenous peoples within the settler colonial nation-state and moves Indigenous nations as “populations” to the margins of public discourse. (p. 22)

By deeming Indigenous peoples “at risk” Tuck and Yang contend that they are continually placed on the verge of extinction. Exacerbating this is that Indigenous people are often represented by asterisks in statistical data that informs public policy that impacts their lives. By being categorized as “at risk” while simultaneously being marginalized to the asterisk or footnotes of data, Tuck and Yang argue that this strategy is a “body count that does not account for Indigenous politics, educational concerns, and epistemologies” (p. 23). The sixth move to innocence, re-occupation and urban homesteading, problematizes the “occupy” movements across the western world as “settler re-occupations on stolen land” (p. 23). In urban homesteading, for example, settlers “re-settle urban land in the fashion of self-styled pioneers in a mythical frontier” (p.28). In both cases, by claiming occupation, settlers are evading Indigenous sovereignty and thus the erasure of existing, prior, and future land claims and rights.

Tuck and Yang posit that these moves to innocence rebuke land repatriation, which is their definition of decolonization. I understand these settler moves to innocence as important in how they work to preserve settler colonial structures, systems, and knowledge frameworks that are firmly entrenched in the Canadian nation and identity, and thus, our way of life and culture. Settler colonialism privileges those that are members by elevating the myth of generosity and the dichotomy of the savage and the civilized-through stories told, and stories untold-in schools, in

government, in curriculum, in media, and around the dinner table. In *My conversations with Canadians*, Lee Maracle (2017) contends that “Canadians have a myth [of innocence] about themselves, and it seems this myth is inviolable” (p. 31). Numerous other Indigenous scholars have written about the upholding of settler colonialism through denialism, defensiveness, and “othering” (Dion, 2016; Simpson, 2017; Starblanket & Hunt, 2020). In 2017, a former Canadian Senator provided us with a blatant example of settler colonialism when she rose in the Red Chamber.

Settler Colonialism within the Red Chamber and beyond

Recently, Sean Carleton (2021), a non-Indigenous scholar, examined former Senator Lynn Beyak's speeches to show how anti-Indigenous racism and settler-colonial denial are used to undermine truth and reconciliation in Canada. Carleton writes that denialism, by Beyak and others, “can be understood as a common strategy in which colonizers use denialist discourse to legitimize and defend their material power, privilege, and profit” (p. 3). Likewise, in *A Case of Senator Lynn Beyak and Anti-Indigenous Systemic Racism in Canada*, Howell and Ng-A-Fook (2022) analyze Beyak's speeches and letters of support from the Canadian public, arguing that both expose the depth of systemic settler colonialism, anti-Indigenous racisms, and unsettling beneficiary narratives in Canada. The authors call on teacher educators to examine these systemic anti-Indigenous racisms in relation to how they can confront and disrupt Canadian settler colonialism and historical settler consciousness within teacher education and school curricula. Interrogating and disrupting settler colonialism is but one part of the work ahead. We also need to unlearn the stories that settler colonialism has told us. To do this, we need to hear and learn new stories. In “We Need a New Story: Walking and the wâhkôhtowin Imagination,” Donald (2021) explains:

The habitual disregard of Indigenous peoples stems from the colonial experience. It is perpetuated in the present educational context as a curricular and pedagogical logic of naturalized separation based on the assumption of stark and irreconcilable

differences. I use the term “psychosis” to draw attention to how the institutional and socio-cultural perpetuation of colonial logics has trained Canadians to disregard Indigenous peoples as fellow human beings. This disregard maintains unethical relationships and manifests as cognitive blockages (psychoses) that undermine the possibility for improved relations. (p. 56)

Donald (2019) contends that unlearning settler colonial logics might lead to the restoration of ethical, balanced relationships between Canadians, Indigenous peoples, and the more-than-human world, leading to understandings of different ways to live as human beings. He writes that the “current human struggles to balance the desire for economic development with ecological sustainability drives from a deep forgetting of...simple truths” (p. 104). Here Donald reminds us that, as human beings, we are dependent on the sacred ecology that sustains our lives, despite numerous technological, economic, and anthroponomic advances. This deep curricular forgetting of our interdependent relationship within ecology has manifested in the promotion of individualism, progress, and anthropocentrism in our culture, curriculum, and pedagogies.

The Great-Forgetting and (re)remembering

As Blackstock explains, settler colonialism has trained us to bifurcate human beings into categories of savage and civilized, enabling ongoing injustices and narratives of benevolence and denial (2019). Colonialism has also instructed us to forget that we are interdependent members of an ecological community, including more-than-human relations (Donald, 2012). This has often been called the “Great Forgetting” which was first brought forward by Daniel Quinn (1996) in his novel, *The Story of B*. In the novel, the character B is a lecturer who uses the term “Great Forgetting” to refer to the wealth of knowledge and wisdoms that were lost when what we now call the agricultural revolution occurred. After thousands of years, people only remembered this one way of living and assumed that civilization and settled agriculture were humankind's natural state

of being (Quinn, 1996). What was forgotten in the “Great Forgetting” was that before the advent of agriculture and village life, humans lived in a profoundly different way—namely, as hunters and gatherers. B stresses that today's knowledge and worldview would be greatly altered had the foundation thinkers of our culture known there was history beyond the beginning of civilization rather than civilization as the *beginning* of our history (Quinn, 1996).

I believe that Canadians are presently grappling with what we might call a “twofold forgetting.” Our culture was founded on the assumption of “civilized-as-human,” and our Nation-state was created and maintained by settler colonialism's logics and culture. If the Great Forgetting started the groundwork for the savage-civilized dichotomy, settler colonialism nurtures, disseminates, and continues its legacy. It is time we get to the heart of colonialism and remember what the great forgetting taught us to forget. Education has a role to play in remembering, and in the words of Justice Murray Sinclair, education is both the cause for and at the heart of addressing “truth,” and sustaining “reconciliation” across the school curriculum in Canada (TRC, 2015). Education has, therefore, once again become the hope for transformative change. In the next section, we will examine some of the research done to date in Faculties of Education as teacher educators and teacher candidates engage in the work of truth and then reconciliation. I argue that to get to the heart of education, pedagogy must include and reflect the hearts of our students.

Education for truth, and then reconciliation: Research in Faculties of Education

How do we engage teachers' and students' attention in stories that tell them who they are when it is a 'who they are that they do not want to be?

(Susan Dion, 2004, p. 61)

Long before the TRC closing ceremonies and the Calls to Action, there were teachers and teacher educators across Canada committed to disrupting the normative narratives of Canadian history in their classrooms. Much of this early work focused on understanding teachers' obstacles

when learning about Indigenous perspectives and history. From this early work, a growing body of research emerged on what is often termed “teacher resistance” regarding teaching Indigenous content and perspectives (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Dion, 2016; Regan, 2010; Tupper, 2011; 2012). Several studies identify barriers for teachers doing reconciliation work, including a lack of confidence, feelings of not “knowing enough,” perceived absence of resources, time and curriculum restraints, fear of offending Indigenous peoples, and fear of cultural appropriation (Dion, 2014; Howell, 2017; Smith, 2017).

Susan Dion, a Potawatomi Lenapé scholar, considers the resistances to teaching Indigenous perspectives and how they are revealed. After extensive work with teacher candidates, Dion (2016) has put forward what she calls “the allure of the perfect stranger” (p. 178) to explain teacher resistance. Dion posits that when faced with teaching Indigenous perspectives, teachers often insist:

I can’t teach this content. I know nothing about Indigenous people, I have no friends that are Indigenous, I didn’t grow up near a reserve, I didn’t learn anything when I was in school. I am a perfect stranger to Indigenous people. (p. 178)

Dion (2016) argues that the perfect stranger positionality permits teacher candidates to excuse themselves from responsibility and prevents them from feelings of discomfort. Furthermore, staying within the space of the perfect stranger enables teacher candidates to remain respectful, hardworking, and benevolent Canadians. Indeed, narratives of “Canada the Good” provide the foundation for how Canadian “students read and racialize the story of the territory on which they live and their relationship with First Nations peoples” (Tupper, 2011, p. 41). For many teacher candidates, these narratives have been upheld and validated by curricular and epistemological exclusion, nullification, and dismissal of Indigenous peoples throughout their years in the Canadian

schooling system. Thus, the “perfect stranger” identity is formed and informed by the narratives we learn and don't learn throughout our lives.

Consequently, by assuming the role of the “perfect stranger,” teacher candidates feel entitled to absolve themselves of responsibility for teaching Indigenous perspectives and remain isolated from Indigenous peoples. Moreover, they avoid facing the contradictions of their histories as Canadians. Donald (2019) explains:

If somebody has a Canadian identity, that's how they understand themselves. They look at an Indigenous person, then part of the acknowledgment is that the Indigenous person is from here. They have deep roots in this place...So with that admitted, then that means that ‘Canadian’ must be foreign to this place. And that’s a very strange contradiction, because how can a Canadian be a foreigner in Canada? This results in a ‘psychosis-like state’ where Indigenous people can’t possibly be seen as in relation to Canadians. (p. 8)

The contradictions to inherited and sustained beliefs about what it means to be “Canadian” challenge our status quo of comfort and privilege, as Brant (2017) found in her Master’s thesis with teacher candidates. She identified several ideologic barriers among the teacher candidates she interviewed. Significantly, she found “a pedagogy of Whiteness which manifests itself as a challenge to mandatory Indigenous education and an active distancing in attempts to absolve oneself of responsibility in relation to Indigenous peoples” (p. 41). In turn, Brant stresses that this caused not only severe impediments to reconciliatory efforts in teacher education, they also risked “impeding further reconciliation in all future educational spaces” (p. 41).

In Aitken and Radford's (2018) research with teacher candidates at the University of Ottawa and Bishops University, proclivities to protecting whiteness and defending settler identity were apparent in several ways. For example, when teaching about the Indian Residential schooling

system, teacher candidates focused on “respect and sensitivity towards their own students, rather than the victims of colonization” (p. 45). Furthermore, teacher candidates suggested that the best ways to go about teaching “truths” and “reconciliation” were through the non-confrontational transmission of information and facts, the use of neutral language, and by “making it lighter” (p. 45). Teacher candidates spoke passionately about the importance of “avoiding approaches that would elicit emotions, particularly shame and guilt” in their students (p. 45). Moreover, their focus on knowing what to do, rather than needing to learn, is an important finding. Likewise, Watson and Currie-Patterson’s (2018) teacher education students wanted to learn about Indigenous peoples rather than learning about their colonialism: “Students appeared to be preoccupied with ‘the cultural other’ and how to ‘deal with the other in the classroom’” (p. 366).

Similarly, in my master's thesis research, teachers expressed comparable resistances and rhetoric in statements such as “no one taught me how to teach this” (Howell, 2017, p. 89). And “I just don't have the resources to teach it” (p. 101). The perfect stranger was also invoked when teachers spoke of the “fear of offending...as this history is not my own” (p. 102). This research demonstrates that fear, discomfort, and colonial logics impede teacher candidates from unlearning colonialism, directly impacting how they take up the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians in their classrooms.

In the next section, I examine responses to the concerns that this research has revealed and questions it has provoked. How might teacher educators work to unsettle the colonial blockages occurring in teacher candidates? What pedagogical and curricular choices might challenge resistances and encourage curiosity, relationality, and openness to unlearning? I will begin with a story about—but not about—Canadian Geese.

Revisiting the story of the Nisk

The first classroom that I taught in at Pierre Elliott Trudeau school was on the ground floor. It was a rectangular room with tiled floors and ceilings, and bright, harsh, halogen lighting, which I quickly deactivated and replaced with lamps. The outer wall had a row of windows that I kept open until it was too cold to do so. The children and I grew and took care of plants that we lovingly kept along the windowsills. A variety of tables, bean bags, exercise ball chairs, and standing desks allowed children to move as they learned. I endeavoured to create a learning environment that nurtured my student's heads, hearts, spirits, and bodies. I was concerned about honouring my student's lived curriculum and worked hard to provide an environment where they belonged as thinkers, feelers, imaginers, community members, and human beings. In that first class, I had seventeen children from Eeyou Istchee. The remaining 12 were Canadians. We all had lots to learn and unlearn from each other.

Unlearning: Who owns the story of the nisk?

One day in the spring of that first year of teaching at PETES, I experienced a visceral sense of unlearning. I was reading a story to my students when we heard the geese honking as they returned from their winter in the south. Several of my Eeyou students jumped up from the carpet where they sat. As they exclaimed, "NISK!" they ran to the classroom windows, pretending to shoot at the geese, gesturing as if they were firing shotguns and making excited "Bang! Bang!" noises. Ross, a wiry kid from Ouje-Bougamou, was up on the window sill, attempting to crane his head through the half-open window to keep his eyes on the geese for as long as possible until they flew out of sight. A few non-Indigenous students started to cry. "I don't want Ross to kill the geese," one lamented. Another angrily yelled, "Don't kill the geese! They are Canada's bird!"

While the Canada goose is not our national bird, they have long been part of the Canadian national imaginary. There are hundreds of Canadian children's books about this bird. Still, very few books teach readers about the importance of the goose to the Eeyou and other Indigenous peoples in Canada. The narrative around Canadian Geese that the non-Indigenous children in my class had learned was of not feeding the community or hunting on lands that your ancestors have hunted on for thousands of years. Instead, the Canada Goose, for many Canadians, is the puffy winter parka that only the financially privileged can afford or the stuffed animal you buy for your European cousin as a Canadian souvenir. Somehow, this gangly bird has become steeped in Canadian culture and values. In 2016, it was voted Canada's National Bird by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society due to its benevolence, humility, cooperation, unity, strength, loyalty, compassion, inclusivity, and community (Canadian Geographic, 2016). These traits have been deemed representative of Canadians and Canada and certainly reflect the colonial story that Canadians are told. The palpable clash of narratives between my students was a moment of unlearning for me, too. What other stories, symbols, and representations that had had their multiplicities and layers deleted by colonialism did I not know of?

The interdependent relationship between the nisk and my Eeyou students, juxtaposed with the nationhood imposed upon the goose by Canadians, resonated deeply. Although the goose announced the arrival of spring after the harshness of the long, cold, dark winter for all my students, for the Eeyou, the goose is about thousands of years of living on these lands. And although the excited gestures of shooting the geese appeared violent to my non-Eeyou students, the



Figure 10: Roby, with his first Nisk (Source: Priscilla Bosum, 2017)

nisk is more about life than about killing. The tradition of the goose hunt on Eeyou Istchee dates back thousands of years; of being around the fire with generations of family smoking and boiling the geese; of watching the kookum's pluck the feathers listening to their laughter. These are the stories that so often go untold, uncelebrated, and unacknowledged, while others are upheld as the narratives of Canada. Unlearning the story of Canadian geese by learning about the nisk has broadened my understanding of how colonialism removes and retells stories until the truth disappears. As unlearning is central to my study, I will explore the concept in the next section.

Unlearning as (re)remembering what we've been trained to forget

Unlearning is an unsettling, a call to action, a new way of being in the world. At present, there is sparse research on the concept of unlearning, so I draw heavily on Eamonn Dunne's (2016) concept of unlearning as “a kind of originality and invention, of finding something new and discovering something old within the new for the first time” (p. 1). According to Dunne, unlearning asks us to take risks, “opening ourselves up to the event and hoping that something might come to help you stage the becoming of another you and another us” (p. 18). Unlearning is concerned with leaving something behind and can often be uncomfortable, as it requires us to confront and reconsider our underlying beliefs about identity, gender, nationality, colonialism, and pedagogy by challenging the status quo. In turn, unlearning calls upon us to imagine *new ways* of living that honour *old ways* of living, so that we are in tune relationally and ethically with the more-than-human world. Dunne (2016) writes:

Once unlearning becomes a question for learning, we are in a very difficult place indeed. We are in a place we don't necessarily want to be. This is precisely why we need to think about what we mean by this wonderfully allusive, even elusive word. It ought to be enough then to mention that when we speak of unlearning we are...not in the realm of simplistic barriers or structured hierarchies in the artifice of education. To think of unlearning is to begin to think about how we have become used to learning, so used to in fact that we failed to even question it. (pp. 14-15)

Unlearning recognizes that we've learned something that we are now calling into question. It indicates a willingness to encounter and reimagine past learning, new ways of education, and thinking about wisdom and knowledge.

I believe that the concept of “unlearning” most honourably reflects the spirit of the TRC Calls to Action regarding the transformative changes required to restore and sustain respectful relations. Before we review some of the work that teacher educators and researchers have taken up in response to resistance among teacher candidates, I wish to explain the linguistic considerations I have made. Several institutions across Canada are calling for the “decolonizing” and “indigenizing” of “the academy” (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). And yet, these terms remain both ambiguous and intricate. Is it even possible for Canadians to “decolonize” while living on and profiting from the lands many of our relatives recently colonized? Moreover, what does it mean to “Indigenize,” and who is doing the indigenizing? The concept of “unlearning,” as a process toward truth and then reconciliation, is a more explicit and accurate description of the work ahead of us. It draws attention that the work we must do involves reckoning and inquiry. It involves the deepest parts of our beings.

Unlearning as a Response to Colonial Psychosis and the Great Forgetting

In Canada, there is an emerging discourse in academe on “unlearning” as a path towards truth and redress (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018; Tupper, 2011, 2012; Ward, 2015). This literature discusses unlearning as a process that holds possibilities for the transformation of settler colonial logics. The research takes teachers engaging in the work of “truths with all of its nuances and complexities” (Llewellyn, 2008, p. 191). Several examples of these engagements in recent research include oral history education, settler life writing, digital blogging, encounters with Elders and survivors, and professional learning opportunities. These pedagogies aspire to help students unlearn colonialisms, provoke their own positionalities, and work through the resulting feelings and understandings of their responsibilities and relationships with Indigenous peoples.

A study done with teacher candidates (TCs') at Lakehead University revealed the possibilities of teaching about settler colonialism explicitly. A partnership was formed by Lisa

Korteweg, a Canadian scholar, and Tessa Fiddler, an Anishinabekwe teacher-educator. Together, they created a specialized honours course called *Indigenizing Perspectives and Practices in Education* (IPPE). Korteweg and Fiddler (2018) describe the course as “a challenging process...we had to disrupt and expose our TCs’ ignorance as settler-colonial complacencies, rather than permit them to assume a professional teacher identity that cloaks ongoing colonialism (p. 255). Korteweg and Fiddler explicitly framed colonialism as a culture, exposing the “mythos of Canadian neutrality” while endeavouring to create a classroom environment that was both safe and provocative (p. 258). Students went on the land, worked with Elders, read Indigenous literature and first-person accounts, and had placements in Indigenous classrooms. They also participated in regular community sharing circles to discuss and debrief their feelings, learning, and thinking. The authors observed that many of the TCs' had moments of openness and a willingness to engage in their complicated histories when hearing the stories of others, and one reflected that:

I will never see Aboriginal people the same way again after hearing Indigenous students’ stories — this personal storytelling format was a powerful learning experience for me. I grew up right beside Indigenous people in Thunder Bay, for my whole life, but didn't know enough, so I easily accepted stereotypes. (p. 268)

This study illustrates how explicit teaching about colonialism and interaction with Indigenous peoples helps TCs' engage with their complex narratives and begin an “unlearning process” (p. 257). Korteweg and Fiddler caution that there are many “slippery slopes and sticky points” (p. 261). Throughout the process, for example, TCs' expressed feelings of personal irrelevance, persistent attitudes of “othering,” an ongoing desire for a checklist of strategies, and difficulty in facing and understanding their privilege. TCs' also exhibited what DiAngelo (2011) calls “white fragility,” which occurred when TCs' realized that the complex issues of colonialism and the unjust history of Canada could not be “distilled into nice lesson plans or explained to family or friends

over dinner” (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018, p. 264). This research suggests that teacher candidates can engage in unlearning colonialism's complex and uncomfortable spaces. It also reveals what difficult work it is.

Another instructive example of white fragility is Jennifer Tupper's (2011) research with teacher candidates at the University of Regina. Although this work is now a decade old, it serves as an essential insight into the types of obstacles we observe in teacher candidates today. Tupper's research indicates that most teacher candidates had a “distressingly limited” knowledge of treaties and the historical and contemporary significance of the treaty relationship (p. 49). Moreover, many teachers thought Indigenous people were more likely to be deviant and were the sole beneficiaries of treaties. One student wrote that “Aboriginal education is shoved down our throats at every opportunity, but no one is ever clear on how to actually teach it” (p. 47). Tupper refers to this as an “epistemology of ignorance, based in white normativity” (p. 48), which works to maintain our imaginings of Canada. She determines, therefore, that “unpacking and revealing the Settler identities” that fuel these imaginings is vital to the work of reconciliation. “Unpacking and revealing” might happen in several ways (p. 50).

Different educational researchers have identified unlearning and listening in different forms as necessary steps for teachers to engage in (Haig-Brown & Nock, 2006). Smith and Ng-A-Fook (2017), for example, learned that when teacher candidates participate in oral history education with Elders and Residential School Survivors, they became “historical subjects during the encounters with the past lives of others...learning how to reread, rewrite, and redress a more nuanced storied account” of being in and relating to the world (p. 81-82). When teacher candidates feel the weight of historical and contemporary injustices, they recognize themselves as implicated in the relationships and the responsibilities involved (Brant-Birioukov et al., 2020). Moreover, their research showed that listeners must attend to the emotional work of learning to listen to the

vulnerability of others. Listening becomes “an act of reckoning with the past lives of others” (p. 118). In turn, it offers pedagogical opportunities for listeners to hear “new understandings of historical 'truths' of the injustices of history” (p. 119). Here Regan (2010) also reminds us that “learning to listen involves engaging our whole being, using silence not to deny, but to welcome and recognize the transformative stories we do not want to hear” (pp. 191-192). Listening, however, is not a one-time action. Instead, as Ward (2015) calls for, listening offers a paradigm change, “an over-haul in power dynamics...as settlers place themselves intentionally in a place that may be uncomfortable, and to learn that silence and humility are the most appropriate responses” (p. 283).

Encouraging teachers to engage in ongoing reflection through writing is another way toward unlearning. Research reveals that the use of extensive digital blogging (Aitken & Radford, 2018), letters to survivors after hearing testimonies and settler life writing hold possibilities for reckoning, revisiting, and unlearning (Brant et al., 2020; Tupper, 2019). Tupper (2019) describes settler life writing as seeking to “overtly connect my memories and experiences in the past with current colonial realities...to revisit memories in consideration of how the experiences they encapsulate re-inscribe Settler identity and frame Indigenous peoples as lives that are not grievable” (p. 94). Tupper suggests that life writing offers opportunities for teacher candidates to integrate and interrogate their own lived experiences as the beneficiaries of colonialism in relation to Indigenous peoples and the land we call presently call Canada. In doing so, opportunities for “reawakening” emerge, not about blame but rather about relationship building and the understanding that multiple layers of relationships can exist (Markides & MacDonald, 2018).

This research on unlearning and teacher education reveal that the ways we engage teacher candidates in “unlearning” colonial logics is critical and impacts how they think and feel about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. Discomfort must be acknowledged as a

“necessary reality of unlearning biases and problematic best practices while coming to know different professional ways of being” (Nathan & Perreault, 2018, p. 70). Despite some promising findings, there continues to be resistance, avoidance, and a tendency toward the identity of the “perfect stranger” among many teacher candidates which has substantial bearings on how they take up the work in their classrooms. Teachers continue to need unlearning and learning opportunities once they have left teacher education and are practicing teachers, which may create possibilities for their ongoing professional development. In the following section, I will review the literature in regards professional development for truth and reconciliation.

Professional Learning Opportunities: Unlearning with Teachers

The TRC Calls to Action initiated the unprecedented development of teacher resources and professional learning aimed at teaching toward truth and reconciliation. In response, many Faculties of Education across Canada have responded with mandatory courses in Teacher Education. However, there is an absence of professional learning opportunities for practicing teachers (Blackstock, Ng-A-Fook, and Bennet, 2018) and most existing options are offered through teachers’ unions and focus on resource sharing and workshops. For example, the Elementary Teacher’s Federation of Ontario (ETF) offers online education resources and workshops. Such resources support their members in “learning instructional practices to integrate Aboriginal content and perspectives in a positive approach and ensure that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people’s issues and worldviews are authentically reflective and connected to the content at hand” (n.d.). Likewise, the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA), the BC Teacher’s Federation (BCTF) and many others offer similar workshops and resources for teachers. Many other organizations across the country provide professional learning for teachers, such as the Caring Society, The Royal

Canadian Geographic Society, Legacy of Hope, and Project of Heart⁹, to name a few (Howell, 2017). However, there is scant research on the impacts of these professional learning opportunities, and many teachers continue to feel that they have “so many resources but not enough knowledge, time or understanding” (Howell, 2017, p. 132). We need to rethink how teachers are supported in their learning and unlearning throughout their careers and how it is facilitated. Below, I describe research currently being conducted that seeks to reframe how teachers learn about and teach toward truth and reconciliation in their classrooms.

Rethinking teacher professional learning: Just because we're Small

Since September 2018, I have been the Lead research coordinator of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project called, *Just Because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Reconciliation education in the elementary school classroom*. The research seeks to understand better the impacts of reconciliation education on students' and teachers' experiences, with a goal of improving teacher professional learning. The research team is a multidisciplinary partnership between the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education and the Caring Society. Through our partnership, we have engaged teachers in numerous professional learning opportunities, such as resource development and facilitation, and the Spirit Bear Retreat for Teacher Professional Learning which was held in August of 2021. During the 2-day virtual retreat, participants heard from several First Nations, Inuit, and Métis scholars, students, and activists who focused on building and restor(y)ing Canadian-Indigenous relations. One of the teachers who attended the retreat emailed us with their comments after the conference:

⁹ Project of Heart is an arts-based inquiry project that facilitates learning about residential schools through research, connecting with survivors, and social justice actions. Thousands of Canadians across the country have taken part since its creation in 2007 by Ottawa teacher Sylvia Smith and her students.

I just wanted to take a moment to tell you how deeply moved and impressed I was by what was shared at the retreat. I learned so much. It was an open-hearted, open-minded, movement to reflecting and respecting the wisdom of Indigenous Elders while acknowledging the limitations of being mired in the context of current colonized, westernized school structures. It renewed hope. It was nothing short of transformative.

A small number of recent studies have revealed the transformative possibilities of affective engagements in pedagogical learning. For example, research with teachers who did Project of Heart shows that emotional engagement, which Smith (2017) calls “heart and spirit” learning, is demonstrated when an Elder or Residential survivor speaks with teachers. Smith (2017) writes how teachers shared about the profound experiences they had with survivors, in that the “knowledge such individuals shared – and especially the manner in which they shared it—created a deep state of receptivity, compassion and respect” (p. 87). Smith’s research reveals that when teachers experience relational opportunities for learning, it encourages them to “contextualize colonial events and policies beyond residential school experiences as isolated events” (Mitchell & Tupper, 2017, p. 11). Pedagogical approaches such as this appear to increase affective engagement, enabling teachers to move “past the assignment of guilt to a consideration of present-day responsibility” (Mitchell & Tupper, 2017, p. 11). Mitchell and Tupper (2017) describe meaningful learning when teachers have opportunities to visit a former residential school site and connect with Elders and survivors. These meetings afforded them pedagogical opportunities to hear stories of Indigenous resistance and resilience and “overtly learning about whiteness and its restructuring forces” to make explicit what often remains invisible (p. 20). Encounters with unsettling occur as an evolving “critical consciousness is fostered through their engagement with colonialism...in effective, meaningful ways as opposed to traditional practices that had left them believing they had

‘learned this already’” (p. 17). Encounters with unsettling must enable the shift from skills and content to “porousness” and complex engagements, as I describe in the next section.

From skills and content to “porousness and complex engagements”

Despite the few fore-mentioned studies, teacher professional learning continues to place significant emphasis on teachers acquiring skills and knowledge. Furthermore, much of the language encourages continues to promote a separation between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. For example, teachers to learn “about” Indigenous perspectives and develop skills to “integrate” and “include” them in their classes. In *The State of Professional Learning in Canada*, researchers concluded that professional teacher learning was a mosaic of diverse experiences, opportunities, and outcomes in Canada (Carol et al., 2016). The study situates teacher professional learning in outcomes and important student learning. The authors state that professional learning:

It can have a powerful effect on teacher skills and knowledge and on student learning if it is sustained over time, focused on important content, and embedded in the work of professional learning communities that support ongoing improvements in teachers' practice. (p. 7)

Many Indigenous scholars who work in teacher education have raised concerns about the content-focused pedagogies of many professional development opportunities and programs. Instead, they advocate for the creation of “porousness” that may contribute to the “making and unmaking” of teachers (Kelly, 2019). In a keynote presentation at the University of British Columbia, Jan Hare argued along similar lines. Hare (2019) stresses that rather than create professional knowledge that perpetuates superficial understandings, teacher educators must invite them to engage in complex pedagogical spaces that nurture reflexivity. Hare maintains that these complex engagements have

the potential to reduce the proximity of space in relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadians.

Here, I am reminded of Dwayne Donald's understanding of “colonialism as an extended process of relationship denial” (2021), which he spoke about at a professional learning day in Edmonton, Alberta. On that cold February day, Dwayne and Elder Bob Cardinal addressed a group of 400 teachers from across the Edmonton Public School Board. During his talk, Donald (2020a) told the teachers that:

the way you think about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians is how you will take it up with your students. For too long, the stories about this relationship have been missing, simplified, and inadequate. What will the new story be? We can't hire a consultant to do this work.

Donald made clear that most learning focuses on informational content about Indigenous peoples rather learning from Indigenous peoples. In figure 11, Donald's framework illustrates how teacher candidates and teachers can work towards ethical relationality. First, teachers understand the truths of Canadian colonial culture. Donald explains that he does this through “paradigmatic provocations,” which challenge teachers to think about learning and living in new ways. He explains that “it's about thinking how to learn emotionally, spiritually, and with your body.

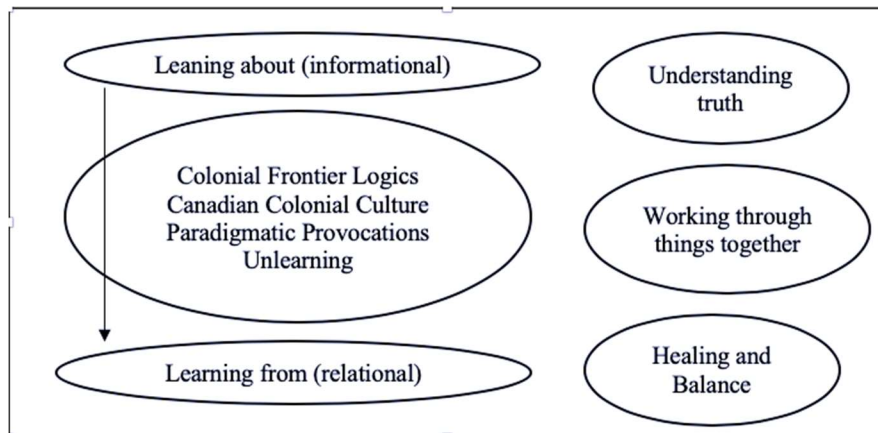


Figure 11: Teaching About to From (Source: Dwayne Donald, 2020).

And trying to attend to how you can constantly try to feed people's balance and so they can make the transitions themselves" (personal communication, 2019). Donald suggests that this process leads toward unlearning, which he believes embodies healing and balance, as we learn from Indigenous wisdom traditions that nurture life and living. In the following section, I discuss Donald's conceptualizations of ethical relationality and his model of the process of moving "about to from." I suggest that ethical relationality is a curricular and pedagogical imperative that uplifts teachers to respond to TRC Calls to Action in transformative and sustaining ways.

About to From: Doing, thinking, being, and living differently

One thing I've learned in the woods is that there is no such thing as random. Everything is steeped in meaning, coloured by relationships, one thing with another.

(Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 298)

This literature review has drawn upon numerous authors, research studies, and theories in arriving at the place we are now at. We will step back before we move forward, ensuring that the connections I have made are mindful. As the narrator of this dissertation, I am immersed in the layers of its story. Perhaps you have meandered off as my reader, unsure of where we came from and how we got here. The spot we are literally at now is significant, so let us tread back through the "woods" of this chapter, hoping that we are each standing in the same clearing.

Going back to be present

I began with the story of me and my students travelling to the closing ceremonies of the TRC in Ottawa in June 2015 to situate the TRC as a significant part of a broader chronology of events. I briefly outlined some of the Indigenous resistance movements and organizations that proceeded and prompted the RCAP, the IRSSA, and the TRC. In doing so, I hoped to illustrate

how Indigenous Peoples have, for centuries, been contesting settler colonialism, engaging in truth-telling, and demanding both their inherent rights as Indigenous peoples, as well as their rights as human beings. Furthermore, I articulated that long before the TRC, Canadians had opportunities to learn and take actions toward redress. Due to the pervasive culture of settler colonialism, many Canadians have continued to uphold the narrative of “Canada the Good” and the relationship denials and privileges that come with it. These narratives of rejection and dismissal are at the heart of settler colonialism and are what Justice Sinclair called upon education to transform. With this stated, I went on to examine research done in Faculties of Education that sought to address how teacher candidates experienced learning about treaty relations, Indigenous perspectives, and settler colonialism and research done in response to these findings. Finally, I discussed the limitations of the work, in part due to a lack of professional learning opportunities and inadequate experiences with relational pedagogies that focus on learning with and from Indigenous peoples rather than about them.

A significant concept that emerged from the literature was the necessity to consider how we might engage teacher candidates in relational pedagogies that call on their affective, spiritual, physical, and intellectual beings (Smith, 2017; Lefebvre, 2019; Tupper, 2019; Donald, 2021). This acknowledgement facilitates the recognition that we are part of a sacred and interconnected ecology with all other human beings and the more-than-human world, which Donald has termed ethical relationality. “Ethical relationality,” writes Donald (2016), “is an ecological understanding of organic connectivity that becomes apparent to us as human beings when we honour the sacred ecology that supports all life and living” (p. 11). As a life-sustaining ecological understanding of the world, ethical relationality is an enactment of sacred ecology that puts differences at the forefront, as necessary for life and living. Ethical relationality, therefore, does not seek to deny our differences but rather positions ourselves as related to “and implicated in, the lives of those that

have gone before us and to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others...and how our futures are similarly tied together” (Donald, 2009, p. 7).

While much of the literature and recent research I have reviewed speaks to relational learning, most does not describe ethical relationality as praxis. I again refer to the transformative shifts that the TRC called for. “If teacher education systems in Canada continue to rely on existing dominant knowledge systems and governing structures to respond to the Calls to Action,” state Daniels et al. (2018), “they will fail to address them in the spirit and intent with which they were issued” (p. 202). The sections below suggest that ethical relationality provides an ecological model of living life well and offers a curricular and pedagogical way forward toward a new story.

Ethical Relationality: A bear doesn't have to be like a wolf

My lived experiences have shaped my understandings of ethical relationality as a human being, a teacher, a parent, and an emerging scholar. My conversations, thinking, and walks with Dwayne have deepened them. The first time I spoke to Dwayne, he shared a story about the wisdom and understanding of difference that sacred ecology offers us. He said, “The crow doesn't have to be like an eagle. Or a bear doesn't have to be like a wolf. In fact, their differences are necessary to life and living.” Indeed, this is how I had thought about life and living from a young age, as growing up between the fields of grazing cows and the cornstalks informed my understanding of ecology. Throughout this thesis, as I traverse landscapes and places, I enact ethical relationality by honouring the gifts of where I live-the Kichi Zibi, the Akikodjiwan Falls, Otter lake where I paddle my kayak, the stones along the Rideau river.

When I became a teacher, I understood the classroom as an ecological community where “respect and love were at the forefront of all interactions” (Donald, 2016, p.11). My student's learning, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs and contributions were all vastly different, yet these differences were essential to the health and balance of our community. Indeed, all classrooms

are made of distinctive students, but the needs of the children and youth in my class were particularly unique. For eight years, I taught a class of students who had a range of learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, health conditions, and emotional needs. Many of these students been previously displaced and misplaced from numerous other classrooms and schools. In our classroom, their differences were honoured and viewed as gifts.

Many of my students were from Eeyou Istchee, where their experiences in the schooling system were fraught with the impacts of intergenerational trauma and ongoing colonialism. When these students came to PETES, many struggled with differences in pedagogy, expectations, culture, and language. Although the administrators and many staff members made genuine attempts to support these learners, several proved futile because of inequities in our school's interpretation of the curriculum, and in pedagogical choices. Moreover, rather than change our teaching practices towards a culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (Paris, 2012; McCarty & Lee, 2014) and support teacher learning in these areas, we often expected students to change to fit the classrooms they were placed in. I believe that these practices reflect a colonial understanding of schooling and education, the structures of schools themselves, and the interests that they serve (Apple & King, 1977).

A chat with a friend under an old elm tree

On an afternoon a few years ago, Dwayne and I sat under the bright green leaves of an old elm tree in the Byward Market, enjoying a cup of tea. As I thought more about my Ph.D. research, I talked with Dwayne about ethical relationality in teacher education and schools themselves. I explained that I wanted to work with the families of my Indigenous students to learn about their lived experiences at the school, and to help teachers acknowledge the lived curriculum of their Eeyou students, including the knowledge they bring with them. My thinking was that when teachers learned about their students and their families, they would “face each other across these

deeply learned divides” and perhaps be able to learn *from* their students (Donald, 2012a, p. 44). He considered my ideas deeply and then asked: “How would this change anything or anyone? If we want to change things, we have to do things differently.” He suggested that I invite Indigenous families, students, teachers, and administrators to listen to each other. Perhaps, in listening to each other, our collaborative relationships would be at the forefront.

As I will explain in the next chapter, my research with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families at PETES was largely impossible due to COVID-19 and the demographic issues that challenged doing the research in an honourable way. As my study shifted, I continued to hold the conversation I had with Dwayne, and his question(s), with me. I also deepened my relations with Albert Dumont, a member of Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg. Albert is a spiritual advisor, teacher, artist, and poet. Throughout the years, I have had opportunities to walk with Albert and listen to him speak about what it means to be a human being. On one of these walks, Albert talked about being a human being:

The people of this world are broken. What has been stored in the human heart for thousands of years, has somehow been removed from the hearts of most peoples of this world. We need to restore our humanity. We need to understand more of what it means to be a human being...we need to understand again what it is to be loved, and to truly love.

As I listened to Albert speak, I wondered about how teachers might learn new stories about what it means to be human. How do they facilitate learning these new stories for themselves and their students? *In Unlearning Colonialism, Storytelling, and the Accord*, Jim Sharpe (2010) writes:

The unlearning of colonial education will require incorporation of the trickster, Glooscap or Coyote, into our stories. We need to hear how the trickster can transform our grand narratives of discovery, progress and empire to ones of relation, harmony, and culture. (p. 268)

How do we enable the spirit of the trickster when for so long, the stories told and retold in schools and curriculum have formed the basis of our collective identity as Canadians and, further, as human beings? These stories are alive in symbolism across Canada and occupy the mythologies of the goose, the maple leaf, and the Canadian Pacific Railway, among many others. Donald (2021) posits that the story of the growth and development of Canada is referred to as progress and teaches that the “needs of human beings...must always supersede the needs of all other forms of life” (p. 57). These human-centric notions of progress contribute to the Anthropogenic climate change that the human and more-than-human being are currently facing.

Walking towards attunement to (new) stories

In this chapter, I have discussed the transformation that occur in Faculties of Education and schools as we begin to learn *from* Indigenous peoples rather *than about* them. Learning about Indigenous peoples has facilitated and perpetuated incomplete stories substantiated in Canadian nationalism, anti-Indigenous racisms, and the bifurcation of peoples. To promote sustainable and sustaining changes, we also need to revolutionize how we teach and cognize learning. As I have previously discussed, pedagogies that honour the many ways that human beings learn are fundamental to unlearning. Walking is one such endeavour. Donald (2021) puts forth that walking is an “intrinsically relational activity that carefully attunes mind, body, and spirit to surrounding life energies” (p. 58). I am inspired by this relationship between walking, reimagining, and the “intentional act of relational renewal” (p. 54). As told in the introduction of this dissertation, I

walked or cycled across the Kichi Zibi River twice a day for twelve years. Walking in that place, in place, during the different moons and seasons informed my relations to that place. Yet it was only recently that Albert took me for a walk along the river and to the place that the Anishinaabe call Akikodjiwan, widely known in these parts as the Chaudière Falls. From the archaeological record, Akikodjiwan has been a sacred and peaceful meeting place for at least 5,000 years and is “known to be the place of Creator’s First Pipe (Ghel, 2015, para 1).

As we walked in this place, Albert told me the story of the falls, the sacredness of the water, and the land. As we walked with(in) this new story, I could reimagine what Akikodjiwan might have been before 1908, when it was submerged and effaced by the construction of a Ring Dam (Lambert, 2016). In 2013, Albert wrote a piece on his blog about the falls, also known as the Kettle of Boiling Waters:

Nothing was more free than were the waters of the great river before contact with white people was made. Nothing was more pure of spirit, nothing nurtured and sustained more life! For all which the river provided, we were thankful. The Kettle of Boiling Waters was a special place on the river and known as such spiritually to all Anishinaabe of our territory. We gathered there to pray and acknowledge and honour the force of Kichi Manido. The falls were truly the centre of our woodland cathedral. (para 6)

On this particular day, with the sharpness of the wind in my ears, the spray of the mist on my face, and the sight of bright wildflowers pushing through the concrete walkway, I felt as if I had stepped into the “organic flow of knowledge and knowing that generates attunement to relationality” (Donald, 2021, p. 58). I understood this place in a way I had not before, even though Akikodjiwan is so close to home- indeed, it is home.



Figure 12: Illustration of Chaudière Falls before it was dammed (Source: Dumont, A., 2014).

Here, I am inspired by Chambers' (2006) following notion of home:

We need to imagine home as the places where we live, walk, write, work, and go to school; the physical, emotional and spiritual places where we learn to be at home with others, as well as, ourselves; the place where *others* means not only neighbours but ancestors—spiritual and familial—theirs and ours—as well as our descendants. We need to offer a home that recognizes we inhabit these places with all animate beings (the land, the stars, the animals, the plants) those with no power to purchase comfort or survival.... In Canada, at least, home is that place where the past is continually present, both complicating this moment right now, and giving us and them, children and students, the courage and the confidence to face the future. (p. 8)

Akikodjiwan is less than a kilometre from PETES. Many teachers drive by the sacred site each day, not knowing its significance to the Anishinaabe people or their shared history of this place. It holds no concept of home to them. As my research study went on, I wondered how inviting teachers to leave their classroom desks, and come to Akikodjiwan to walk in relation with Albert,

might help them consider new stories. This walk became central to how my research unfolded and how walking in place has deepened my understanding of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality.

As we end this chapter, it is fall. The golden leaves of the birch trees paint a backdrop over the lake our cabin window looks out on. Above, I hear the geese honking, making their way south for the winter. I head outside and look up, noticing their strength, determination, and support for the one straggling near the back of the V-formation. I smile and say “Nisk” out loud. I offer a silent prayer of thanks to my Eeyou students, who so generously offered me an opportunity to learn a new story. To my friends Dwayne Donald, Cindy Blackstock, and Albert Dumont, who put forward understandings about (un)learning, truth-telling, restor(y)ing, and being a human being, which forms my conceptual framework for this study. We are heading there now, to the stones that hold the knowledge to guide us.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

...this country has an other story, one that is not his or hers or ours/ it is written in water, carved on earth...every stone a song that echoes the erosion/hold one to your ear, whispers rise/this country has another story and it is not his or hers or even ours/it is scrolled on wind, painted in blood/ every bone sings/hold them to your heart/ those buried voices still rise.

(Katherena Vermette, 2018, p. 61)

Reflecting on the lull of the tracks: temporality displaced

I am on a train bound for Tiohtià:ke, the metropolis that many now call Montréal, Québec. The bright sunlight is streaming in my window as we roll along brown fields and through bush, spattered with the reds and oranges of what autumn looks like in this place. We are currently in the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is my first trip since March 2020. Signs of the pandemic are everywhere, of course; masks are mandatory, and hand sanitizer is at the ready. However, I feel a sense of freedom, lightness, and movement. Of being away. I look out my window and down at the iron tracks. The freedom I feel and the privilege to travel on this train carries a history of displacement and injustice for Indigenous peoples along these centuries-old tracks. These tracks embody the scars of dispossession and genocide, yet the story told in school curricula tells a story about these tracks that boast expansion and progress.

In *A Topography for Canadian Curriculum Theory*, Cynthia Chambers (1999) writes that the “classic existential question – ‘Who am I?’ -can be posed only by people for whom ‘where’ they are is not an issue, the place itself apparently being fully known and well defined” (p. 137). How might we traverse the questions of who we are and where we are from while remaining lulled by the train and the stories speeding along with it? How can we remember that which we’ve been “trained” to forget? How might we unearth the stones that lay beneath the tracks and a temporality

that allows the honouring of stories that sustain life and relations with all living around us? How do we learn to listen so that we might hear the “an other” story (Vermette, 2018, p. 61) of this place and of ourselves?

Throughout this dissertation, I use narrative and metaphor to describe the process that Canadians, including myself, are required to embark on to unlearn colonial logics. By metaphor, I am referring to the literary device used to make associations between two often dissimilar concepts. Metaphors are often used in qualitative interpretive research to “identify significant patterns in language that might otherwise be missed, reveal informants’ implicit assumptions about a subject or situation, and make salient the socio-cultural contexts in which conceptual metaphors occur” (Kochis and Gillespie, 2006, p. 566). I weave these metaphors with the landscapes of places I have walked on along my own journey, as well as current events, seasons, and moons. As I mentioned previously, I also draw on the Touchstones of Hope reconciliation process and Donald’s conceptualization of ethical relationality. In figure 13, below, I have attempted to visually



Figure 13: A visual representation of my conceptual framework

represent these interweaving's of theory and metaphor as a cyclical process of acknowledging, truth telling, restor(y)ing and relating through relationships. My conceptual framework draws on the train's metaphorical images, the unearthing of the stones that were displaced but not lost, and the wisdoms that they hold so we might learn “an other” story. The first “phase” in this process is acknowledging that we have been on, and lulled by, the metaphorical colonial train, which included the stories we have learned in textbooks, curriculum, family stories, and society. These stories have “trained” us to forget our connections to place and time. Once we disembark from the train, we walk along the tracks as we learn the truths about settler colonialism and our own implications and responsibilities.

This involves listening in different ways from how we have been taught, and learning about the place we live on, and the wisdoms that the land, the water, the rocks, the people hold. It involves the restorying of narratives we have learned and in turn shared, including those that call our “Canadianness” into question. Through this work, we work to restore and repair relations, which involve taking seriously the responsibilities of being in relation. As Canadians, it means standing in solidarity with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people and demanding equity and justice and an end to discrimination and anti-Indigenous racisms. Finally, as Canadians, it means coming to terms with being from and not from this place, while also placing ourselves within the implications that such differing and simultaneous positionalities require.

Uncovering the tracks: Settler colonial expansion and genocide

*Hot metal screaming through the valleys, echoing loud enough to wake the mountains
A procession of metal caskets carrying stolen goods: clickety clack, clickety clack, cha-ching.*

(Wet'suwet'en poet Jennifer Wickham, I'm A Real Skin, n.d.)

This train that I am writing and riding on is racing along tracks that are part of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The CPR was built between 1881 and 1885, predominantly by poorly paid Chinese labourers who worked in harsh conditions. At least 600 of these men died during the rock blasting and unearthing of stones (Yee, 2010). Despite its racist foundations, the colonial mythic surrounding the CPR emphasizes its instrumental nature in the settlement and development of western Canada, part of John A. MacDonald's "national dream." The railway is thus immersed and emmeshed within Canadian curriculum and national narratives as to how "Canada became Canada." In 1881, Sir Charles Tupper, who was the Minister of Railways and Canals, boasted that the Canadian Pacific Railway would "show the world" that Canada's "great transcontinental line" would "stretch from sea to sea" and "attract attention to the country," thus stimulating its "progress" (Lyall, 2020, p. 4). In, *They smashed it right through our reserve*, geographer Nadine Schuurman argues that these types of "laudatory narratives about the power of the railways to triumph over the geography of this country obscure a history of material violence against Native peoples" (Lyall, 2020, p. 4).

The horrific violence that the CPR perpetrated on Indigenous peoples, including the displacement of communities, the destruction of fishing sites, the elimination of rock outcrops, bisections of land from rivers, and death, benefitted settler society exclusively and were part of a much larger structure of expulsion and genocide (Lyall, 2020). "The railways got very wealthy on our land. The railways had more right to the land than we did," states Kenneth Deer, a Mohawk leader on Kahnawake territory. Deer explains that the CPR embodies many things that do not "normally occur to Canadians when they board a train or hear one whistling by: theft of land, starvation, forced relocation" (Andrew-Gee, 2020, para 2-3). For many Canadians, myself included, trains conjure images of vastness, space, and freedom. We have been trained to think this way.

As the tracks expanded west, so too could the settlers. The CPR was a strategy of dispossession of Indigenous peoples, and the land on either side of the tracks was cleared and then offered to European homesteaders (Roberts, 2020). In *Clearing The Plains*, James Daschuk (2013) describes how 5 000 First Nations people were expelled from the Cypress Hills in 1882 alone, and “in doing so, the Canadian government accomplished the ethnic cleansing of southwestern Saskatchewan of its Indigenous population” (p. 123). A common tactic used by local Indian agents against “obstinate” bands who refused to leave their ancestral homelands was to withhold food rations. “Trains brought settlers, and settlers brought the measles and influenza that ravaged First Nations people in the last decades of the 19th century,” writes Daschuk. “For many on reserves, the railway proved to be a fatal disease vector” (p. 164).

Despite the records of displacement, disease, starvation, and death that the CPR inflicted on Indigenous peoples, the railway remains a celebrated Canadian triumph. The “last spike” is an iconic cultural artifact, and the gift shop of the same name sees thousands of visitors each year who purchase memorabilia and pose for photographs. The last spike “signalled the end of freedom for First Nations people...and, “from that same year until the mid-1930s, the Canadian government imposed an extralegal and little-known policy of segregation called the pass system, which prevented First Nations peoples from leaving their reserves without written consent from government officials” (Bongiorno, 2020, para. 17). The Pass system was just one of the restrictive policies of the Indian Act. Its impacts were pervasive, as it prohibited First Nations peoples from attending potlatches, the Sun Dance, and other cultural ceremonies.

Moreover, the Indian Act enabled Canada to control First Nations children further, as it limited and prevented parents from visiting their children in Residential schools (Milloy, 2017). The Indian agents were responsible for enforcing the policies of the Indian Act and had the power to take children from their parents, jail First Nations people they deemed were breaking the law,

and withhold food rations. Indian agents were an integral part of Sir John A. MacDonald's plan, and in 1882, he told the House of Commons that he had “reason to believe that the agents as a whole ... are doing all they can, by refusing food until the Indians are on the verge of starvation, to reduce the expense” (Hopper, 2018, para. 2).

Cracks in the foundation of confederation: past is present

As Canadians are learning the truths about their first Prime Minister, statues of him topple, schools are renamed, and the cracks in the foundation of confederation deepen. Yet, what of the connections between these “historic” injustices and current inequities and anti-Indigenous racisms? By examining a few recent events, we can see how colonial culture manifests itself in the workings of public and political perceptions. For example, in early 2020, when Mohawk supporters in Tyendinaga installed a blockade on the railway in support of Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs and land defenders, Justin Trudeau tweeted that “we’re focused on ending the blockades and supporting the Canadians that are impacted across the country” (Trudeau, J., 2020). The blockade, which caused *Via Rail* to lay off hundreds of workers, angered and inconvenienced many Canadians, including farmers and business people. Andrew Sheerer, then leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, condemned the federal government's decision to negotiate peacefully, calling it “the weakest response to a national crisis in Canadian history. Will our country be one of the rule of the law, or will our country be one of the rule of the mob ?” (Tasker, 2020, paras 19, 21).

As I write this section, in February 2022, Ottawa is occupied by various protest groups who oppose COVID-19 government mandates and public health measures. Confederate flags and Canadian flags embellished with swastikas have been sighted among the crowds. Ottawa residents have reported hundreds of incidences of intimidation, assault, and homophobic, racist, xenophobic, and misogynistic acts of hate to the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). Many believe that the OPS has

acted as a facilitator of the occupation thus far, allowing protectors to commit acts of hate and block access to schools, hospitals, and other essential services. Numerous Conservative party members have voiced support for the protestors, framing the protestors as champions of freedom (Wherry, 2022), and calling on the Prime minister to extend an “olive branch” to protestors, referring to the occupation as an “impasse” (Tayler, 2022). Andrew Sheerer, who referred to the land defenders as a “mob,” was pictured standing with protestors at a blockade in Ottawa, grinning and giving a “thumbs-up.” That blockades by First Nations land defenders on their unceded territories is coined a National crisis and removed with force, while the occupation of downtown Ottawa is publicly cheered on by our official opposition should be disconcerting for all of us. So, why is it not?

As the train rumbles and sways along the tracks, the pervasiveness of the national stories of the railway in Canadian colonial culture, despite historical records to the contrary, are on my mind. As I reflect, I look out onto the ochre-coloured stalks of cornfields, noticing how the sway of the train, and the landscape, offer a comforting stillness, a lull. This lull permits us to live in a state of disentanglement and estrangement to our relations with the land, the people, and the histories that we share. The fast-moving train isolates us from what is beneath the tracks and beyond. The mythic lull of progress and comfort draws us away from unlearning, allowing us to continue occupying separate and segregated spheres of place and time. What might we learn as we unearth the stones that were violently displaced as the national dream was built? What are the stories that lie beneath? How might we unlearn our colonial training?

Stones unearthed: Before the trains and the settlers came

My joomshoom used to walk in the bush for days with the snowshoes and toboggan my kookum made. He was the best hunter in the village. Now he uses his skidoo. It's easier because he can get places quicker, but he has to learn what sounds scare the moose away.

(Student from Chisasibi Cree Nation, 2017)

Before the trains came and settler colonialism spread across the land, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples travelled vast distances, always in relation to the land, climate, and seasons.

Birchbark canoes, snowshoes, horses, dogsleds, kayaks, toboggans, bull boats, travois', and Red River carts were some of the ways Indigenous peoples travelled and hunted and transported goods.

These ways of travelling embodied relationships with the land, sky, sea, and living creatures.

Moreover, travelling outdoors, in the elements, is an experience that attunes one to their physical being and the senses—the heat of the sun on the skin, the harsh wind blowing across one's back, the numbness of cold on the cheeks of your face, the crunch of snow under snowshoes, the splash of water over the side of the kayak—the weight of the canoe on one's shoulders through a long portage.

The violent advance of settler colonialism across the land can be metaphorized in the ferocious removal and destruction of rock and stone. In 1907, for example, in the mountains near the Kicking Horse pass, 1 000 men blasted enough rock from the earth to fill 275 Olympic-sized swimming pools (Canadian Geographic, 2010). Rock and muskeg, often frozen, were also blasted out of the Canadian Shield. Most of the rock and soil removed were used to fill in “valleys, swamps, and lake crossings, but it never was sufficient: much of the fill had to be “borrowed,” as it was commonly called, from sites beyond the actual line excavations” (Hall, 1995, p. 20). The stone, rock, and earth that were blasted out of the earth to make way for the tracks and ties were displaced, replaced, erased, misplaced, and defaced in the name of Canada.

Disembarking from the metaphorical train: Stones as guides and teachers

Thus, Indians knew stones were perfect beings because they were self-contained entities that had resolved their social relationships and possessed great knowledge about how every other entity, and every species, should live.

(Deloria, 1999, p. 34)



Figure 14: Blasting through mountains of the west (Source: Historica Canadian Railway, 2022)

There are many accounts of stones and rocks as sacred for Indigenous peoples across the globe. Vine Deloria, in *The World We Used to Live In* (2006), described the sacred stones in North Dakota as having the ability of “forewarning of events to come” (p. 150). Deloria writes of the sacredness of stones for many tribes in North America:

One of the most prevalent entities in the traditional Indian spiritual universe was the sacred stone. Almost every tribe had its own understanding of the vital role stones play in the physical/spiritual universe. The most giant stones, of course, are the

mountains. They often represent the center of the universe...and in this sense, they provide a cosmic perspective that the people must always keep in mind. (p. 149)

Deloria reminds us that stones were sources of knowledge, healing, guidance, and oracle used in ceremonies, as medicines, and given to people in visions. “There are so many stories about the stones,” writes Deloria (2006), “that one comes to believe that they form a separate spiritual universe in themselves” (p. 157). Donald (2009) describes rocks as “significant, and deeply spiritual, markers on the land because of their visual prominence on the open prairie” (p. 12). Before the infrastructure that settler colonialism built, rocks could be seen from far distances and helped travellers find their way across the land. They continue to be respected as honoured helpers (Donald, 2009). Moreover, Donald explains that rocks, and the places in which they are located, are inhabited by “muntou,” the energy and movement and “mystery of life that manifests itself in diverse forms” (p. 12). He writes:

The important point about rocks and place-stories is that the rocks, as animate entities, have an energy to them that is forever in flux—constantly changing, transforming, combining and recombining. This cyclic energy is what gives the rock its spiritual quality. (p. 13)

Finally, in *The stones shall cry out*, George Tinker (2004) points to the difference between Indigenous understandings of “aliveness” and those of western thought. Tinker maintains that western worldviews categorize animate and inanimate, and among those things that are alive, there is a:

consistent distinguishing between plants and animals and between human consciousness and the rest of existence in the world. On the contrary, American Indian peoples understand that all life forms have consciousness and have qualities that are either poorly developed or entirely lacking in humans. (p. 106)

The largest of the sacred stones, the mountains, were blasted apart as labourers cleared the land to lay the tracks of Canada's expansion. This was a literal detonating of Indigenous ways of being and knowledge to advance settler colonialism. When we recognize the sacredness of rocks in this way, we must pause, and disembark from the train. By pulling up the tracks of the settler colonial narrative, we might begin to learn from Indigenous wisdom traditions. Might these wisdoms help us answer the questions of “who am I/who are we?” Might they help us learn to listen to the “an other” stories of these lands?

**Ethical Relationality, Mino-Bimaadiziwin, and Touchstones of Hope:
Gifts for unlearning and restor(y)ing**

Albert and I walk together across paved land towards the rushing water of Akikodjiwan. It is early in the day, and the sun is low in the east, casting a blurriness in the morning sky. The Chaudière bridge resounds with northbound traffic and is adorned with faded prayer ties. I feel the grit of construction debris in my eyes as two multi-storey cranes move across the landscape. They move concrete blocks that sway as they rise and thud as they land. I feel the reverberations in my feet.

As we maneuver our way through the construction barricades, we begin to hear the sounds of the falls and the water's rush. These riverbanks and stones mark the landscape and embody living knowledge situated in this place. We sit on a stone that has been placed by the fence that separates that falls from the area deemed safe for us to walk on. Albert crosses his right leg over his left and looks out at the water rushing forward, and says:

Some Elders who supported the construction project here tried to say that the area was no longer spiritual because of pollution in the Kichi Zibi. Nothing, not even pollution, can take away spirit. Spirit is all over this place we call Akikodjiwan.

Kichi Manitou—the great spirit—is in the rocks, the water, the land—all of it—sacred. Not even their “so-called progress” can take way Kichi Manitou.

We walk over to the fence, and Albert points towards the steep incline that has been dug out of the riverbank. He tells me that the damming of the falls and the condo development have devastated what was once a sacred place where Anishinaabe and other Nations met for ceremony, trading, and visiting. “People used to come here from miles away,” Albert tells me. “They had their birchbark canoes, and they could navigate through currents, rapids, around great stones. The stones along the river guided them to this meeting place. All of that spirit is in the water that falls here. All who live here are part of this sacredness.”

As I traverse back towards my bicycle to head home, I am thinking about the connections between the train, the blasting of sacred stones, the damming of Akikodjiwan, the condo development, and notions of progress and living well. I also think about ethical relationality, truth-telling, acknowledging, relating, and restoring, which brings me to my theoretical framework. The first is ethical relationality, as conceptualized by Dwayne Donald and inspired by Mino-Bimaadiziwin, which I believe can help us enact ethical relationality in this place. My second frame is what Cindy Blackstock refers to as “Touchstones of Hope,” which guide us towards enacting a form of reconciliation that engages truth-telling, acknowledging, relating, and restoring relations. Third is Donald's model for unlearning, which helps teachers move from a place of learning “about” Indigenous peoples to learning “from” them.

Ethical relationality: kíkway e-nohte ohpinaman?

Donald is concerned with how the curriculum might be reframed, so colonial logics are no longer at the forefront. As a teacher and teacher educator of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and teacher candidates, I have similar concerns and desires for an ethical reframing. However, as Donald (2009) asks, “On what terms should this rereading and reframing be done” (p.

4)? He draws on Willie Ermine's (2007) notion of ethical space, which conceives the space between two separate entities as a place of engagement. For this space to be ethical, the separate entities must be understood as distinct from each other. Once these differences are acknowledged, a space between the two might emerge, whereby “we can enact a theory of human relationality that does not require assimilation or deny Indigenous subjectivity” (Donald, 2012a, p. 45). Donald puts forth ethical relationality as a theory of human relationality that honours the sacred ecology that supports all life and living. Donald (2012b) cautions us, however, that ethical relationality should not be embraced as a “universal sameness,” but rather as an “ethical stance that requires attentiveness to the responsibilities that come with the declaration of being in relation. It means that something is at stake” (p. 535). As an ethical way of being in relation, it asks us to recognize, respond to, and reconcile the past, present and future together, drawing on what makes us relational and interconnected as human beings. Ethical relationality asks us to imagine different ways of living together as human beings.

In figure 15, Ethical relationality is conceptualized by Donald as a model from the wisdom teachings of the Cree and the Blackfoot. *Wicêhtowin*, on the left, teaches us how to face a fellow human being. The teaching says that our fellow human beings are sacred and have everything they need to live a good life. We must approach our fellow human beings with respect, love, compassion, and with a desire to enhance their wellbeing. When we practice *wicêhtowin* there is healing and unity as we come together in compassion and humanity. On the right, we have *Wahkohtowin*. *Wahkohtowin* teaches us about kinship, specifically about recognizing our fellow human beings as relatives to whom we are inextricably connected. *Wahkohtowin* also extends to all other forms of life, teaching us that we are entangled and emmeshed in all the relationships that we depend on in our lives. Together, *wicêhtowin* and *wahkohtowin* form an ecological understanding

of life and living, in which differences are necessary and therefore position us in relation to each other. In the middle, there is a picture of a treaty medal. Donald (2020b) explains:

If we're struggling to understand how to connect Canadian and Indigenous peoples, we have a very beautiful example of that. We have layers and layers of teachings that have to do with how to understand this relationship and what those people back then hoped was going to happen.



Figure 15: Ethical Relationality (Source: Donald, 2020a)

The treaty medal symbolizes the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. It reminds us that we live together on these lands, with Indigenous wisdoms of living in this place recognized, and the responsibilities of Canadians. Canadians are part of this ecosystem, which is related to the knowledge systems of Indigenous people. “Unlearning,” for Donald (2020b), “comes from this process of accepting that the ecosystem they [teachers] live in has something to do with their identities.” Finally, the phrase at the bottom, *kîkway e-nohte ohpinaman*, means “What are you trying to lift up?” This addresses the responsibility that we have towards each other as kinship relations.

Donald's framework of ethical relationality speaks to his location on treaty six territory and the wisdom teachings he has received from the Cree and the Blackfoot. In my research, with the guidance of Spiritual Advisor Albert Dumont, I have drawn on the wisdom traditions of the Anishinaabe to understand the ethical relations of this place. This is an important point, as it cautions us to be attentive to the locality inherent in ethical relationality. Ethical relationality is not a model that can be transferred from one place to another; rather it provides us with a way of thinking and conceptualising our own relations to the ecosystems in which we live. Specifically, I have learned from the Anishinaabe teachings of Mino-Bimaadiziwin. I have learned about Mino-Bimaadiziwin from Albert and by reading Anishinaabeg scholars, notably Nicole Bell and Brent Debassige.

Mino-Bimaadiziwin: living in balance, together

Mino-Bimaadiziwin means “the good life” and describes a way of living that attends to physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing (Goudreau et al., 1998). Mino-Bimaadiziwin teaches us that to live a healthy life is to live in balance. Here Reynolds (1994) reminds us that many Anishinaabe people refer to health promotion as “a way of living” (p. 151), and this way of living is discussed as a “return to the old ways...before the arrival of the white man” (p. 150). For Anishinaabe peoples, health and wellbeing are wholly interwoven with emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical balance. In *Mino-Bimaadiziwin: Education for the Good Life*, Nicole Bell (2016) writes:

Mino-bimaadiziwin is given to the Anishinaabe people as their original instructions from the Creator. These instructions and teachings include the conceptualization of the individual as having a spirit, heart, mind, and body and therefore capable of connecting, feeling, thinking, and acting, which leads to healthy relationships with the self and others. (p. 7)

Mino-Bimaadiziwin offers teachings on how to live a good life that is balanced and leads to relations that are kind and healthy. Anishinaabe scholar Brent Debassige (2010) writes that “Anishinaabe mino-bimaadiziwin is a unifying and transcendent concept that, when activated, contains the past, present, and future of good and respectful approaches to daily life” (p. 16). He emphasizes that although mino-bimaadiziwin transcends contemporary theories of research and education, mino-bimaadiziwin is a “wholistic way of daily living and should not be reduced to only an intellectualizing project” (p. 17).

In my conversations with Albert, I have learned how mino-bimaadiziwin helps him live as a “human being, the way human beings are meant to live. That is to live with love” (Dumont, 2021). In my reading, I’ve learned that Mino-bimaadiziwin holds seven principles to help Anishinaabe people live the good life and including: Anishinabemowin, the language; Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin, values and behaviour; Anishinaabe inendamowin, way of thinking; Anishinaabe gikendaasowin, way of knowing; Anishinaabe ishigigewin, way of doing; Anishinaabe enawediwin, relating to the Spirit/spiritual; and Anishinaabe gidakiiminaan, responsibility to the land (Debassige, 2010).

As a Canadian living on the ancestral, unceded lands of the Anishinaabe people, I believe I have a responsibility to look to their teachings to help me understand what it is to live in balance on the land in relation to the ecosystem I am emmeshed in. Mino-Bimaadiziwin helps me conceptualize my relationship with the peoples who have been here for time immemorial and is therefore part of my theoretical framework. Moreover, I believe that Mino-Bimaadiziwin can guide us as we go through the processes of unlearning by connecting us to the wisdom traditions of the Anishinaabeg.

Touchstones of Hope: Truth-telling, acknowledging, relating, and restoring

Taking up the work of Dr. Cindy Blackstock, I now turn to the *Touchstones of Hope for Reconciliation* (Touchstones). Although Touchstones began as a reconciliation model used to address harms done to Indigenous children, it has been used successfully in other contexts such as healthcare and education (FNCFCSS, 2019). Touchstones, as seen below in figure 16, offers us four processes for moving toward reconciliation: truth-telling, acknowledging, restoring, relating (Blackstock et al., 2006). The first, Truth-telling, asks us to listen to and learn the stories and realities that are often silenced, misrepresented and often founded on myths of deficit. In a recent public lecture, Tricia McGuire-Adams (an Anishinaabe scholar) refers to “narratives of deficit, in which Indigenous peoples are seen as deficient. These deficit narratives are caused, perpetuated, and maintained by settler colonialism, allowing the story of Canada and Canadians to remain uncontested” (McGuire-Adams, 2020, 2021).



Figure 16: Touchstone processes for Reconciliation (Source: FNCFCSS, 2019)

The second touchstone, acknowledging, positions us in relation to each other, rather than apart, by asking us to learn from the past, see one another with new eyes, and move forward together in a way that restores healthy relationships. The third, the relating touchstone, guides us

on this new path forward, reminding us that we are relatives. Finally, restor(y)ing, the fourth touchstone, calls on all of us to do what we can to redress the harms done, ensuring they do not happen again. Moreover, I believe this touchstone asks Canadians to revisit the stories that they have been continuously told and retell. Are they stories of truth and our relationships with each other? Do these stories position Canadians in relation to the past, present, and future with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples, or do the stories maintain what Donald (2009) calls “the pedagogy of the fort,” where Indigenous peoples are always on the outside? Drawing on the Touchstones as part of my theoretical framework helped me consider how teachers may be in different places in working toward ethical relationality in their personal and professional lives. The following guiding framework takes up the work that teachers are being asked to do.

Unlearning colonialism: About to From

Finally, my third frame is inspired by Donald's model of unlearning colonialism, as presented at a professional development day for teachers in Edmonton, Alberta, in 2020, and is pictured in figure 11. I wrote extensively about this model in Chapter 1, so I will not go into any detail here except to use this as a segue to explain how it and the previous two frameworks come together to form a conceptual model for this study. As I learned about ethical relationality, touchstones of hope, *mino-biimaadziwin*, and this model for unlearning, I had many questions about how these concepts and ideas would help me frame my study and understand the stories I was hearing from teachers. I wondered how we move from learning about, which often includes narratives of deficit, to a place of learning from First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples? How do we change the story? How do we get off the train and look beneath the tracks and learn from the wisdoms that were buried, dislodged, and relocated by settler colonialism?

Guided by Stones

...the rock does not die when it is broken, just as a mountain does not die when a tree is cut down or a rock removed. As we have already noted, rock is the oldest living being, called in Lakota, for instance, *tunka*, the old one. Part of its longevity is precisely invested in its durability and the difficulty with which it might be finally killed. Even in a modern atomic explosion, it can only be transformed. (Tinker, 2004, p. 117)

I now return to Deloria's and Donald's writing on the guiding power of stones, in that they are pointers, helpers. This brings to mind a memory of being out on the land with an Inuk musher and his dog team in Iqaluit. As we sped across the icy vastness on our qamutik (dog sled), they pointed out large stones and small hills, explaining that they served as guideposts for hunters. As I am writing, I am a hunter /seeker/chaser/pursuer for knowledge, understanding, and guidance on the way forward. Symbolically, stones embody my theoretical framing of this study, which I describe below, and that I have represented in figure 18. The water represents the confluence of the two rivers that flow nearby (the Kichi Zibi and the Pasapkedjiwanong in the image below. There are many stones in the rivers which guide my thinking throughout this dissertation. The stones cause us to pause and reflect and we therefore never step into the same river twice. They hold knowledge of this place. The concept that the first stone represents is *truth-seeking and understanding* and asks us to consider these questions: what truths do I need to understand about this place? About my history? About the peoples of this land? What are the truths about the stories I have been told and retold? The second stone we come to is *acknowledging and accepting* that Canada was founded on colonial logics and asks us to consider these questions: how has Canadian colonial culture privileged my family and me? How does colonialism shape the way we live and understand life? What are the harms that have been perpetuated and continue to be maintained?



Figure 17: After the About: a process of unlearning, restor(ing), and relationship renewal (Source: Howell, 2022)

Furthermore, what are my responsibilities and connection to the past? The present? or the future? The next stone asks us to think about our *relationships* and ask, who are the people of the lands that I call home? How did I come to live on their lands? What was the relationship between my ancestors and the people of the lands? How does this impact my identity? What was/is expected of me? What can I learn from their teachings? How can I live in a healthy and respectful way to all my kinship relations? Finally, we come to the last stone, which asks us to *restore and (re)story or relations*. This is where we ask: How can I live in a way that restores kinship relations? What new stories have I learned, and what stories will I now tell? Importantly, what stories will I live? How will I love as a good relative in a healthy and balanced way that uplifts others?

In acknowledgment and respect of my location on Anishinaabe territory and my relationship with Albert are the principles of *mino-Bimaadiziwin*, which I believe can help guide us through the river, flowing around the teaching stones again. This is a process of unlearning and learning new

ways; ways of thinking, being, doing, understanding, and ultimately, new ways of living together. I contend that this process requires that we disembark from the metaphorical trains we are speeding forward on, and walk into the place(s) we call home.

Disrupting the Lull: Moving with the water and the stones

At the beginning of this chapter, I was on a train travelling upon tracks of the Canadian Pacific Railway, an infrastructure that remains a reputable source of National pride to many. I reflected on how the cumulative lull of colonial culture, including untold and distorted truths, perpetuates dominant narratives and historical amnesia (Jurgens, 2021). Train tracks are made to stay in place. They become permanent and substantial, unyielding to the weight of locomotives and the most flagrant of Canadian weather. They lead to a definitive destination, and the trains that travel across them make few stops along the way. As they hurry across the land, their sway comforts and lulls many passengers into a state of comfortable timelessness. Unlearning means that we must disrupt the lull that has trained so many of us into a state of relationship denial.

As I near the ending of writing this chapter, I am sitting in an old, weathered Adirondack chair on the equally old and weathered dock at our family cabin. The wood is blanched by sun and rain and etched with years of being here. Today, the sun's warm rays are warm, and I have taken off my wool socks to enjoy the feeling of heat. The light dances on the water and the water ripples and curls as yellow and orange leaves from the birch and the maple trees drop and swirl from above. A black crow squawks loudly on the branch of a jack pine that towers along the shoreline as a blue jay swoops nearby to check if I have left out any more shelled peanuts for her. It is now the month of the falling leaves, and I have not seen the pair of loons that hunt and play in our bay for a few weeks. Everything is changing here, as the seasons shift, and as I listen and observe, I learn more about this land, this lake, and the creatures I live with. In a few hours, I will take my kayak

out and paddle from this bay out into the marsh. Perhaps the great heron I often see will be there, crouching along the shore, looking for her next meal. I will paddle carefully around the stones that rest along the bottom of a shallow narrow further up the lake. Like the water, I will move my kayak slowly, gently, around the stones. I will keep moving but pause to listen and learn along the way, for the (an)other stories- in water, on stones, in the wind and on bones. They rise when we listen, holding them to our hearts.



Figure 18 : Early morning on Otter Lake (Source: own photo).

Chapter 4: Methodology

On this bridge, we are in no hurry to cross over; in fact, such bridges lure us to linger.

(Ted T. Aoki, 2005, p. 316)

The stones steam and hiss with heat and water as the heavy flap is lowered over the light. The darkness envelops us as we become adopted relatives under the curve of the dome above. Outside the lodge, the helpers keep the fire burning as Elder Bob Cardinal begins to pray. I close my eyes and breathe deeply, taking in the hot air and the shared breath of those around me. I think about Denise Taliaferro-Baszile's contention that "all work is autobiographical" (p. 483). Indeed, life is autobiographical, and as I breathe, I breathe in the lives of my fellow human beings. I begin to sweat, and I dwell in the slickness and weight of this in-between space (Aoki, 1986/2005).

I am a guest on the Enoch Cree Nation. The day before, my partner, Mads and I flew to Calgary from Ottawa. I stayed the night in Calgary while Mads headed west to Banff for a scientific conference. The next day, I began the trek north in the early morning darkness, traversing the snowy highway as dawn breaks. As I travelled, I sought to dwell within a tensionality that I worry is my resistance to residing within these in-between places. Is this highway I navigate an "Aokian bridge," in that it is a space of "tension, both 'and/not- and,'" a space "of conjoining and disrupting," indeed, a "generative space of possibilities, a space wherein tensioned ambiguity of newness emerges" (Pinar, 2004, p. 83). I am trying to embrace this newness.

I have been struggling with(in) the confines and limitlessness of my dissertation proposal for the last few months. I cannot quite articulate what it is I am doing. I instinctively knew that spending time with Dwayne would help me see through the fog. When Dwayne heard I was travelling out west, he generously invited me to a sweat on Enoch territory led by Elder Bob Cardinal. During a conversation on a walk in the river valley, he also invited me to the idea and

space of hermeneutics, or interpretative inquiry, which I was largely unfamiliar with. Jardine (1992) suggests that interpretative inquiry does not aim to define an instance clearly, but rather, “it wishes to playfully explore what understandings and meanings this instance makes possible” (p. 56). In *It Might Just Be Ravens* (2021), Jardine writes:

Hermeneutics works not by searching our persons but by finding the open territories of the tale told that might allow each of us to open out into it and perhaps take flight a bit...slowly starting to move *towards* this happenstance with an eye to taking it seriously and seeing where it might lead, what places it might inhabit and lead me towards. Where, if anywhere. Most often, things trail off, scents fail. Red herrings dragged across the path...but knowing that it might thus be deserving is a *consequence of taking it seriously* as much as it is a *cause of taking it seriously*. This is the great, intimate, contradictory, and risky first dance of hermeneutic attentiveness. (p. 7)

By deciding to take that first risky dance with hermeneutic attentiveness, I found myself profoundly vulnerable and in an in-between middle space of ground and groundlessness. Of resonances and dissonances. Of taking it seriously and seriously taking it in. The labour of hermeneutics, the willingness to dance-made me sweat.

Sweating it out: Emerging hermeneutically, dwelling on the bridge

Sweating, sweat, sweaty, sweatiness, “no sweat.” The word has many linguistic formations and variations in meanings across cultural landscapes. The verb sweat comes from the Old English “sweatan,” meaning to “perspire,” “work hard,” and to “be vexed, or worried,” circa the 14 century (Online etymology dictionary, 2022). The noun sweat comes from the Old English “swat,” meaning perspiration, moisture exuded from the skin, and “labour, that which causes sweat” (Online etymology dictionary, 2022). The term “sweating fever” described a sudden, often-fatal

fever that struck England in the late 1400s, and thus sweat(ing) was often associated with death and sickness. The colloquial expressions, “No sweat,” “don't sweat it,” “no sweat off my back,” and “don't sweat the small stuff,” are generally associated with straightforwardness, lack of worry, and ease. The etymological history demonstrates how the word “sweat” is associated with labour, hard work, and often worry and illness in the English language and culture. Sweat is regarded as grimy, slimy, and clammy. Something to be avoided, as in “No sweat” and “Don't sweat it.”

Though differences in traditions depend on location, territory, and culture, there is also universality across Nations in ceremonial sweat practices` (Marsh et al., 2018). Evidence shows that Indigenous Peoples across North America have practiced sweat lodge ceremonies as early as 400 B.C. (Abdullah & Stringer, 1999; Brave Heart, 1998; Colmant et al., 2005). Many Elders “teach that the sweat lodge ceremony serves a sacred purpose through the ritual healing or cleansing of body, mind, and spirit while bringing people together to honour the energy of life” (Marsh et al., 2018, p. 3). The ceremonial sweat lodge ritual is associated with transformation, healing, and community (Garrett et al., 2011). This is quite the opposite of the conceptualizations of sweat in western culture, where sweat is perceived as something to *wash off* rather than be *awashed* in.

Awashed in Hermeneutics

In the sweat lodge, I am awash in sweat and reverence. I am supported by the earth under me, the people around me, the prayers shared in the hot air. I think I might be at the beginning of understanding what Aoki referred to as a:

...hermeneutic returning to the lived ground of human experience within the story
— a place where inhabits a tensionality of both distance and nearing. Where might

such a place be? Paradoxically, the place is where we are—a place so near yet so far that we have forgotten its whereabouts. (as cited in Pinar, 2004, p. 77)

Pinar (2004) writes that this lived experience, this place of living, is the place we are already in. I am both near and far, but I am also in the middle- the place where I might stay to dwell in the encounters of living. As I step out of the sweat lodge, I think about that and give thanks to the generosity of Elder Bob Cardinal and Dwayne Donald. I give thanks, too, to the helpers who placed the stones in the fire and to the stones who carried the heat of the fire into the sweat.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will describe the process of coming to the decision of hermeneutics as an interpretive inquiry. I will then explain each phase of my research and the context of the research demographic. Next, I will discuss the importance of my relationships with participants and detail the measures I put in place to ensure respectful relations. Following this, I will put forward the limitations that I encountered, particularly regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the opportunities and choices I had and the subsequent decisions I made.

Research Design

Hermeneutics provides a way to study human experience that...provides dynamic, rich, compelling, and detailed understanding and description that leaves all of their difficulty and ambiguity in place and makes it available to thinking, communication, sharing, and a deeper understanding of, and sensitivity to, the subtleties of lived experience.

(Moules et al., 2015, p. 177)

There were several reasons why I chose hermeneutics—or perhaps it chose me. My decision to draw on hermeneutics came after thoughtful discussion, in-depth reading, and a reluctant acceptance of the uncertainty that hermeneutics requires. In choosing hermeneutic inquiry, I seek

to honour and uplift my participants' experiences as “eventful, ongoing, emergent, forming, and generative” rather than isolated events (Jardine, 1992, 1994, as cited in Moules, 2002, p. 6). My research study did not seek to assess the experiences of teacher candidates and teachers. Instead, I endeavoured to understand teachers' lived experiences as they navigated their processes of unlearning colonialism and what it might mean for them pedagogically.

Furthermore, I appreciate that hermeneutics pays attention to lived experiences and calls on us to offer our analytical and synthetical interpretations of these experiences. Therefore, using hermeneutic inquiry allows me to experience the concept of “aletheia,” which occurs when something opens that was once closed (Moules, 2002). As I navigated the hermeneutic process, I lived in moments of aletheia and “aletheialessness,” experiencing the opening, closing, and fissures of light.

Finally, and significantly, hermeneutics appeals to who I am as a researcher and human being. Moules (2002) reminds us that within Gadamer's philosophy, the role of the researcher takes on an important place in the work. Hermeneutics insists that we work with care and with our whole hearts and that, because of what we study, we live differently. Our work changes us and changes how we live our lives.

Hermeneutics As an (un)Method

“Hermeneutics,” states Moules (2002), “ offers a substantive philosophy rather than a strategic method. In other words, one might say hermeneutics is substantively driven rather than methodologically given” (p. 13). Hermeneutics invites us to proceed with our research in specific ways. Gadamer (1989), for example, tells us that the topic guides the way we proceed with our research. This becomes a question rather than a method per se. Moules (2002) asserts:

For even though it is not a method, one can cultivate hermeneutics and the questionableness becomes: how can I turn my attention to human life and my topic

and not require methods which render it to something else; how can I avoid betraying it and not delivering it unto itself; and how do I preserve its character without reducing it? (p. 13)

This attentiveness reveals the deep integrity that hermeneutics requires of us as researchers. Koch (1996) suggested that we attend less to a method and more to methodology, which is “the process by which insights about the world and the human condition are generated, interpreted and communicated” (p. 174). Hermeneutics is, therefore, messy. It calls on us to reveal and revel in the entangled webs of people's life worlds as well as our own. Jardine (1994) reminds us that hermeneutics requires researchers to not rely on methods such that “we live in understanding and interpretation and no amount of measured techniques will save us from the task of interpretation” (as cited in Moules, 2002, p. 13). Hermeneutic inquiry, therefore, begins with the experience of address (Moules, 2002). Gadamer (1989) describes this as the experience of being addressed by a topic. Here Moules (2002) writes:

Address, as experienced, can be a breathtaking and breath sustaining gift. In its own arrival, it asks the researcher to suffer the topic — to be compelled to do well by what comes to greet you, in the letting of itself in a way true to how it was given to you. (p. 13)

The concept of address, then, is the inherent obligation to recognize that the topic was already going on before our arrival. The question, therefore, becomes, “how do I cultivate what is already there” (Moules, 2002, p. 13)?

Hermeneutics is an “(un)method” because it is not bound by a structured sequence of steps, per se, but rather how one questions, wonders, attunes and thinks in, though, and with the evolving data. For this to occur, “hermeneutic researchers adopt an attitude or stance that ponders unfolding and evolving questions allowing them to be surprised by how their thinking on phenomenon

transforms over time” (Crowther et al., 2017, p. 827). In *Writing in the Dark*, phenomenologist Max van Manen (2016) draws our awareness to the significance of openness and attunement in hermeneutic research:

Openness-in the sense of interpretive availability-is a sustaining motive of all qualitative inquiry. Such inquiry is based on the idea that no interpretation is ever complete, no explication of meaning is ever final, and no insight is beyond challenge. It behooves us to remain as attentive as possible to the ways that all of us experience the world and to the infinite variety of possible human experiences and possible explications of those experiences. (p. 237)

Thus, as a hermeneutic researcher, I am not after thematic codes or the frequency of such codes as part of my overall “data.” Rather, I am interested in wondering about the resonances in the stories I have heard. I am engaged in the “reading of something back into its possibilities” (Moules, 2002, p. 14). By resonances, I am referring to “the capacity to hear both consonance and dissonance—the harmonies and disharmonies. By reverberating with the consonance and dissonance within a text allows researchers to discern a multiplicity of potential meanings associated with the phenomenon under study” (Given, 2008, p. 791). By remaining and whiling within the resonances, the stories teachers shared with me lingered, allowing multiplicities to reveal themselves.

Data Analysis: Resonances rather than themes

In hermeneutic inquiry, Gadamer (1989) reminds us that we approach the reading of the text as the answer to a question that might have been answered very differently. Data, therefore, never stands alone, as the researcher and the reader are always implicated (Moules, 2002). Gadamer tells us that “hermeneutic analysis is synonymous with interpretation and begins with reflection” (as cited in Moules, 2002, p. 14). For the researcher, analysis begins with careful reading and re-

reading, being attentive to first impressions, and lingering on “perturbing and distinctive resonances, familiarities, differences, newness, and echoes” (Moules, 2002, p. 14). When we re-read, we are listening for these resonances, which will expand and deepen our understanding of the text's possibilities. Moules (2002) reminds us that hermeneutics, therefore, “pays attention to the instance, the particular, the event of something that does not require repetition to authenticate its arrival” (p. 14). Hermeneutics is concerned with the holism of data rather than the fragmentation of themes. This attempt to work with the whole and the parts in the process of interpretation is known as the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle, as described by Heidegger (1927/1962), describes three fore-structures through which individuals come to understand and interpret their lifeworld. Fore-having is the background context of pre-understandings, fore-sight relates to how an individual always enters an experience with a specific viewpoint and fore-conception is an anticipated sense of the interpretations that will be made. The circle is a metaphorical conceptualization to draw attention to all the relationships of interpretation in which the researcher is situated “through extensive readings, re-readings, reflection, and writing. In this process, there is a focus on recognizing the particular, isolating understandings, dialoguing with others about interpretations, making explicit the implicit, and, eventually finding language to describe language” (Moules, 2002, p. 14). I used notes, recordings of my thoughts, and mindful walks to help bring my interpretations forward. By mindful walks, I am referring to the walks I would take with the purpose of thinking about a conversation I had with a participant, a metaphor, a resonance.

To help guide my interpretations, I found the two figures below useful. In figure 19, Crowther and Thomson (2020) visualize the interpretive journey, cautioning us that although it suggests a linear process, it only indicates a direction of travel through analysis.

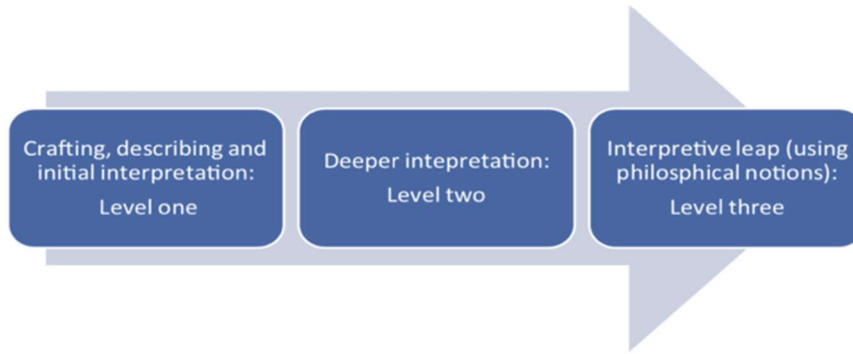


Figure 19: Hermeneutics (Source: Crowther & Thomson, 2020, p. 4)

Crowther and Thomson (2020) emphasize that “in practice, these levels weave in and out, back and forth...as one becomes conversant with the philosophical underpinnings and becomes immersed in the interpretive process level two and three often merge as the philosophy draws us deeper into analysis” (p. 4). Figure 20 builds on this process, iterating the questions and activities involved at each level. As a new hermeneutic researcher, I found these visualizations very helpful as I began the process of what Gadamer (1997) speaks to as a multiplicity of meaning in human experiences. The process of re-reading, thinking, going back to the texts, and searching for meaning in philosophical notions. In the section below, I detail my journey through hermeneutic analysis.

The Dive: Reading, Crafting, Re-reading-reading, Reading altogether, wondering

Admittedly, I did not know much about hermeneutics before my tentative steps toward it, and I am still learning as I live through it. For well over a year now, I have immersed myself in the texts of Gadamer, Derrida, and Ricoeur, though it is Gadamer’s philosophical notions that figure most prominently in my work. I also relied on key concepts put forth by curriculum scholars David



Figure 20: Taking an Interpretive Leap (Source: Crowther & Thomson, 2020, p. 7)

Jardine, David Smith, Cynthia Chambers, and Ted Aoki. I sweated over the transcripts of interviews with my participants, reading and re-reading, note-taking, wondering, and walking. Dwelling in/between words/worlds of the stories that the teachers shared with me.

There is that word again. Stories. Thomas King (2003) tells us that “the truth about stories is that’s all we are” (p. 5). Richard Wagamese (2012) writes: “All that we are is story. It is what we arrive with. It is all that we leave behind” (p. 103). Gadamer (1997) writes about the multiplicity of meanings in a story, as does Ricoeur (1984), who believes that hermeneutic inquiry involves the relationships between stories and within stories. Likewise, Derrida (2004/1972) describes how story is always larger than the sum of its differing vantage points. Viewing my transcriptions as

stories rather than verbatim data helped me understand and attune to the life worlds of the teachers I had listened to. Crowther et al. (2017) remind us that:

In hermeneutic phenomenology, data use is concerned with surfacing meaning and sharing human experiences in ways that resonate with listeners/readers. The purpose is to reveal what lies in, between, and beyond the words while staying close to the phenomenon of interest. As researchers, attuning our thinking to this purpose is essential as we begin our interpretive work with verbatim data. (p. 829)

I found myself inspired by the idea of “crafted stories” in hermeneutic research as a provocative way to bring forth shared responses (Van Mannen, 2014). I followed the guidelines put forth by Crowther et al. (2017) to craft stories from the verbatim data I had collected. Their process of moving from transcript to story is seen below in figure 21.

The process of moving from transcript to story is as follows:

Remove extraneous detail that does not add to the story; keep the data as “story”; and keep the sentences that seem to hold the meaning; remove the sentences that repeat or expand in a manner that is not needed.

Ensure the story flows. This may mean the following:

Adding words in where sentences have been removed to make the link from one section to the next, given details of context; polishing grammar, reordering sentences to keep the flow; going back to the original transcript to add in bits that now seem to matter as the polished story comes to life, and reading it aloud to “hear” how it sounds.

This interpretive process involves asking questions:

Does this story “show” the experience? Does it engage? Are we still holding the meaning as gifted by the participant? Have we seen “more” in the process of crafting up this story? Does it work? Does it still need more pruning?

Figure 21: Crafting Stories in hermeneutic research (Source: Crowther et. al., 2017)

The Fog: Dwelling, circling, reading, writing, wondering

The process of listening to, transcribing, reading, and crafting the stories was the beginning of the interpretive process. As I listened and read, I made notes of words and phrases that addressed me. Crafting the transcripts into stories made the stories come together as a whole; the stories became less about the individual participant and more about understanding the questions I was thinking about. The resonances that “pulled me up short” were the ones I “whiled” with. “Crafting stories is about bringing the story together in a way that 'shows' what the researcher is noticing...it is not focused on the story but on compelling and salient qualities within that illuminate the question” (Crowther et al., 2017, p. 833). In this interpretation phase, I tried to stay with my research questions, asking myself what the teachers' stories were telling me. What were they saying that was not on the surface? What truths might be concealed? I stayed with stories, deepening my attentiveness and noting aspects that I had not noticed before. Deepening resonances.

The Leap: weaving philosophy, poetics, and story

When I began learning about hermeneutics, the word “leap,” as in making the interpretative leap, intrigued me. The word “leap” comes from the old English *hleapan* and means “to jump, spring clear of the ground by force of an initial bound; run, go; dance.” Leap, then, is to rise after an initial bound with force; to me, this constitutes the iterative cycles of reading, thinking, and writing that occur before the leap happens. The word “interpret” comes from the old French *interpreter*, meaning “explain, expound, understand.” Together, an interpretive leap is to move from one place to another to understand. In hermeneutics, this movement towards understanding is made by engaging in an iterative process with philosophical texts and seeking out notions that help

the underlying meanings of the crafted stories reveal themselves. This process includes cycles of reading, thinking, re-reading-reading, writing, rewriting, and re-thinking (Crowther et al., 2017). In the next section, I will describe my process for inviting participants to take part in the study and the phases of research that I undertook. First, however, I need to acknowledge the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic and the numerous ways it affected my research and my research participants.

Participants and Data Collection Phases

Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans.

(John Lennon, 1980)

On a Mountain in a Cloudforest

When the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a deadly worldwide pandemic, I was on a mountain in the south-central region of Costa Rica with a group of women travellers. We had been staying at a yoga retreat that was nestled in the cloud forest, completely “off the grid.” Light came from solar-charged lamps, and there was no access to cellular data, television, telephone networks, or Wi-Fi. We slept in small cabins with mosquito netting, falling asleep to the sounds of the jungle: the mating screams of the pumas, the songs of the gray-necked wood rail and the spotted sandpipers. At sunrise, we sleepily trudged from our cabins to the open-air yoga studio, where we would watch the sunrise over the mountains as we stretched and meditated on colourful mats. We spent our days hiking, birdwatching, learning about the ecology and biodiversity of the region, swimming in waterfalls and doing yoga.

On March 13, 2020, we hiked down the mountain. Our cells phones, now reluctantly turned on, began a chorus of buzzing and chiming with the worried texts from partners, husbands, wives, and children, letting us know that borders were closing, flights had been cancelled, and the infectious coronavirus was spreading around the globe rapidly. I returned to Canada three days

later and was instructed by customs to quarantine for two weeks due to international travel. Our kids were sent home from school for what was to be an extended March break. None of us realized then how-and how long- the pandemic would change our lives. I am writing this chapter in October 2021, 19 months, four waves and countless variants later. Thankfully, and with great privilege, as an immunocompromised person, I have received four inoculations of an mRNA vaccine. I have experienced no severe COVID-19 infections in any of my family members, close friends, or colleagues. Life is good, and I am grateful to be alive on this beautiful day.

With this in mind, most of my Ph.D. research work has been done during the necessary lockdowns and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, COVID-19 changed many aspects of my proposed research, as I will share throughout this section. I start by discussing the importance of my relationships with participants and detail the measures I put in place to uphold respectful relations. I will then describe each phase of my research and the context of the research demographic. Following this, I will put forward the limitations that I encountered, particularly in relation to the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the multiplicities of the curricular landscapes in the lives of the teachers.

Honouring address, method, and participants

Understanding that the research participants are not the topic, but rather people who can help us understand the topic more profoundly are significant. I had been “addressed” by the topic of unlearning many years ago. Unlearning and resistance to unlearning has been an ongoing pattern in my life, in that I have a propensity for unlearning. I am interested in being emmeshed in the process of wondering. Mainly, I am interested in how teachers unlearn settler colonial stories. I believe this affects how they will teach children and youth about relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. I recognize that my participants are not the topic per se, but I also acknowledge them as instrumental in helping me understand my research questions. Therefore, my

relationships with the participants are vital to me and the process, but, unlike in other qualitative studies, I do not provide a “backgrounder” on each participant.

A hermeneutics research methodology often uses purposeful sampling to engage participants to help researchers understand the research topic deeply. Moules (2002) reminds us that “the topic *is not* the participants, nor should the writing be a *portrait* of the participants” (p. 14). The validity of hermeneutic inquiry is not based on the number of participants but rather on “the completeness of examining the topic under study and the fullness and depth to which the interpretation extends understanding” (Smith, 1991, p. 196). This also guided my thinking about whom I might ask to participate and the number of participants I spoke to.

Guidance around the phases of my research came from my supervisor and my committee member Dr. Dwayne Donald. When I was visiting Dwayne, we went on a walk in the river valley and had the chance to talk about my research. I wondered if I could speak with some of his students better to understand unlearning and ethical relationality in teacher education. He agreed that it would be fascinating to hear what they had to say and agreed to ask his students to be part of my research study. Three of his students agreed to be interviewed. I had planned to travel back to Edmonton that summer to interview them, but due to COVID-19 ethics protocols, I interviewed them on zoom in October 2020. I offered each of them a \$20 gift card to a local shop of their choice in a small gesture of gratitude. The conversations took between 45-and 75 minutes and were open-ended and conversational. This was Phase 1 of my research.

Once I understood how Dwayne's former students had experienced ethical relationality in his class, I began the second phase of my study and invited members of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau School (PETES) community in Gatineau, Québec to participate. Specifically, I invited current and former members of the Indigenous community at PETES to participate in a survey, interview, or community sharing circle in order to gain an understanding of their experiences at the school. Due

to COVID-19, many Indigenous families decided to stay in their communities rather than return to school, making it challenging to form or renew relationships with them. Furthermore, because I did not teach in person at PETES during my data collection process (due to my risk of developing severe COVID-19), I was unable to renew relationships with the families present. The First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth coordinator was also away from the school, and although she tried to reach out to families to invite them to be part of the research project, few showed interest, and fewer still participated. In the end, I held a community sharing circle over zoom in the Winter of 2021 with two former Indigenous staff members, a parent, and a student.

Phase 2 also included interviews with staff, teachers, and administrators at the school. I emailed the entire school faculty, and out of 39, 14 staff responded. I interviewed one administrator, two educational assistants, and eleven teachers. Unfortunately, due to ethics COVID-19 protocols, these interviews had to be done over Zoom. Our conversations focused on truth, reconciliation, Indigenous perspectives in curriculum and pedagogy, professional learning opportunities, and their relationships with Indigenous students and families at the school. I had also invited them to participate in a life writing process, but none of the participants chose to engage in this.

I hoped that Phase 3 would bring First Nations, Inuit, and Métis parents and staff, teachers, and administrators at PETES together to talk about how things were going at the school. I planned to interview teachers and administrators after meeting and working with family members and vice versa. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, this was not possible, and I had to “reimagine” phase 3. I still wanted to bring teachers at PETES in relation to Indigenous peoples/knowledge, but due to the many constraints I outlined above, I could not hold a community sharing circle . I decided to wait and see what would happen with the pandemic and my research over the spring/summer of 2021.

May 2021 and the reimaging of Canada

At the end of May, the unmarked graves of 215 children were announced by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nations after they used ground-penetrating radar on the grounds around the former Kamloops Residential school. Shock reverberated through the country. Many of us who had listened to the stories of Survivors had known for years that there were many children in unmarked graves, and we were surprised at the shock that many Canadians felt. In response, some of us created an educational bike/virtual tour of five stops around Ottawa to help Canadians “reimagine” Canada. This walking/cycling tour came out of a recognition that many Canadians wanted to learn about their own implications in Canadian settler colonialism. The cycling/walking component of the tour came from my belief that movement through place attunes us to that place.

This tour also involved the partnership that Cindy Blackstock and Beechwood cemetery had formed to “revisit” the national cemeteries legacy program. For example, shortly after the TRC released the Calls to Action, a plaque was unveiled beside Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce’s graveside. The plaque honours Dr. Bryce’s commitment to public health, his reporting of the horrific health conditions in Residential Schools, and his efforts to educate the Canadian public about the harms perpetrated by the state. Beechwood Cemetery is also where Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, is buried. The plaque that had once honoured him as one of Canada’s confederate poets was aptly updated after the horrors of the system that Scott resided over were revealed by the TRC. Scott’s plaque now dons the phrases “confederate poet” and “cultural genocide,” giving proper weight to the historical legacies of this man (Blackstock and Palmater, 2021). The updated plaque is pictured below in figure 22.



Figure 22: Duncan Campbell Scott's plaque at Beechwood Cemetery (Source: Project of Heart, 2018)

Learning the complete and truthful narratives of people, places, and institutions is powerful when we inhabit the places themselves, reimagining and revisiting, even if only for moments in time. Visiting or revisiting historical sites develops a sense of place, connection, and a vision of past and present emmeshed. Ecology educator, researcher, and developer of *A Walking Curriculum* Gillian Judson (2022) posits:

The walking-based practice connects curriculum topics with/in the real world on a deeper level. A new level of curriculum relevance can emerge for students as a result. Walking-based practice can support students in developing a sense of place. Sense of Place, here, refers to an emotional connection to some aspect of the wildness in the world that surrounds them. Sense of Place involves a sense of

community. Sense of Place is what can change how our students understand the world of which they are part—it can help them reimagine their relationship with the natural and cultural communities they live in. (para 2)

I found myself thinking, once again, about walking as a purposeful practice to renew and revisit narratives about the places we live in and think we know. Research demonstrates that walking is a conduit to creative thinking (Oppezzo and Schwartz, 2014), brain plasticity (Voss et al., 2010) and memory (Nagamatsu, 2013). I was also intrigued by how the concept of walking is used metaphorically to describe transformative life experiences that are often arduous—for example, walking towards reconciliation, walking your life path, walking through the storm, walking as medicine. Walking has the potential to support processes of unlearning, leaving us open to possibilities, and “carefully attunes mind, body and spirit to surrounding life energies” (Donald, 2021, p. 58). I was also curious about how modernity and technology have changed walking practice. Rebecca Solnit, author of *Wanderlust: A history of Walking* (2000), writes:

Many people nowadays live in a series of interiors- home, car, gym, office, shops- disconnected from each other. On foot, everything stays connected for a while walking; one occupies the spaces between those interiors...one lives in the whole world rather than in interiors built up against it. (p. 10)

These thoughts inspired the reimagining of phase 3, as did the walking I did on the path I had taken for many years, to and from school.

One early morning, I wandered through the sleepy streets of Centretown, past the park where I often saw Chinese Elders practising Tai-chi. I traversed through Chinatown, gazing up at the colourful gate that spans Somerset Street west, acting as the entrance to a different world. I travelled down Nanny Goat Hill with its rambling houses and street names of trees: Elm, Spruce, Oak, Balsam, and Walnut and out onto Booth Street. As I made my way over the Booth Street

Bridge, I noticed the shiny new light rail train station that had been under construction the last time I had walked by. The station is named “Pimsi,” which means “American Eel” in Anishinabemowin. The Algonquin people have called for increased protection of the pimsi in the Kichi Zibi as it has nearly disappeared from the waters. As I cross the Sir John A. MacDonald Parkway, I am intrigued by contradictions of the naming of the station and the refusal to change the name of this parkway by the same City council. I suppose that naming a rail station after a fish challenges our sense of Canadian identity much less than what some see as the attempted erasure of our founding Prime Minister.

As I draw closer to the Chaudière Bridge and the sacred site of Akikodjiwan, I feel the heat of the sun and the mist of the falls on my skin. I see the metropolis of concrete and condos that have been built up around the falls, the multi-million-dollar project *Zibi* that many members of Kitigan Zibi had protested. I remember Albert Dumont's words the last time I was at the falls with him. Albert said:

We tried so hard to fight them [the developers], but we were up against the almighty dollar. This remains a sacred site, and I ask you, does the world need more condos? Or does the world need more sacred sites? The answer is clear to me. We need places to connect to our ancestors and to what it means to live as a human beings.

The walk I took that day shaped what became the third phase of my research. After talking with Albert, we decided to invite teachers who participated in phase 2 of the study on a walk around Akikodjiwan. On a blustery October day, Albert and I met with five teachers and one administrator at the edge of the construction site. After our walk, we sat in a circle near the falls, and Albert spoke to us about the history of the sacred site, about living a balanced life, and living and acting with honour and goodness. Participants were invited to listen, share, and pose questions. I also emailed them a short questionnaire after the walk where they could share their experiences. In the

end, data collection for Phases 1 and 2 data took place between October 2020- and March 2021. Phase 3 took place in October 2021.



Figure 23: Akikodjiwan (Source: National Arts Centre, 2022)

A modified methodology

This chapter has discussed the context and temporality of my research, which began and ended during the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. COVID-19 changed how I interacted with my participants, including my proximity to the Cree students and families I had hoped to work with at PETES during the 2020-2021 school year. As previously stated, due to health reasons, I could not teach in person, and most Cree families chose to stay in their communities due to COVID-19. Thus, my desire to engage in community-based research with the Cree families was not possible. Moreover, the parent who had been very supportive of my research in the beginning was overwhelmed with the demands of the pandemic and the realities that her family faced. Namely, during the first wave of the pandemic, the Cree School Board cut funding to Eeyou parents who attended C ejep, college, or university, and therefore parents had little choice but to return to their

communities to do school online. It is important to note that the Cree School Board supported students living outside of the communities upon their return home (Grand Council of the Crees Eeyou Istchee, 2021).

The stories I collected were also impacted by the upheaval the pandemic caused to the structures and programs of the school itself. In many cases, during the interviews, I gently reminded participants to try and “think back to the time before the pandemic” so that their thinking reflected not only the present but the, at one time, “normal past.” I discovered an intriguing curricular complexity at play. The administration instructed teachers to implement curriculum-as-lived to reflect the immediacy of needs during the pandemic. The curriculum-as-planned, is for Aoki (1993), “the work of curriculum planners, often selected teachers from the field, under the direction of some official often designated as the curriculum director or curriculum supervisor” (p. 258). The lived experiences of student’s lives outside of the pandemic were cast aside for the most part. However, as understood by my participants, the curriculum-as-lived seemed to reflect the experience of the pandemic. The space for teachers and students to dwell in the multiplicity of the curricular landscape appeared to have been rendered invisible (Aoki, 1993). The landscape had been reduced to the singular focus of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The freezing moon and the crunching of snow

As I finish up writing this chapter, we are moving into the month of the Baashkaakodin Giizis, or the Freezing Moon. For many Indigenous Nations, winter is a time of storytelling. Although not officially winter yet, it is creeping towards us. There are more leaves on the ground than on the branches, crunching under my boots as I walk my dogs each morning. The chill of the air runs through my denim coat, reminding me that colder days are fast approaching. Darkness settles in these parts by early evening, and we now must stoke the woodstove at our cabin

throughout the day. In the mornings, we wake up with cold noses and feet that beg to stay under the cozy wool blanket. It is a time for stories, and I have some to share with you. The stories were gifted to me from teachers; some new, some old. Some are First Nation; another is Metis. Many identify as first, second, and third-generation Canadians—others call themselves immigrants.

Each teacher is committed to unlearning colonialism and moving towards a deep understanding of truth and how these truths might be embodied pedagogically, curricularly, and personally. Nevertheless, what connects them is stronger and more significant to this study than their differences. So, let us listen.

Chapter 5: Stories to listen to, stories to learn from

We are what we know. We are, however, also what we do not know. If what we know about ourselves—our history, our culture, our national identity—is deformed by absences, denials, and incompleteness then our identity—both as individuals and as Americans—is fragmented.

(Pinar, 1993, p. 61)

Stories have always enamoured me. My paternal grandmother, who I knew as Nana, was a storyteller. She was my only grandparent still living when I began making memories I could remember. Nana was a small woman who stood at the height of 157 cm, with silver hair, pink cheeks, and a quick gait. She was *my person*. She was the one I felt the most at home with. The daughter of a British home child and a third-generation Torontonionian, my Nana described growing up during World War 1 with such vivid details that I could picture her father in his war uniform.

One particular story resonated with me. She told us how her mother took her and her older brothers to visit their father at the veteran's hospital, after he'd been wounded in a battle in France and sent home. At the hospital, she walked by men who "laid in baskets." They had lost all their limbs in the war. The nurses placed small baskets of candy beside the larger ones that the men lay in. At six years old, my Nana would look down at them from above as they offered her candy.

Nana also told us many stories about our Papa, her husband, a fiery redhead who could play the piano by ear. Papa died when I was only two, so it was through these stories that I came to know and love him. She'd also tell stories of her two older brothers, Jim and Ken, who gallantly fought in WW2, and whom she and my Papa named their sons after. Listening to her stories helped me understand my place in our family, the era I was living in, and what had come before me. Her stories captured me, as did the ones that Mr. Warner, my Grade 5 teacher, told us in history class. He would weave tales about the European explorers; the rocky, violent seas, the tall ships, the

billowing sails—the bravery of the men who “found” the “new world.” Although I heard many stories growing up, they were told by Canadians who had very little knowledge or understanding of the peoples whose lands their recent ancestors had stolen. Therefore, the stories I learned promoted and perpetuated a single story of the new world, in which colonialism was equated with adventure and prosperity, and war as necessary for the development of Canada as a nation-state.

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2010) famously said that “the consequence of a single story is that it robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult, and it emphasizes that we are different rather than how we are similar” (13:42). Thomas King (2003) has warned that “you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told” (p. 10). Stories have considerable power over what we believe or do not believe, how we understand ourselves and others, and how we live our lives. In this chapter, we will hear stories from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis former staff members and parents and one student at PETES. We will also hear the stories from teachers at PETES, specifically about school support for Indigenous families, commitments, and enactments of the TRC Calls to Action, and opportunities for professional learning. We will hear about how certain stories about PETES are told and retold, often acting as obstacles to transformation and action.

In the first section, I will describe Pierre Elliott Trudeau School, where most of my study took place. Its location and context is essential- and like most places, is layered, complex, and unfolding.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School: “Up north” meets “down south”

Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School is situated in Gatineau, Québec, just across the bridges from Ottawa that span the Kichi Zibi. The school is part of the Western Québec School Board (WQSB), an English language school board with 30 schools and adult education centres. The district spans an immense and diverse territory covering the Outaouais, Pontiac, and Abitibi-

Témiscamingue regions, including 10 First Nations communities. Consequently, many Western Québec schools have significant First Nation student populations in both rural and urban areas. For example, the Manawaki Adult Education Centre has a First Nation student population of 85%, while Golden Valley School in Val d'Or has a 68% population (WQSB, 2018). In 2018, the



Figure 24: Pierre Elliot Trudeau Elementary School (Source: own photo).

WQSB released their “Commitment to Success Plan: 2018-2022.” Regarding Indigenous learner success, the plan states:

Canadian and Québec educational statistics indicate a significant gap in the success rates of Indigenous learners in comparison to non-Indigenous learners. This is an area of focus for the board, and Western Québec continues to develop and deliver a culturally relevant curriculum and an Indigenous pedagogy approach where possible. The board has engaged several community members and elders to work in developing resources, providing staff training, and support to students. In addition, Western Québec has established vital partnerships with Native Friendship Centres in both Val d'Or and Manawaki and works closely with several Indigenous

community partners. WQSB adopted several strategies to ensure adequate support for Indigenous students. These include a centralized approach for the use of the MEES Aboriginal success grant in our schools and centres with Indigenous students. The board supports the receiving schools through a network and research-based professional development for staff. (p. 9)

At Pierre Elliott Trudeau School, Indigenous students currently make up approximately 10% of the school population. In past years, the population has been between 20 and 25%. Some Indigenous students at the school are residents of Gatineau, while others come from the nearby Algonquin communities of Kitigan Zibi and Rapid Lake. Most of the Indigenous students at PETES travel from several Cree communities that form the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. Many of the Cree students who attend PETES do so while their parents or other family members attend post-secondary schools. Among many of the families I have taught, there is a sense that schools “down south” provide better educational opportunities for their children than they would receive “up north.”

While some Indigenous students are placed in the French-immersion stream, most of them end up in the English Program, which is notorious for its high teacher turn-over rate, new teacher population, a disproportionate number of students with individual educational plans (IEPS), higher numbers of suspensions and interventions, and lower academic results on report cards and standardized testing. PETES has implemented several strategies over the past decade to help address the challenges that many Indigenous students encounter. Moreover, the school has made commitments to teach non-Indigenous students the truths about Canadian history and present-day injustices. For example, teachers are invited to sign-up to have an Elder speak to their classes

several times a year.¹⁰ Since 2017, PETES has hosted a powwow, where many Indigenous students participate. The school has also had an Indigenous Cultural Worker since 2015 who works to support Indigenous students academically and emotionally. The cultural worker has also offered programming both inside and outside of school hours, including beading, moccasin making, powwow dancing, hip hop, drumming, singing, and theatre. However, these initiatives have ended completely or been vastly reduced in recent years due to staffing, COVID-19, and shifting school priorities and focus.

Tensions within the school community and the Québec curriculum

There are several tensions within the school community that teachers and school staff face. Numerous Indigenous parents have reported that not all teachers understand the importance of cultural holidays, such as moose break in the fall and goose break in the spring. Another parent disclosed that the school “has never asked us what we need or want for our kids. Nobody cares.” Several teachers also report that they do not have time to teach things outside of the curriculum as they are under pressure to follow the curriculum and prepare students for standardized testing (Howell, 2107). Moreover, that Québec has largely ignored the teaching and learning of the truths and perspectives that the TRC has called for angers many teachers. KAIROS, a Canadian faith-based ecumenical organization that works for social change, launched an “Education for Reconciliation” campaign after the TRC released its final report in 2015. This campaign 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 Québec includes very little content on Indigenous peoples

¹⁰ In the fall of 2021, the Elder who had worked with PETES since 2016, was accused of identity fraud after a Radio Canada report revealed questions about her claims of Indigenous ancestry. Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg has spoken out strongly against her, and the WQSB cut ties with the Elder. Presently, PETES does not have relations with an Elder or knowledge keeper.

and little on residential schools. The report states that although Québec has publicly expressed some commitment to including Indigenous content in the school system, significant work is still required to implement Call to Action 62 fully, “even after decades of appeals from Indigenous Peoples to include Indigenous content in the curriculum” (KAIROS, 2018). Furthermore, the report notes that the province did not:

consult with Indigenous people regarding inclusion, and there is concern about bias and inaccuracies. Treaties and the Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples are conspicuously absent, as well as critical historical processes that are relevant to Indigenous peoples in the province. (p 14)

In this context, school staff, students, and families at PETES come together, working towards a school mission with the intentions “to promote individual success and well-being in a safe, healthy community.” In the sections below, I will share some of my interpretations from my conversations with teachers and former Indigenous staff members, parents, and students. These stories have shaped my study and given its purpose and validity. Therefore, it is necessary to present these stories at the forefront because they provide meaningful understandings to the lived experiences of those in the PETES community.

“I felt good in that room:” The loss of culture at PETES

For several years, PETES hired members of the Indigenous community to provide cultural teachings and activities to students, managed by the Indigenous youth worker. Storytelling, teachings, bedding, drumming, singing, feasting, and other events were held. At one time, the large room in the school's basement was dedicated for this purpose and became a community room for Indigenous students, staff, and parents. Over the years, the community room moved and shrunk into a tiny space that housed the first-floor photocopier.

As a teacher of many of the First Nations students, I had long-established relations with Indigenous parents, and many had come to me with their concerns about the disconnection they felt within the school. When I left PETES to do my Ph.D., I stayed in contact with many of them, and the idea to do my research with PETES came from these relationships. Therefore, a necessary process in my research was the community circle I facilitated on the Zoom digital platform in December 2020. This community circle was open to all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis staff, parents, and students. During the conversation, several concerns were raised that are important to share, namely a lack of perceived understanding of what the cultural programs and staff members were attempting to achieve and the perceived absence of support for the programs. One of the participants, who I call Cindy, said:

There was very little understanding of what we [Indigenous cultural teachers] were trying to achieve. And that lack of understanding was based on, to my mind, the fact that we received something they didn't receive, which was funding, and somehow, they needed to get their hands on that funding too because it wasn't fair that we got funding. I heard a couple of teachers talk about how unfair it was that we were getting different funding they don't get. I think that mentality has got to go, and that some of the staff needs...anti-racism education, teaching. Just on that basis alone and for them to understand the treaties, understand the information that is out there, and to take the time to learn it and stop thinking that it's something against you. It is what it is. We live by this every day. Why can't you take the time as a teacher to understand what it is that we live by? Because we're here.

Cindy believes that the lack of understanding on the part of teachers and administration at PETES is connected to a dearth of education, envy about resources, and a perceived unwillingness to understand treaty relations. The stereotypical tropes of Indigenous peoples somehow “getting

more” than Canadians are also present here. Sam, another participant spoke about the feelings of being unseen and not consulted on decisions that would affect the Indigenous community:

We had community members that came in and created a centre area which was a basement, but still we made it our home. We made it our safe place. And we did that by painting the medicine wheel colours and using pictures of the members of the community to build community within our community. After sometime, they [unnamed staff at the school] went and they took over and painted all the walls. They did this without consulting with the community, not consulting with parents that are within the community, and not consulting, not even talking with the children. What message do you think that gave the kids? You don't matter, your space does not matter, your safe zone where you can be yourself, does not matter. That's the message. That's a silent...but very loud message.

The loss of the cultural teaching room and programming has impacted many parents and students who once felt that PETES was a school where they were truly seen and supported. A parent participant of the community sharing circle, who I've named Pat, shared:

It's definitely a big change in the past three years. Like, there's nothing. And these kids [Indigenous students] need someplace to go to-they need someone that can sit there with them and just let them talk, someone that they can trust. In my opinion, that someone that they can hire to do that should be only there for that...not to get pulled to teach a Physed class or walk them to the forest or other things. They need someone who is dedicated to those students, and non-Indigenous students too, if they want to learn about the culture. Being a “COVID year” should not be an excuse! If they can find time to play soccer in the gym, they can find time to give

them a half-hour to play the drums in the gym. And if they can do that [fund sports activities] then why can't they have that cultural room?

Pat speaks to the contradictions that the Indigenous community at PETES feels, which I contend are manifestations of settler colonialism and the privileging of “Canadian” experiences. In other words, sports are upheld as necessary and therefore deemed unremovable, whereas cultural activities are categorized as optional or “extras”. These perspectives perpetuate the structure of colonial hierarchy within the school community and further demote the lived experiences of Indigenous staff and students.

“A silent but very loud message: Sending away noisily without speaking.”

The loss of the cultural room and programming began before COVID-19 but has undoubtedly been heightened by it. We see this in the participants questioning of why certain things are deemed *possible despite* COVID-19, while other activities are relegated to the *impossible because* of COVID-19. Pat has repeatedly asked that the school prioritizes the staff member who is dedicated to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students rather than that person often being pulled in multiple directions. An Indigenous student at PETES, who I’ve called Taylor, shared how they feel about the loss of the room and the cultural programming:

I like it at PETES but I would rather have a cultural room to bead in. I felt good in that room, having my space from my classmates. But the people who aren't First Nations and who want to be in there, they have taken away the space away from us. If I was the principal of PETES, I would put in a cultural room for anybody who wants to go there.... it doesn't matter if they are First Nations or not. We can go there and do activities and I like talking about our culture...talking about our different cultures and being proud. In class we don't ever really talk about

anything. Just in social studies we talked about the Indians and how they lived a long time ago.

It is salient that this student feels that “non-Indigenous staff took the room away,” and the value that having a room to “feel good in” brought her. She is also clear that the cultural room should be for everyone. Pat also commented on the influence the cultural room and programming had on their entire family:

I definitely want to see change. I don't want them [her younger children] to have to experience losing their sense of culture at school. When our daughter first started doing the powwow at school, that's what got us going to the powwows every summer, all summer long. That's what took us there. If we didn't have that cultural room at PETES, I don't think we would have been on that powwow trail all summer, every summer.

The “silent but very loud” message that Cindy, Sam, Taylor, and Pat feel from the school resonated in all our conversations and steered me to examine how these words work together. The word “silent”, from the Latin *silentem*, circa 1500, means “without speech, silent, not speaking” (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). The adjective “loud”, from the Old English *hlud*, means “noisy; making or emitting noise” (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). The etymology of these words suggests that one can convey a message without speech, as silent refers to the lack of noise rather than the absence of a thought or communication. When researching the etymology of the word “message” I learned that it comes from the Medieval Latin “*missaticum*”, meaning “a sending away, sending, dispatching; a throwing, hurling” (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). Taken together, a “silent but loud message”, then, means to be “sent away noisily without speech”, which describes the feelings of my community sharing circle participants.

I assert that these silent but loud messages are forms of “polite racism” whereby oppressive actions or inactions are obscured by polite words and excuses framed as good intentions. The term “polite racism” was first used by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. decades ago and calls out the “systemic cruelty of allies who supported civil rights while criticizing its tactics, who denounced discrimination elsewhere but explained away prejudices at home” (Theoharis, 2020, para.6). When I asked participants what they would like to see changed at PETES, many spoke of the need for more education for staff and leadership to prioritize and respect cultural programming. Cindy felt that “polite racisms” need to be spoken about and addressed:

The staff at PETES needs to have some more education, and the leadership at PETES needs to prioritize Indigenous students and staff. They need to give them the leeway that they need to get the program done. And that doesn't mean that they're going to be off on their own doing whatever they want, of course, but it shouldn't be a battle. It felt as if many of the things we did, and community members that we brought in were not honoured respectfully by the school, but the school took all the credit...look at us! We have James Jones here! But the school didn't invest in those relationships.

Sam also spoke about the need for non-Indigenous school staff to learn and respect local protocols to ensure that relations are upheld with community members who are working within the school:

This person [an Indigenous cultural teacher] was coming in and doing contracts with the school and the school had an outstanding bill. You see, we tried to follow protocols, and we needed to offer sweetgrass or tobacco, and so they [the cultural teacher] went out and bought bundles of sweet grass, which ended up getting handed out to guest speakers. The deal was that the school would give them a form of compensation for it, which never happened. So, this teacher, who loves everybody

and is always supportive...they don't come to our school anymore, they have zero involvement.

I honour and thank the participants of the community sharing circle for coming forward to share their experiences at PETES. The sharing of their stories has provided a view into what is happening—and not happening—at PETES. The feelings expressed above provide insights as to what PETES might consider moving forward, including more professional learning for staff on Indigenous protocols and worldviews; increased autonomy for Indigenous programming and staff; a renewed commitment to a cultural space and programming; and an overall prioritization of the restoring of relations with the Indigenous community. In the following sections, I share insights from my interviews with teachers about relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous school community, as well as commitments to truth and reconciliation and support for Indigenous students and teacher professional learning.

“We need to get back to a focus on truth and reconciliation”: Pulling away from the pull of the pockets

During my interviews with the teaching staff at PETES, I asked them what their feelings and perspectives were about truth and reconciliation, support for Indigenous students and programs, and their professional learning. The following is an excerpt from one of my interviews with a PETES teacher I have named Brian. I begin this section with this quote as it speaks to the complexity of issues that many teachers spoke to throughout my conversations with them.

I would like to see the administration reaching out to our Indigenous families. And personally, inviting them to a feast. I would like to see and hear a land acknowledgement every day. I would love for us to have a PD [professional development] on what it means to teach to the circle of courage. What does that

mean and what does that mean in your classroom? I would love that and I think they could be done easily. I would also like more support. I don't have the resources, I don't have the conversation, I don't have the encouragement. There is no budget when you want to do things and so that lack of resources is really hard when you're dealing with children that don't come from affluent homes. I find that very hard and if I bring that up, and it is immediately shut down. There's no discussion for that. It's all on us. I walked into an empty portable. There was not a pencil in my classroom. Not a single book. Not a classroom library, nothing.

Brian is asking for the school to support Indigenous families and support teachers so that they, in turn, can support their students. We also hear them asking for the return of daily land acknowledgements and professional development so that teachers can continue to learn and grow. Teachers spoke openly about the current context at PETES, and these conversations helped me understand the complexities, tensions, and possibilities of the work ahead. We begin with one of these complexities which speaks to contradictions between purported actions and the reality of teachers and students.

Supporting Indigenous students: Walking the talk... or just talking?

I asked teachers how they felt PETES supported First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families and students. Support is vital for all students, but especially for Indigenous students, considering current and historical injustices, including inequities in education and other public services for First Nations children. Moreover, while some urban Indigenous students attend PETES, the vast majority come from the communities of Eeyou Istchee. These students are away from their families, communities, language, traditions, and land, and this must not only be understood but honoured. Many teachers I spoke to felt that PETES provided more support to Indigenous families

in years prior. Despite the current level of decreased support, continued to put forth the image of being an “Indigenous-centred” school. Nora shared that:

I think there's still a lot of learning to happen and I think many of us really don't understand. There's still a lot of negative talk about absences. There's still an undertone of... “Oh, if they come back”. I have heard this sentiment from many people at the school. I think there's been a lot of positive movement and we are far better than a lot of schools. But if you're asking if there's actual support, I would say no, because even the programs that are in place, such as the Indigenous grant, we don't have a solid person all the time or the teacher who is in the role is taken to do something else, as if it the Indigenous kids aren't a priority. Also, the idea is to catch the kids on the cusp who we could potentially get to pass over the kids who can't read yet. So yes, things are in place but are they really helpful? No, I don't think we're really getting to the root and I don't think we're building relationships with families.

Nora spoke to several crucial issues, including some staff's attitude towards absences among Indigenous students. While it is true that many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students are away for prolonged periods, this is usually due to the seasonal moose and goose hunting traditions and funerals and other community and family emergencies. Pamela said:

When many of our Cree students return to their communities for the goose and the moose hunts, teachers accept it, but there are “concerns”. It's not so much they're against them being away for the goose hunt because that's not a good reason to be away, as much as they're concerned about the impact on the learning. They don't see the goose/moose hunt as an opportunity for learning that they can mark and put on a report card.

Teachers have a right and a responsibility to be concerned about student learning, but understandings of what learning encompasses and how learning happens needs to be based on culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies (Howell, 2021). In Québec, students in Grades 2,3,4 and 5 write end-of-year board math exams. Students in Grade 6 write Ministry Math, French, and English exams, and these results are reported, analyzed, and shared. There is certainly pressure to develop the necessary competencies and skills in your students, and there is a practice at PETES to prioritize the students who “are on the cusp” instead of those who are working below grade level. Attendance is also factored into this, and impacts the support that many Indigenous students receive. Harper adds:

I think our attitudes and expectations towards some of our students and their families is problematic. Expectations get dropped for certain students based on their race or their background, their socio-economic standing... lots of reasons. We are not keeping them at a high standard... we need to have high expectations of all of them, not just the ones you think can get 90%. With our Indigenous students, I have heard it said many times that they don't get resource support unless they actually stay at the school for a year or two. There is an attitude of, 'Why invest if they are just going to go back up north?' It manifests as kids not getting a fair shake, and it's how we end up in with students in Grade 6 who are reading at a grade two level that are not on a modified program. We also have a real issue with resources being allocated under the guise of one thing, and then being used for other things, which end up not meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students.

Several teachers spoke about their concerns about the Indigenous grant that the school receives to support Indigenous students academically and emotionally. Many teachers feel that there are serious and long-term issues with how the grant is used and how the teacher in the role of

supporting Indigenous students is often “pulled” to cover other areas in the school. To get a better understanding of these concerns, the following excerpts are from three teachers about the grant:

I know that we have extra support through the native (Indigenous) grant, but I feel that's not good enough. The person who supports Indigenous students gets pulled in so many different directions, mainly to cover people who are not in or who get sick. So, before you know it, there's a whole week that's gone by and those kids haven't been seen again. I feel like that happens a lot, and it makes the relationships falter when it's not a consistent meeting with them. (Kennedy)



I think PETES does and doesn't support Indigenous students. One concern is how the grant is used. I really feel like it doesn't actually support them academically. There have been many years that I have had Indigenous students who were supposed to receive support and never did, or very rarely did. Where's the accountability for that? And there is not visibility that we support Indigenous students unless you go into specific classrooms. I do think that PETES tries culturally to do things like powwows and to bring in Elders...but to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into our school life?(Nora)



There is an issue at our school about the support our Indigenous students receive. This year I have one student who I didn't know was Indigenous until two days ago... All this time, her mom had been asking me for support for her daughter. I spoke to resource about why this child was not on our list for support. Where's the disconnect? Why am I not aware of this? This needs to change. (Evelyne)

Teachers are frustrated about what they perceive as serious misuses of the Indigenous grant and its impact on their students and, more broadly, relationship building with Indigenous families. Peter says:

I feel that PETES supports Indigenous students and their families in some ways, but we could do a lot more. The representation isn't there. The Indigenous program used to have space in the basement but that is gone now. We have an Indigenous grant, but it is often used for other things. I believe it should be fully focused on supporting Indigenous students. It feels like we used to do so much more. I'd like to see more teachers promoting a more immersive rather than "pieced together" program.

Several teachers spoke seriously about the attitudes among some staff members towards Indigenous students and about truth and reconciliation. Here, Stan speaks to these racisms:

At PETES, among some staff, there is an attitude toward Indigenous students of, "Well, they're never here, they go up north." I think there's still a systemic approach to having students conform to the system as opposed to them coming into the system and benefiting from it and being accepted for who you are. And having the system change to the kid. I've also had the discussion about having the daily land acknowledgement...we used to have it every morning. There are some people who resist that and roll their eyes, and say, "Come on... really? Do we really need that?" Honestly.... I can't imagine being in a room and someone says, "We need to make announcements about Black Lives Matter" and people say, "No, we don't." I would say that at PETES, there is tokenism. We like to think we are doing more than we do.

Many of the teachers I spoke to feel that Indigenous students and families are not being supported to the school's potential. Moreover, they have serious concerns about how the Indigenous grant is being used, the lack of cultural programs, the dearth of resources for their students, the attitudes and expectations of some staff, and the image that PETES puts forth that is not always completely truthful. In our conversations, Nigel shared:

I always wondered if First Nation kids who walked in the door feel comfortable here. Do they think people want them to be here? They are so far from home. We need to provide that sense of belonging for them. I know of a lot of teachers will personalize learning, but there are other teachers that don't.

It is clear from the teachers statements that although some work is happening, much of it occurs in “pockets” that are “pieced together” rather than inherent in the systems and structures of the school itself. Moreover, the staff member who is specifically hired to support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students is “pulled” from their role to respond to a litany of other needs. I see these two issues as connected, in that rather than functioning as a holistic organization, PETES often runs on “auto-pilot”, responding to needs in one area, by pulling from others. While I’d expect this is common in schools, it has consequences, especially when the area being pulled from is meeting needs of vulnerable students who rely and deserve the support. Clearly, teachers feel that it is possible to provide First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students with a sense of belonging is achievable when proper supports are in place, when culturally responsive pedagogy is embraced, and when cultural traditions are not only accepted but viewed as rich and meaningful learning opportunities for everyone. However, the feelings of a “pieced together and pocketed” commitment to Indigenous students and to truth and reconciliation is strongly expressed as undermining the efforts PETES intends to espouse.

The TRC Calls to Action: a priority or an afterthought?

PETES is a great school. I love being there, but our school culture could be better, including the culture of leadership and also of communication. Sometimes we're all on our "islands" and we're all just floating around and I think we take too much on. We miss opportunities for rich learning because we're busy, or we think we need to keep ticking all the boxes. I don't think it's malicious necessarily, but unfortunately, it's sometimes perceived as being token or being dismissive. (Stan)

Islands. Floating. Pockets. Pieces. These are words of isolation and disintegration that do not promote a sensibility of connectivity, groundedness, solidarity, and holism. Interestingly, the word "pocket" comes from the Anglo-French *pockete*, circa the 13th century. By the early 1900's, the word pocket was used to describe "a small area different from its surroundings" (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). The lived experiences shared by the teachers reflect how these "pockets" at PETES feel small and disconnected, rather than immersive, especially in regards to commitments and actions to truth and reconciliation.

As stated earlier, every teacher I spoke to mentioned their dedication to the PETES community. There is a sense that PETES is unique in its approach to caring for students in creative and innovative ways. For over a decade, the administration at PETES has championed an approach developed by Dr. Gordon Neufeld, a developmental psychologist based in Vancouver, B.C. . Neufeld's approach is based on attachment theory, which posits that children's development and maturation occur when they know that adults are in charge and care for them (Neufeld Institute, 2021). More recently, PETES has become focused on play, nature, and outdoor learning, which teachers in the kindergarten program initiated. While many teachers I spoke to were very optimistic about the school's outdoor learning programming, many also felt that it had become a

singular focus and vision and that the TRC Calls to Action were no longer a priority for the administration, as stated here by Harper:

As far as our commitments to the TRC Calls to Actions, I do not think it's something we talk about and we don't focus on or ever discuss how we can we bring it into our everyday. I don't think it would be that hard to do. We have daily communications everyday about outdoor learning, but we could have a paragraph every day on truth and reconciliation. And you can speak to it at every staff meeting- what are you doing in your classroom towards truth and reconciliation, and how can we support you? Having support from the top is paramount. What's in the curriculum is totally inadequate, so I think it's up to teachers to be more creative to teach the truths of our history.

The curriculum-as-planned does not reflect the responsibilities that educators hold. Several teachers spoke about the need for support and leadership from the administration and priority given to the *Calls to Action*, particularly considering the absence of truth-telling in the Québec curriculum. Evelyne shared:

As I teach Canadian history, I'm learning how flawed and empty the Québec curriculum is. It's just a very empty historical perspective on the trading of beaver pelts and living in villages and canoeing. It's nothing of substance. We need to have active and strong leadership, and a commitment to the TRC Calls to Action.

Henry spoke about the need for leadership and champions—teachers who are leaders in the school, and the need for the administration to support the champions and carry out the vision. This way, when a teacher championing the Calls to Action leaves the school, the Calls to Action remain part of the school culture. Henry says:

There are certain teachers who are incorporating Indigenous histories into their classrooms, but there's no one's steering the ship. I think there needs to be discussion and looking at it through a new lens and speaking with the [Indigenous] families. I don't really see any 'joined-up thinking' around First Nations issues right now. The administration does not champion the champions. I think we had such a thriving school in terms of the Calls to Action for a number of years, but there was not the vision on the part of the administration to sustain it once certain teachers left.

Teachers spoke about past projects that the school was engaged in, such as *Project of Heart*, and the need to reengage with them. Pamela said:

*As a school, we need to get back to a focus on truth and reconciliation because teachers need the learning too. Engaging students and teachers at the same time, through a creative means is really powerful. When we work on a project, like *Project of Heart*, as a school, we create a depth together. I'd really like to see that work come back.*

There was also a sense that PETES puts forth an image of reconciliation without doing the hard work of reconciliation, and that this work has increasingly become as performative, rather than sustaining and meaningful. Here, Harper states:

I don't think the TRC is a priority for PETES. I don't think that teachers and administration are reading them, or thinking about how they are meeting them. We do the powwow, but, it's one day where we celebrate Indigenous culture. I think that it's really powerful for our Indigenous students to have the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and their skills. I have heard their peers say, 'That's so cool, that you can do that. I didn't know you danced!' What an awesome opportunity for those

kids to feel like they have something special that that the average person doesn't have. I don't think one day is enough. But it gets so much attention, and in that way it has become a bit politicized because it looks good. I think we need to move beyond how it makes us "look good" and actually do it to build relationships with those families who come to participate in the powwow by getting to know who they are and allowing them to come in and be part of the community all year long. I'm always looking for authenticity. I'm looking for more of a collective response to where we are at in Canada, and in truth and reconciliation.

The annual powwow is, as Harper said, an incredible day of culture, festivities and learning, but it is *one* day. They and many others are looking for authentic engagement with the Calls to Action, including a vision from the leadership, and a school wide commitment. Another teacher, Jordan, agrees, reflecting:

In terms of the TRC Calls to Action, I feel like we want it to be a priority but I'm not sure if it's necessarily happening. I feel like there's a genuine respect and yearning to want to do as much as we can. I just don't know if we're following through on it to the best of our ability. I know we can always talk about roadblocks and excuses and COVID and things that are happening, but I don't know.... I think it's so different in each of the classrooms. I will get the random email now and then, but it's the same teachers every year that are really pushing it and interested.

The work of truth and reconciliation cannot be left up to individual teachers, as it is the work of school boards, administrators, and all of us. Dion (2016) reminds us that it is the responsibility of educators to accomplish restitution and reconciliation in education. She states that “this is the system that we work in. We are implicated, and we have work to do” (p. 471). However, Dion

contends that many Canadians, including some teachers, are not yet “ready” to engage in reconciliation (2016). I posit that they must first be willing to unlearn colonialism.



Figure 25: The first Powwow at PETES (Source: Miller, 2016).

Systems of education must also face their own implicitness in perpetuating colonial ideals. In, “The Privilege of Not Walking Away: Indigenous Women’s Perspectives of Reconciliation in the Academy”, Ward, Gaudet, and McGuire-Adams (2021) discuss how universities, eager to respond to the TRC Calls to Action, often uphold the colonial structures they intend to unsettle. They remind us that “universities are necessarily involved in reconciliation efforts, and there has been an effort to ‘fill the gap’ with Indigenous presence within academic institutions. This ‘filling’ effort has highlighted ongoing systemic pitfalls, barriers, and structural injustices” (p. 4). Some of these injustices include placing Indigenous peoples in positions with little power; settler scholars not speaking up when racializing comments are made; continuing to believe that Western oriented research is superior to Indigenous research methodologies and epistemologies; and the emotional, spiritual, physical, and time consuming labour that reconciliation efforts demand of Indigenous

women (Ward et. al, 2021). Like Dion, they posit that reconciliation includes all of us, and remind us that:

Although some may think it difficult to become settler allies, we encourage them to deeply consider the ongoing harms Indigenous peoples continue to experience (e.g., the ongoing loss of Indigenous peoples' lives, systemic injustices, overrepresentation in prisons and child welfare systems, and health disparities)... These truths are difficult to take; to teach to colleagues, administrators, leadership, and students; to speak of in our research; and to reconcile with on a daily basis. This is the "labour" we speak of when we talk about emotional labour. We feel this immense loss in our blood, bones, flesh, and hearts. This is what is often missing in settler allyship. We do not need settler guilt or shame in our solidarity efforts. We need settler allies to engage in critical self-reflection in order to assist in Indigenous-driven reconciliation efforts, to demonstrate their allyship...(p. 19)

Similarly, a recent piece that myself and colleagues published in *The Conversation* urged universities and schools to acknowledge how colonial education has reproduced anti-Indigenous racisms and called on "teachers and leaders to continue to address how teacher education programs, as well as provincial curricula, continue to be largely framed by settler-colonial worldviews, histories, and perspectives" (Howell, Brant-Birioukov, and Ng-A-Fook, 2021, para. 14). Within hours of the article's publication, some readers posted several harmful, anti-Indigenous comments, perpetuating the very settler colonial violence that as the authors, we sought to disrupt. While the CEO of the Conversation removed the comments, this serves to remind us of the ongoing, pervasive, and dangers of anti-Indigenous racisms that are normalized in Canadian settler culture, including education that has perpetuated and maintained the oppression and exclusion of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, as in the comments mentioned above, these injustices are normalized by colonial logics and work to "erase Indigenous histories, geographies, and

agency...and should not be considered innocent oversights, but are central to a deliberate politics of dispossession and disappearance” (Tomiak, 2016, p. 14).

Canadian culture, Faculties of Education, and schools such as PETES are predicated on such colonial logics. Not surprisingly, then, colonial logics persist. However, as Canadian educators, we have been called on to act. We have been called upon to teach our students about the historical and current injustices many Indigenous peoples and communities face, the truths of Canadian history, and the strength, resilience, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples (TRC, 2015a). Therefore, we must take seriously the concerns of teachers who shared that for many reconciliation is not a school-wide effort but rather happens in “pockets” and “bubbles” in individual classrooms. Jordan shared that:

I went to school in Québec and now I am teaching in Québec, and the curriculum is still Québec- centered. I think there are some pockets of individuals at PETES who are taking it up, and inputting the missing pieces of our history, but there are still so many teachers that don't. They follow the Québec curriculum, and they're very curriculum tasked and focused and meticulous. They “cover” the whole curriculum but they're missing a huge amount of information that's being left out. Information that's really important, and current, and still has so many repercussions today.

Currently, it is clear that the TRC Calls to Action are not being addressed adequately at the school. The ramifications of this are felt within the school community and impact what students learn about the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples- and what they do not learn.

Many teachers feel that commitments must be made by both the school leadership and at the board level, and that professional learning opportunities must be accessible and or mandated to all teachers. Harper reflected:

I do wish that the leadership would make this a priority, just like Neufeld, just like nature and play. Those are all very leader driven. We have all gotten our fair share of Neufeld training, because that was a priority at the leadership level. So, it can be done. I think we might not be addressing it because we are walking around like 'this is who we are'. But it's not a true representation. I want to see us do better as a collective. I think we need to know our true history. I would imagine that we all have various degrees of knowledge about Canadian history, but some are of us absolutely have no idea. We need to learn and work together.

Leadership and professional learning for teachers were also discussed in the community sharing circle that I held with Indigenous participants. Marie Wilson, one of the commissioners of the TRC, once said this about the pathway to reconciliation: “It's not going to be fast, and it's not going to be easy, but it's going to be rich and uplifting for us all” (The Quad, 2016, para 8). At PETES, it seems as though the pathway to reconciliation has in many respects mainly been abandoned, perhaps not intentionally, but through lack of leadership, support, and commitment. Those that remain “walking the path” are determined but are calling for the company of their school community.

Teacher (un)learning: “We have to get them fired up first—we need to touch their hearts.”

Most teachers feel that there is very little professional learning offered by the school board or by the school, and many feel that they urgently need it. This section will focus on teacher professional (un)learning, which was a focus of many of the conversations I had with teachers. Harper speaks to the connection between learning and action:

We need some professional development. We need to start by giving an overview and a real true reflection on history, the repercussions and the current situations because of that. I think a lot of people would be far more on board because I think people are in the dark and don't really get it. In the truest sense of the word of just

not knowing. I think if we started that way, then people would be passionate and want to make a change. We have to get them fired up first-we need to touch their hearts.... I think that they need to really understand, because it's like anything if you don't really understand where it's coming from. Or you are so disconnected from something you've never experienced anything in your life, then how can you possibly try to relate if it's not touching your heart.... so, you have to start from a place where you're going to move somebody to action.

Several teachers identified two main obstacles that they saw as contributing to teacher (un)learning. One is the absence of truth and reconciliation in the curriculum, and the other is what many perceive as the school's sole focus on outdoor play, nature, and learning. Nora discussed how the lack of priority around reconciliation from the administration impacted teacher learning and action:

I think, as a school, we need to have mandatory professional development. There are too many of us who just want to keep doing whatever we've been doing forever, and we think that this isn't in the curriculum so we don't have to teach it. Teaching about colonialism and toward reconciliation is not a priority because for so many teachers, they are focused on what they have to get through. If the vision was that this is our top priority at the school, it would open people's eyes even more and give them tools. Right now, our focus is on outdoor education and everything is focused solely on that...all the newsletters and the lens from which all flows. If leadership could make reconciliation and Indigenous perspectives a priority, then I think teachers would step up and start to do more if that's what they thought was the priority and the vision.

Teachers also spoke to the disconnect between what is represented and what is accurate, and many claim that they have had none or very little professional development. Here, Harper says:

I think there is a lot of celebrating through our communiques or having the local press pop in to see our three tents outside in the yard. But in reality, most of us don't have any professional development in outdoor learning or land-based curriculum. So, it just looks good. It's like a snapshot. Some teachers are rocking certain things for sure, but it's not throughout, and I think it's a false representation. And it saddens me because there is an underlying hypocrisy.

Some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit training (FNMI training) has been offered through the school board for several years, and teachers spoke about this training positively. Many felt that the lessons they learned through this training provided much-needed education and resources, but there was little take-up in the school community. Harper shares:

I understand it takes a long time to make change. But not this long. There's a lot that we all could be implementing in our classrooms across the whole school, that would be beneficial for all of our students, not just a few. I've said several times since the beginning of the year that should really implement some of the pedagogies I have learned from the FNMI group. It ties into our other philosophies of nature learning, and land-based learning, so it's not an add on, we're not giving teachers more work. It fits so beautifully into that system, but it doesn't get integrated.

Brian spoke about the lack of learning opportunities and the misrepresentation of what is taking place in the school:

I don't see PETES as a place where ethical relationality is present. I think there is a thought that it is happening. And there might even be a little bit of a will. For the last two years, I went to the FNMI network meetings, and I listened to people from

our school talk about 'how we do this and 'how we do that and I don't see it. We're supposed to have monthly meetings at school and we've not met once. There are a few teachers at PETES that have agency for our First Nations students, but many do not. Not long ago, I heard a teacher say, 'I just feel like we're so overdone with the Aboriginal stuff here at school, it's just jammed down our throats. I just froze. I couldn't even say anything. I'm thinking, there's been nothing shoved down my throat! I'm asking for it and getting nothing.

The need for learning and unlearning, including a commitment from the administration, is crucial for PETES to move forward toward truth and reconciliation. Some teachers are taking the initiative to learn as personal commitments to reconciliation, such as a massive open online course (MOOC) as one teacher is doing. Jordan also speaks about the need for accountability, long-term goals, and teamwork:

There's a huge disconnect there in terms of awareness, and we need some serious training in terms of history. I think there's a lot of fear of doing it wrong, or being disrespectful, or not knowing enough. I've always been very self-driven, and I didn't come with that knowledge, I had to learn it as I went and I'm still learning as I go. We're talking about hundreds of years of history that we need to unpack and figure out. We need to support each other. If one person did some research on one area, and then shared that with their triads, that would work. But it has to start right from the beginning of the year, and it has to continue and be revisited throughout the year. And accountability, where are we at and what have we done?

There is work to do moving forward. The teachers who shared with me were courageous in their honesty about what they felt and wished for. They believe that there is a lack of support for Indigenous students and families, inadequate understanding of the needs and traditions of

Indigenous students, and an absence of school-wide commitments to the TRC Calls to Action. They are asking for professional development for all staff and meaningful opportunities to learn year-long. They want PETES to *be* all the things they believe it portrays itself as being.

Concluding thoughts: A (re)commitment to truth and reconciliation and (un)learning with and from Indigenous families, students, and staff

As I write the concluding remarks of this chapter, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland is delivering the Liberal Government's fiscal update. Included is 40 billion dollars for First Nations child welfare compensation and reform. Marc Miller, minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, stated, "This is 30 years of the cost of failure, and that cost is high" (McCharles, 2021, para. 10). The failure that Minister Miller refers to is the years of inaction when, as Cindy Blackstock says, "governments knew better but didn't do better" (Barrera, 2019, para. 22).

We "know better" now, thanks in part to the work of the TRC and the courageous Survivors who shared their stories. We know better because of the brave survivors of the sixties scoop and federal day schools. We know better thanks to the advocacy of Inuk survivors of the government's "mishandling" of tuberculosis treatment and the "forced relocations" to the high arctic. We know better due to the resilient women and family members who shared their truths during the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. And we know better due to the tireless work of leaders such as Cindy Blackstock, Alanis Obomsawin, Pam Palmater, Justice Sinclair, and to the hundreds of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis authors who have written stories, songs, poems, and histories to help us learn and unlearn.

Like the government of Canada, PETES "knows better" too, but it appears they believe they are doing better already, or because they *were* doing better, they must *still* be doing better. This sentiment was captured many times as teachers expressed feelings of hypocrisy and

misrepresentation at PETES, despite good intentions. While good intentions are honourable, they do not guarantee action. “Caring is not enough,” Cindy Blackstock (2013) says. “It doesn’t do anything to make things right. It’s a starting point. The real test is what you *do*”(45:10).

What we learn from the stories shared in this chapter is that there is much work to do at PETES. Former First Nations staff members want to be respected for the work that they are doing. They want their protocols and worldviews to be recognized and trusted. They want to be consulted on decisions made and given the resources, autonomy, and support to develop and sustain vital, culturally relevant programs. They want staff at PETES to have anti-racism education and for the leadership to believe in them. Moreover, they wish for a comfortable and permanent space to call their own so that students can be proud to come to the room and be First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Parents also want this for their children and feel a sense of pretence when other activities are given space and preference.

Teachers are asking for similar changes. They need professional learning opportunities. They are requesting more cultural programming in the school, and they desperately require more support for their Indigenous students. Many mentioned that representation on the staff must be addressed, specifically concerning the lack of Indigenous and other racialized staff members. Teachers are also appealing to the leadership to prioritize Indigenous students and families and make visible and sustainable commitments to the TRC Calls to Action. One teacher summarized what they see as the necessary change that need to take place:

Here at PETES, there are a few factors that we have at play...we have tried to have a First Nations person to support students and staff, but there has been a lot of absenteeism in that position over the years. Second, I definitely think we need to hire more First Nations staff. We are very white- not that that's anyone's fault but it is a reality that we are not very diverse. Third, I think we're lacking leadership in

bringing the TRC Calls to Action to life. Fourth, the grant we have for First nations academic support is often used for other things. Our staff member doing First Nations support did not even have a schedule for the longest time, and gets pulled for many other things.

Changes at PETES will only happen when the community comes together and as teachers and staff unlearn the lessons that colonialism has taught and expose the workings of colonialism in the structures and perspectives of the school itself. Several teachers are working towards truth and reconciliation in their classrooms and are frustrated with what they feel is a lack of leadership and commitment “from the top.” Moreover, they struggle with the deficits of the Québec curricula, the absence of representation in the school, and the inaccurate narratives that are being told and sustained through an image that many see as wishful thinking. As one parent told me, “I have no idea what they [the administration] is waiting for. The funding is there. Our kids [Indigenous kids] need to be seen. They need to be valued. Parents are leaving the school and going elsewhere.”

This research began when an Eeyou student's parent came to me with frustration and sadness that her children were not being valued for their knowledge, culture, and tradition in PETES classrooms. She expressed disappointment that the school did not ask Indigenous families what they need and want for their children. This study evolved from that conversation, and the circle with the Indigenous staff members, parents and students, and the perspectives of the teachers, helped me to deeply understand PETES as a community.

Stories are powerful. They inform our understandings of our past, present, and future. They can bring us together but also keep us apart. Stories can inspire transformation in the institutions we call school and how we imagine them. At PETES, there has been a “reimagining revolution” for well over a decade now and a commitment and desire to “think outside the box.” This desire to reimagine and “think differently” is foundational for change. In the last several

years, PETES has focused on play and outdoor learning. Most of the kindergarten programming is now based on playful learning in and with nature, and there is a desire to advance outdoor learning and playful learning throughout the school. I suggest that we consider broadening our understandings of outdoor learning and land-based learning to include truth, reconciliation, and ethical relationality. How might ethical relationality, as described in previous chapters, help teachers unlearn colonialism, and how might this unlearning be practically taken up as pedagogical and curricular decisions? This is the inquiry before me, and educational leaders across the country.

In the next chapter, I share the stories that teacher candidates in Dwayne's class discussed with me and my hermeneutical interpretations of those stories. It was inspiring and essential for me to speak with them, as they provided me with an understanding of how Dwayne's conceptualizations of ethical relationality manifested in a teacher education class. This will help us understand how ethical relationality as a concept might look in praxis in schools such as PETES.

Chapter 6: Provocations from the Belly Button

It had been a warm fall day as I prepared to have a conversation with my very first research participant for my doctoral work. I spent time in the backyard that afternoon, harvesting the gangly pole beans, the yellow tomatoes and composting the remnants of the garden. I had shared the space with the red squirrels who run along the top of our rickety wooden fence, pausing to add to their already heaping clutches of acorns. The sun was low in the sky as I made my way inside, prepared a cup of tea, and clambered up the stairs to my home office. I turned on my computer, opened a brand-new moleskin journal, and logged into the google meets meeting. As I waited for Mae to join, I reflected on how different this was from how I had hoped to do this research. I never imagined meeting with participants over the computer, and I was nervous that I would have difficulty creating a welcoming and generous space during my conversations. Before COVID-19, I had planned to travel out to Treaty 6 to hold these interviews and go for more walks in the River Valley.

Suddenly, I heard a voice exclaim, “Hi Lisa!” and saw a young woman's expectant face smiling at me. “Mae! Thank you so much for being here!” I answered. Throughout our conversation I learned that Mae was a fourth year student in the Teacher Education Programme at the University of Alberta (U of A). Mae shared that she struggled with a sense of disconnect between many of the courses due to what she described as her fellow teacher candidates doing the “bare minimum,” “checking off the boxes,” and “lack of commitment to learning.” In a conversation I had with Ava, another U of A teacher candidate, Mae’s concerns were echoed:

In general, I think the teacher education programme at U of A is woefully inadequate...the majority of my peers haven't taken the time to think about these things (Indigenous perspectives) and the curriculum enough. In one of my classes, we had a community sharing circle , and so many of my classmates gushed about

how much they had learned and how it has changed them and how different of an educator they would be. I was so angry...I remember thinking, that this course is just the tip of the iceberg and you all think you are done with it and that you're going to be better teachers. This is only a start. If you go out into the real world and never think critically or unpack concepts, you will not learn or unlearn.

In part, the three teacher candidates from U of A who participated in my research (who I've named Mae, Elsa, and Ava) took Donald's *Perspectives in Aboriginal Education* course as an elective in the winter of 2020 because they were all searching for a sense of authenticity, meaning, and a deeper understanding of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives.

Teaching from the belly button

In our conversations, I came to hear Dwayne's teaching described as gentle, respectful, spiritual, accepting, healing, ceremonial, and thoughtful. Mae explained:

The relational aspect of his teaching was very healing. I told him one time that he teaches from the heart, which is a corny thing to say, but the Elders say that when you really care about something, you feel it in your belly button first...well, Dwayne definitely teaches from his belly button.

While there is a vast field of research and resources on authentic learning experiences for students, teacher authenticity or “pedagogies of the belly button” are harder to find (Pinner, 2019; Serrano et al., 2018). The depth of authenticity that the teacher candidates described in Dwayne's teaching are significant because of the impact it had on their learning. Moreover, the conceptualization of teaching from/caring from/learning from your belly button provides us a place to start thinking interpretively.

Physiology and etymology

Lana Whiskeyjack (2022) is a multidisciplinary treaty Iskwew artist from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty Six Territory, Alberta, who creates digital stories as intergenerational traces.

In her video story entitled “Ohtisiy,” she says:

Within the Cree language, we identify our name and land connection through our ohtisiy (belly button), reflecting that we are a matrilineal peoples. Knowing where we come from is vital to know where we are going. There are protocols in raising our children. My bellybutton is connected to my great grandmothers.

The belly button or “ohtisiy” connects a person to home, tradition, protocol, and place. It has very different connotations in clinical terms and in western cultures. In figure 26 below, we see this lineage as a still from the digital story.

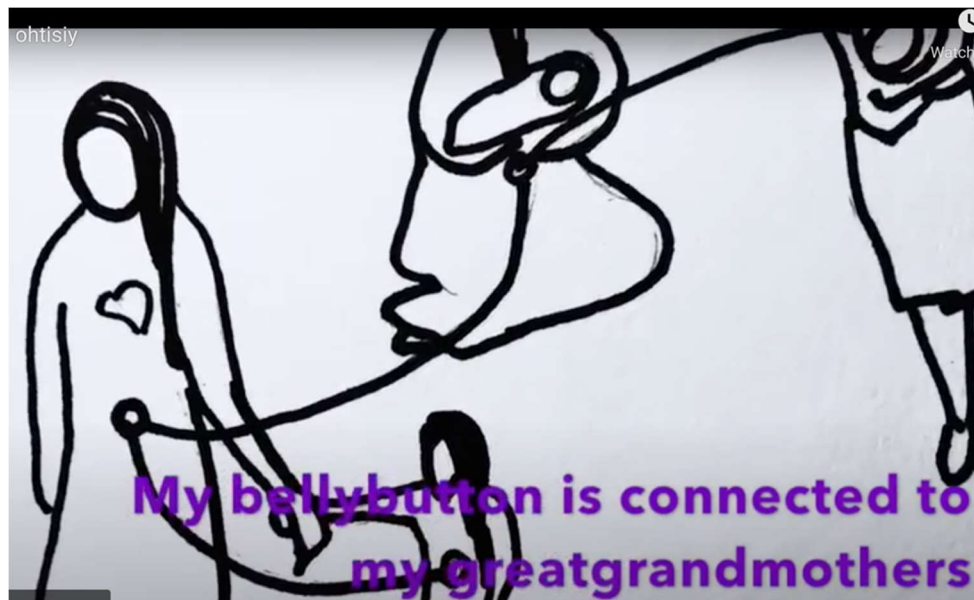


Figure 26: ohtisiy (Source: Lana Whiskeyjack, 2022)

In medical terms, the belly button, or navel, is referred to as the umbilicus and is a protruding, flat, or hollowed area on the abdomen (Imaios, 2021). The first known colloquial use of the word belly button to describe the human navel was in 1887 (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Etymologically, the word comes from combining two nouns, belly and button. Originally, “belly” was a Germanic

word used to describe a “leather bag or pouch” and gradually evolved to mean a part of the body in English (Online Etymology dictionary, 2021). By 1200, the Old English word for the belly, *buc*, was being used to describe both the inner and outer stomach, particularly concerning gluttony (Online Etymology dictionary, 2021). The word is also related to the Middle English word *bellows*, which refers to the bulging part of a convex surface (Online Etymology dictionary, 2021). The word button, circa 1300, comes from the Old French *boton*, referring to something that pushes up, or thrusts outwards (Online Etymology dictionary, 2021). Interestingly, the phrases “button pusher” or “push one's buttons” are used most often to describe people who use manipulative, childish, and provocative statements to elicit strong, negative responses (Merriam-Webster, 2021). In later sections of this chapter, I hope to playfully use the term “belly button pusher” to understand how teaching from/feeling with/learning through the belly button is provocative and is meant to be that way.

The words *belly* and *button* could mean a pouch that protrudes or a protruding part of a pouch. Although long associated with the stomach, in physiological terms, our navel is not connected to our stomach but our urinary system. After we are born, the internal part of the umbilicus closest to the navel degenerates into ligaments, while the more internal structures become part of the circulatory system and are found in the pelvis supplying blood to parts of the bladder, ureters, and ductus deferens (Dalen, 2017). That this is not common knowledge is noteworthy and signifies the disconnection we have to our anatomy. I think, too, of the ways that the belly button is embodied in many western cultures, encompassing silliness (are you an innie or an outy?), selfishness (navel-gazing), patriarchy (traditionally, after the cord is clamped, it is the father who severs the connection between mother and child), and sexism (the hyper-sexualization of the female navel). The dried stump often shrivels up and falls off the baby within a week or two after birth and is forgotten. We readily forget that our umbilicus connected us to our mother and

provided us with nourishment and life. Nevertheless, we carry the memory of this relationship in the very centre of our body for our entire life.

Belly Button Ceremony

In *Nitsiyihkâson: The Brain Science Behind Cree Teachings of Early Childhood Attachment*, Pazderka et al. (2014) describe the community-based research project they did in Saddle Lake with Elders and community members to restore culturally appropriate birth and parenting practices. Elders in the community came together in a community sharing circle and spoke in Cree about teachings related to pregnancy, birth, and parenting, including the bellybutton ceremony:

The Cree practice a special ritual of disposing of the newborn's belly button. Rather than throwing it away, they will make a special effort to, for example, bury it in a special place. The belief is that where the belly button is placed helps define the child's path in the world. Burying it helps to keep the child grounded so that his or her spirit has a home...this reflects the...view that it is important to give thought to the child's place and path in the world; that the wishes placed upon the child's future are valuable and require conscious attention. (p. 9)

The belly button is spiritual, connecting the child to home, tradition, family, and *who* they are and *who* they come from. When I think of Mae's statement that Dwayne “teaches from his belly button,” I think about the belly button's sacredness for the Cree and the etymology of the words belly and button. In other words, by teaching from his belly button, Dwayne teaches from his spirit. His teachings and *ways of teaching* are connected to his sense of place and his connections to place. They are the teachings of *who* he comes from. In response, his students feel a sense of profound reverence and connection while in his presence. Rather than focusing on *what they will* become, Dwayne facilitates his student to inquire about *who they come from*. His teaching guides

them towards their belly buttons, to what connects them to their kinship relations, family stories, place, and understanding of knowledge and learning.

In the next section, I will expand on these ideas by weaving what Mae, Ava, and Elsa shared with me alongside the philosophical notions Gadamer put forth, particularly his conceptualizations of the “shared life” and the “I and Thou.”

“I know I’m getting close to home when the trees change”: Gadamer’s “I and the Thou”

In Chapter 1, I wrote extensively about how Donald's conceptualization of ethical relationality has shaped my study. Specifically, I was inspired by how ethical relationality does not seek to deny differences, but rather positions ourselves as related to “and implicated in, the lives of those that have gone before us and to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others...and how our futures are similarly tied together” (Donald, 2009, p. 7). Mae, Ava, and Elsa each spoke about developing a profound sense of coexistence with their classmates, surroundings, and their sense of place while in Dwayne's class. This did not always come easily or without discomfort, as Elsa explains:

We went on a River Valley Walk. It was -30 C outside and we walked for two and a half hours. I remember feeling like I don't want to be here! This is not what I want to do on a -30 day! We all showed up in snow pants and multiple mittens. Although I loved hearing the stories that Dwayne told, I also felt that it was so cold and we could have just done that in the classroom. I didn't really get it. As the course went on, and I learned that it wasn't about being in the classroom, it was about being in place. And as we went on other walks that were cold, what had been unenjoyable became enjoyable. It's not about learning in the classroom. He (Dwayne) could have said nothing on the walk and it would have been the walk that was valuable

because being in place was what mattered the most. I now value being outside because of those walks, knowing who walked in those places before me, and being in relationship with the trees and the river valley.

I am struck by Elsa's awareness of her physical discomfort and her cognitive framework about what it is we should do and not do on a -30 C day. Her focus on *being cold* and attending to the cold made it impossible for Elsa to be in attunement with the river valley itself. As Gadamer (1992) writes, “where one is not concerned with learning how to control something, we will always and again learn” (p. 235). On that first walk, consumed by the cold, Elsa “*did not get it.*” As the walks went on, she understood that being in place was what mattered, of being akin to those who had come before, and of being in relation to the trees and the valley. Gradually, the attentiveness to her own physiological needs and her desire to *control the cold* gave way to an attunement towards what Gadamer (1989) conceptualizes as the “shared life.” He writes:

In human relations, the important thing is, as we have seen, to experience the thou truly as a thou—i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs.... Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another.... When two people understand each other, this does not mean that one person 'understands' the other. Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so. (p. 361)

Gadamer believes that to truly experience the “Thou” (what he later refers to as “the other”), we must let the thou say something to us...we must embrace the openness that brings us to listen to something other than ourselves. Similar to ethical relationality, this openness does not ask that we

deny our differences but that we instead position ourselves in relation to each other while knowing that this means we will encounter things different from us. I contend that Gadamer's understandings of a shared life extend to the beyond human world and include all forms of kinship. Risser (2019) explains that Gadamer's ideas of openness involve “both the I and the thou belonging not so much to themselves but to the world...but more than this...in the openness to the other, the I undergoes a learning” (p.8). According to Gadamer, a “genuine experience of nature can only occur if nature is treated as Thou” (Grün, 2005, p. 166), thus positioning nature *as relation* to human beings. Thus, Gadamer advocates for a deep and genuine relation towards the thou and believes that in these encounters, we begin to understand our selves and communality (Grün, 2005, p. 167).

When I re-read and thought about Elsa's experiences of being in place, it was apparent how her openness allowed her to shift from being the “I” in the walks. The trees, the river valley, and the moon thus became the “thou and the I”:

On our first day of class, Dwayne introduced moon teachings. We started the course in January, and it was the kindness moon, and we learned that because this is the coldest time of year, we have to help each other out. I remember being so excited about looking for moons. Now, if I haven't gone for a walk, or taken the time to look around me, or paid attention to the moon teachings, I feel very disconnected. Going for walks really help me feel more like myself.

Gadamer describes interactions between the “I and the thou” as a partnership, which requires taking part in something larger than oneself (2000a, p. 46). In taking part in something larger than oneself, we often learn things about ourselves that we do not understand. As we work to understand, “we must break down resistance in ourselves if we wish to hear the other as other”

(Gadamer, 2007, p. 371). By forming relations with the river valley, the cold air, and the moon, Elsa could (re)connect with herself, recognizing that when she became attentive to the land, sky, and water, she felt more like herself. In Gadamerian terms, Elsa's openness to the thou strengthened her awareness of herself, affording her an opportunity not only “to recognize in principle the limitation of one’s own framework,” but also to “go beyond one’s own possibilities” (2000b, p. 284). The river valley walks revealed possibilities of ethical relationality, where communality is found:

For me, ethical relationality is knowing we are all one. It started on that very first day when we did the walk, together with the land, experiencing that together. When Dwayne would tell stories, we were all so cold- an 'I can't feel my toes cold'. We didn't know each other at that point but we were all connected by it being so cold.

This passage strikes me as compelling, as Elsa identifies *being cold* as the experience that binds her and her classmates. *Being cold* has transformed from a physiological discomfort into an experience that puts the I in relation to the thou. On the first walk, Elsa did not understand why they had to be walking in the River Valley to listen to the stories Dwayne told. As time went on, as she walked, she began walking in temporal relation, at a slower pace. Cynthia Chambers (2008) writes that a curriculum of place calls for a different sense of time, which is invoked for Elsa as she walks and listens to Dwayne's stories. “People who dwell in these places have stories that go back to the time before stories, back to the time when these places came into being,” writes Chambers (2008, p. 2). Thus, walking in time shifts our understandings of time, our time in a place, and calls us to the question who and where we come from.

“Those stories came from his bellybutton”: Walking towards home

Throughout the walks, place was revealed, revered, restor(y)ed. Fragmented, fragile, and fraught stories were transformed towards holism. Students were invited to engage by way of all their humanity, and this was transformative, as Mae explains:

The walks were so important because they touched all aspects of our humanity-physical, spiritual, emotional, mental. It’s very much a living relational history. You are on land that people lived on for thousands of years. People lived literally right here. And Dwayne tells us stories and those stories come from his belly button.

If we return to our etymological discussion of the word belly/button, we remember that the word bellybutton literally means “a protrusion from a sac” and that in most western cultures, the belly button is not thought of philosophically or spiritually, or even remembered as what once gave us life. Most often, bellies and belly buttons are regarded as body parts that we consider unattractive and often cover-up, or conversely, hypersexualized. However, in many cultures around the world, belly buttons are celebrated as a connection to the sacred; in India, the navel is the site of one of the six chakras (Mallinson, J. & Singleton, 2017); in China, the bellybutton is referred to as “shénquè,” which means “divine imperfection or mark of the ancestors”(Abbate, 2010, para. 1). In Japan, the navel was considered the center of where life begins, and figurines from the early Jomon period are adorned with tiny balls of clay at the center to emphasize the navel (Naumann, 2000).

As we read earlier, for many First Nations, including the Nehiyawk (Cree), the belly button is that which connects you to home. In “In considerations of belly buttons,” Sylvie Vigneux (2015) retells a story told to her by a friend:

This friend had been introduced to an Elder who asked her, in Cree, where she was from. At least, that is what she thought he asked her. She responded, naturally, with where she was from and the places she had lived. “No,” he insisted, pointing firmly

at her belly button and repeating the question. They went back and forth like this for a while until she realized her mistake. *Tante ohci kiya?* The Elder was asking her not *where* are you from, but *who* are you from. (para 2)

Tante ohci kiya? Or “Who we are from?” is the “thou of our I”; the relations that we are born into, the place we call home. It is the connection to our centre, roots, and belly button. The invisible cord connects us to our blood memories, our ancestral ties, our homes, and our implications in these places and our relations to them. It was Elsa's understanding when she says:

I think about driving home, to my family's home outside of Fort McMurray. I know I'm getting close to home when the trees change, and that represents me and who my family is. They hunt moose and snare rabbits, and it is a different lifestyle than on the prairies. Dwayne says it is the opposite for him...because when he sees the prairies, he knows he's home. So, my understanding that the trees are my family, and my family is my family...that's ethical relationality to me.

Unlearning Colonial logics: Finding our way back to our belly buttons

How do we find our way back home to that which connects us to the *who of who we are?* To explore this, we will return to an aspect of my conceptual framework, which is Donald's conceptualization of moving from a place where Canadians learn *about* Indigenous peoples to a place of learning *from* them. In the previous section, we learned how the pedagogy and curriculum that Dwayne puts forth is felt as coming from his belly button. *What* he teaches, *how* he teaches, and *where* he teaches facilitates the journey teachers make back to their belly buttons, moving from acknowledging and truth-telling to relating and restor(y)ing. The journey back to the belly button begins with unlearning the colonial logics that have severed the connection to our kinship relations and continue to be foundational to the damaging and divisive stories that perpetuate relationship

denial (Donald, 2021). In this section, will return to the stories that Mae, Ava, and Elsa shared as we work to understand how we might think about unlearning as an “openness” rather than as “something we do.”

From doing to being: A shared life

Throughout this thesis, I have used the term “unlearning” to describe a process frequently referred to as decolonizing. The word “decolonize” is commonly used to describe the process of resisting settler colonialism and is defined in various ways, including pedagogies that attend to and challenge ongoing colonial structures (Madden, 2015), the repatriation of land to Indigenous Peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012), and the realization of Indigenous determination as well as resistance to new forms of imperialism (Stewart-Harawira, 2005). It is helpful to turn to Gadamer's understanding of a shared life:

We may perhaps survive as humanity if we would be able to learn that we may not simply exploit our means of power and effective possibilities, but must learn to stop and respect the other as another, whether it is nature or the grown cultures of peoples and nations; and if we would be able to learn to experience the other and the others, as the other of our self, in order to participate with one another. (pp. 235-236)

Gadamer reminds us that the survival of humanity rests on our openness to experience the other in others as well as the other in ourselves. Settler colonialism, as I have discussed previously, has worked to consistently dehumanize “the other.” Gadamer advocates for the exact opposite by asking us to see the other in ourselves. *To be the other* is to be in *relation with an other*. We see this in Elsa’s thinking:

I'd been learning about decolonizing education, but not in the way I learned about it from Dwayne. Beforehand, I understood it as taking away colonial barriers from education. Now, I understand more as learning and engaging with the land, and

starting from the ground up, rather than starting somewhere and taking away.

Unlearning is a journey that can't be measured. I was looking for strategies to bring into the classroom and wanting to understand how I could 'do' decolonizing work, but now I understand that it is a way of being.

What resonates here is Elsa's gradual understanding from “doing” to “being.” This process, as described by Mae, includes unlearning:

I wrote the word decolonize in one of my papers, and Dwayne crossed it out and put 'unlearning'. It made me stop and think, 'What the hell does decolonize even mean?' When you think about unlearning, it is very specific...it is about unlearning something you have learned that is harmful and/or inaccurate. Dwayne helped me learn and unlearn by showing us how we had learned things and how we have all been colonized. A game-changer with Dwayne is that he includes himself; that he has been colonized to, and that he is unlearning. This never happens-that you have a native professor at the front of the classroom including themselves in the narrative...it really opens the door to truly understanding the unlearning process...it is not that we are just unlearning particular information...it is our entire culture, it is how we live our lives.

“The problem with learning,” writes Bonchek (2016), “is not learning. It is unlearning...to embrace new logics...we have to unlearn old ones. Unlearning means something is at stake and that we must leave something behind. Unlearning is not about forgetting. It is about the ability to choose an alternative mental model or paradigm” (para 3). Mae explains:

We talked a lot about how our colonial culture is obsessed with growth and progress, and we are constantly trying to not be in nature, and not be who we are as human beings. This obsession with growth has completely devalued local

knowledge, of being, and knowing who you are. Just because knowledge is older and not scientifically validated doesn't mean that it's not valuable. I realized I needed to unlearn what I thought about knowledge.

As Mae acknowledges, talking about colonial culture was instrumental to her understanding it. Ava too speaks to thinking about how she thought about knowledge but also about living together differently:

How do I understand and treat other ways of knowing? How do I engage voices in my teaching that I do not understand? How do I live differently in my day today? How do I want to be interpreting the world and how do I want to be affecting those around me? These are the questions I carry with me...that I grapple with every day.

Gadamer (2001) once proposed that “education is self-education...meaning that to educate oneself is a cultivation, a formation... a self-cultivation” (p. 529). Unlearning is self-cultivation, grappling, and unknowing. This self-education, according to Gadamer, can only be achieved when we *play*. By play, Gadamer is speaking about leeway, or the freedom and ability to act and move (Liang, 2013). Gadamer (1989) tells us that play occurs when “over and above their wanting and doing, the player is taken over...which has no purpose other than to bring something forth” (p.108). Ava recounts:

We read Thomas King's book, “The Way We Tell Stories.” And we learned about stories as ways that people express their understandings of the world and their place in it. We talked about how to play with telling stories in a way that's true to our teaching. We can't change the curriculum, but we can play with how we understand it. How are we going to talk about this rather than what are we going to talk about?

Dwayne's pedagogical choices offered his students *the leeway, the play*, to grapple with the concepts *at play*, to loose themselves and to experience the freedom from the traditional margins of knowing (Gadamer, 1989). Metaphorically, he poked at their bellybuttons, prompting them to ask who and where they come from.

The bellybutton pusher: "He kept asking us questions that we didn't have any answers for"

As we explored earlier in this chapter, a person who "pushes someone's buttons" is often thought of as purposefully provoking another to elicit a strong emotional reaction (Meriam Webster, 2021). Often, pushing someone's buttons involves provoking that which causes them feelings of vulnerability. I see Donald's curricular provocations as instances of play, leeway, and the space to dwell in that which has been stirred up purposefully. His provocations push on that which we thought we knew. We hear this in the dialogue I had with Elsa and Ava:

Dwayne's course was very challenging. He kept asking us questions that I didn't have any answers for. I am a person that likes things to be laid out and organized and I like that there's a right answer. I was intimidated and lost for the first few weeks, and I didn't know where to begin. And then I began to see that that was the point. I began to see that there are no right answers and that unlearning is being open to not knowing.



Dwayne's class was very emotional for me. In class I was either sad or I was angry or I was hopeful or I was joyful. It was emotionally engaging on multiple levels. We learned a lot about epistemology, and how we uphold some stories as valid while others aren't even though there is not much difference to them. It's just that one of those stories has been considered valid by society and one has not. I had never thought about it like that. I'm trying to learn to just sit back and listen, and to be

okay with not knowing the answers. I'm not very good at that. I'm starting to realize that I have more work to do in that direction.

What resonates in both Elsa and Ava's thinking is how Dwayne's teaching provoked emotions of intimidation, sadness, anger, hopefulness, a sense of being lost, an openness to wonder, and a rethinking of the promise of correct answers. Both Ava and Elsa spoke about needing to learn to be okay with not knowing the answers. I am reminded of Gadamer (1989) when he wrote that “discourse that is intended to reveal something requires that... that thing be broken open by the question” (p. 363). Dwayne's discussions and questions were done to provoke an “openness” that might lead to new ways of thinking and being. Ava says:

What I carry with me from Dwayne's course is the idea of everyday unlearning and grappling with different epistemologies is very important. He encourages us to think about our thinking every day, but in a gentle way. It is always a process...you are either always building up or breaking it down or reshaping it in some way, and critically thinking about how you want to understand and what you want the framework in your head to be. If you don't think critically, then it's likely been made for you by the dominant society. How do you want to be interpreting the world and affecting the world around you?

Gadamer suggested that being in dialogue with others, listening and asking questions and trying to understand different perspectives is being in play of different understanding “makes possible a movement, on the part of the players, towards ways of knowing that extend beyond their current understandings” (as cited by Spence, 2001, p. 627). The play provokes vulnerabilities, and must be prodded for movement to happen. Unlike the calm lull of the train, the curricular provocations that Dwayne puts forth do not uphold what we know to be accurate but rather gently entices us to think

about things differently. Our openness to the provocations that help us unlearn colonial logics and forge a path back to our bellybuttons.

Concluding thoughts: “Now the same peg anchors the tips of both”

Donald's approaches' pedagogical and curricular significances are profound and help teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. This unlearning happens as teacher candidates learn a curriculum of place, which, as Chambers (2008) tells us, is one of an “education of attention” (p. 5-6). By taking his students into the cold air of the river valley, Dwayne teaches them to dwell in place and to be attentive to the land, water, trees, animals around them, “to notice the clues in a place, the clues through which each generation must learn how to live here, and the clues by which what it means to live here, may be revealed” (Chambers, 2008, p. 6).

The teacher candidates that I spoke with were able, with Dwayne's gentle guidance, curricular provocations, and the opportunities for walking in place with each other, to begin understanding other stories about Canadians and Indigenous peoples. They were “called back to their bellybuttons,” to grapple with who they are from, and what might be revealed in those answers. Mae shared that:

As an Indigenous person, I've unfortunately been in situations where there is a lot of lateral violence. I've had lots of comments made about my Indigeneity and also the “Us vs. Them” narrative about white people. Being in this toxicity broke me. It was never how I viewed native people. So, meeting Dwayne, and learning his understanding of ethical relationality really healed me. It is how I would like to live my life...it's the least violent, the most inviting, the most inclusive way to live. It is also the most realistic, because we are all here together. No one is going anywhere. You [Canadians] are born here, and this land is now as much yours as it is ours.

We have treaties, and we have a relationship. We need to rework this relationship, but the treaties tell us how. Ethical relationality is a beautiful response to the harmful relationships that are entrenched in the way we live our lives.

In this chapter, I introduced Gadamer's notions of the "I and the thou," the "shared life," and "play" to interpret the teacher candidate's experiences in Dwayne's classes. Dwayne's pedagogical choices to engage students holistically nurtured their innate humanness to embrace relations with the more-than-human world. By walking with students in the river valley, they were able to restore place together, develop a different sense of time, and play with what it might mean to live a shared life based on understanding what it means to be in the place we call home. In doing so, teachers could reimagine what it means to live in that place, unlearning the logics that have, for too long, told us that we do not belong here together. It is what Cynthia Chambers (2008) so beautifully speaks to when she writes about grief and sorrow:

There is a great deal of grief and sorrow about place in Canada, about land and who it belongs to, about whose stories get told and which stories are to be believed. Ted Chamberlin (2003) asks if more than one people can ever call a place home. I don't know but I don't think we have much choice. A curriculum of place is no longer optional. As Andy Blackwater (Blood & Chambers, 2008), a Kainai elder, said: "the Blackfoot are not going anywhere; the newcomers are not going anywhere; now the same peg anchors the tips of both" (p. 7). It is not the grudge but the grief that matters, and what we are going to do about it. It is where we are that matters. By learning to do what is appropriate in this place, and doing it together, perhaps we can find the common ground necessary to survive. (p. 124-125)

Ethical relationality encourages us to understand what it is to be from a place, and not from the place. As Chambers wrote above, the time has come for us to stop resisting this contradiction and

instead take seriously the place we call home. What does it mean to live here? How do I act in this place in a way that honours this place? What are the truths about this place, in the past and in the present and how does my living here put me in relation to these truths? These are the questions that ethical relationality invites us to consider.

Common Ground: Protocols of place and time

It is four days since the occupation in Ottawa by the “Freedom Convoy” ended. The convoy supporters embedded themselves along the narrow, snowy streets of the city that I have called home for decades. They installed themselves, with blaring horns and waving flags, on the unsundered, ancestral territories of the Algonquin Nation during the months of quiet and rest, causing a desperate imbalance that resonated in our city. Albert Dumont (2022), spiritual advisor from Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg, recently wrote to the occupiers about the protocol of this place:

Winter, according to Algonquin tradition, is a time of peace and appreciation of spirit – yours, mine, and that of all our relations. We are instructed by Creator to be as quiet as we possibly can whilst passing the cold moons of winter. We do so to allow sacred Mother Earth time for rest so she can rejuvenate her energies properly.

The so-called Freedom Convoy is disturbing the peace, not only of the sleeping land but also of many decent, kind-hearted, law-abiding people living in Algonquin territory. (para. 1)

In this chapter, we saw how unlearning colonial logics can bring us metaphorically home to our belly buttons, to who we are from, and to where we live. When we unlearn, we open ourselves to the places we inhabit, provoking our imaginations and watching and listening to previously unnoticed relations. Albert Dumont, in writing to the occupiers of Algonquin territory, was calling

on them to listen to their relatives who live in this place and to notice the impacts they were having. If only they had listened and respected the protocols of place and time.

In the following two chapters, we will hear from teachers at PETES as they share how their learning experiences in school and during their teacher education programmes informed their knowledge about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. We will hear how these experiences shape what and how they approach teaching about the relationship in their classrooms and the school community. As we listen to their stories, we will return to this chapter to continue thinking about how unlearning, ethical relationality, and place contribute to teachers' pedagogical and curricular choices.

Chapter 7: (En)countering(s) of Address: Worthwhile whilings and being Pulled up Short

In a perverse and fearful way, I like the looking; but I am not so crazy about this business of shaking with fear that the unfolding story inspires in me. I have some doubt about the intelligence and safety of staying behind to witness, but some piece of me believes that doubt is somehow the best part of being alive; I love the suspiciousness of doubt and all the angles for retelling stories that this doubt spawns.

This story deserves to be told; all stories do. Even the waves of the sea tell a story that deserves to be read. The stories that really need to be told are those that shake the very soul of you.

I prepare to be shaken.

(Lee Maracle, 2014, p. 5)

The surging of the dammed water of the Kichi Zibi rushes around the bearings and the pile cap piers of the Chaudière Bridge, just below the concrete girders. At this moment, on this winter day, during my daily walk to school, I pause on the walkway suspended above the frigid water. I feel the rumble of the vehicles speeding across the bridge while standing still. I experience a deep and palpable feeling of address as I physically and imaginatively encounter the past and present before me. I am called to “while” here, on this bridge. *It is worthwhile to while here.* David Jardine (2008) refers to “worthwhileness” as:

a way of treating things, a way of composing our understanding of something...and, in the same breath, composing ourselves, finding our composure in the face of what we have encountered... Whiling is the work of someone looking to be implicated in what they while over. (p. 3)

As I look west and witness the sacred Akikodjiwan falls, restrained by settler-colonial infrastructure and now re-framed by the development of million-dollar condos, I reflect on my own implicitness. I look east, noticing how the Kichi Zibi spills forward, flowing toward the Parliament of what some call Canada, past Asinabka Island, commonly known as Victoria Island. Asinabka

Island has been a gathering and trading place for the Anishinaabe and other Nations for time immemorial and continues to be a site of both ceremony and resistance to this day. Asinabka was the site where Chief Teresa Spence held a hunger strike during the Idle No More movement.



Figure 27: The Chaudière Bridge, Ottawa, looking east towards Parliament Hill (Source: Chutes Chaudière Falls, 2022)

I am whiling here, occupied in my wondering about the names of these places- this bridge, those falls, that island, and the school, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, that I walk towards. I am walking towards and past places with names that I have always known but have not interrogated until now. Gadamer (1989) writes that a worthwhile matter “would not deserve the interest we take in it if it did not have something to say to teach us that we could not know by ourselves” (p. xxxv). And so, what matters to us as Canadians, may not be worthwhile. Moreover, what might be worthwhile, may matter.

In this chapter I seek to understanding the shifting situated contexts of “worthwhileness of matters.” I am concerned by the—what, who, why, when, where—type of matters that Canadians

learn, both through curriculum and prevalent Canadian collective memory and colonial logics. Specifically, how do the matters deemed worthwhile within the school curriculum impact *what* teachers teach and *how* they go about teaching? How might *whiling with* and encountering these narratives shift their pedagogical and curricular decisions? Teachers' knowledge and beliefs about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians directly influence, as Donald (2020) reminds us, how they teach First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives, and contemporary issues. I suggest, then, that it is crucial for teachers, and their students and future students, to spend time “whiling” about the stories they have learned and whiling about those they have not.

Recognize as re-cognize: Encountering as countering what we already know

And yet, what is whiling, exactly? What are encounters? Moreover, what does it mean to be implicated within them? In response to such curriculum inquiries, Kent den Heyer (2021) conceptualizes such “whilings” as “encounters”:

For teachers, approaching curriculum as an encounter means looking at how students at any age have already learned much about making sense of life, their country and themselves in relation to others. What they take for granted as common sense is itself a historical legacy that requires explicit study...to recognize what they have already learned. (para. 9)

Such explicit encounters with what we know facilitate, as den Heyer makes clear, a process of recognition. “To recognize is to 're-cognize', meaning to bring into consciousness as to know again” (2021, para 10). In other words, for teachers, encountering involves being conscious of what we already know and spending time thinking about how this shapes *what* we teach and *how* we

teach. Encounters of re-cognizing ask us to do something. Simply put, we are invited into relation when encountered by the other.

As I stand on the Chaudière Bridge, the surging water demands something of me. I have been called to “re-cognize” the implications of settler colonialism on the kinship around me and within me. Of the pimsi fish who once swam voraciously in this river; of the medicinal plants that were wiped out by the contamination from the mill built on Victoria Island; and of the natural damn builders of this eco-system, the beavers, whose lodges were dislocated when the river was controlled. And to the names of these places that I understood as *the* names rather than the settler-colonial *renaming* of sacred sites. The sun is coming up now, illuminating the winter sky with soft orange openings. I must be on my way. I take one last glance at Akikodjiwan and continue walking toward Ecole Pierre Elliott Trudeau School. I have got stories to hear and encounters to while in.

Encountering the past: stories we learned and didn't learn in school

In this section, teachers share stories about the cultural tools and public memories they encountered in their schooling. Drawing on David Jardine's concept of “worthwhile whilings” and Gadamer's ideas of “being pulled up short,” I think about the work teachers must do when encountering and reimagining themselves in relation to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. My first question asked teachers to engage in encounters with the stories of Canada they grew up with. E. Bishop, who has been a teacher at PETES for more than a decade, reflected:

A huge part of my identity was being from Guelph, Ontario, the town where the “Great Canadian” John McCrae came from. Every year at school, we would walk down the street and visit his house. There was a little museum and a garden, and any kid growing up in Guelph knew they lived in the hometown of John McCrae. Thinking back on this, I am amazed at how much space this narrative took up.

John McCrae figured large in the development of E.Bishop's identity and what “Canadianness” entailed, both individually and collectively. One could say that the public schooling system was designed this way, in how McCrae's story, made real by his house and idyllic garden, represented the values of the “good Canadian”: sacrifice, courage, bravery, responsibility, and duty. John McCrae is, among many others, a cultural tool firmly embedded in Canadian public memory, national heritage and nationalism, and is passed on to future generations without pause (Robertson, 2019). These endearing and enduring forms of public memory continue to pervade the types of remembering-and forgetting- that Canadians learn and teach in school curricula and classrooms. The story of John McCrae was created and upheld to support the story of the birth of the Nation of Canada. His story has become our story and became worthwhile to Canadians because it makes sense in our understandings of Canada and of who we wish to be.

Cowboys, (and) Indians and the historic imaginary

My siblings and I were kids in the late seventies and early eighties and spent most of our time outdoors. Before my parents built our house on the acre of farmland, we lived on a crescent. There were other kids who lived around the crescent, and we rode our bikes around and around the block, exploring the creeks, catching frogs, and endlessly playing imaginary games. One of the games my brother and his friends played-this game belonged to boys only- in the warmer months was “Cowboys and Indians”. The boys who were the “Indians” would always end up shirtless and tied up to a telephone pole. In the winters, we played “Eskimos” as we built snow forts. We had no concept that we playing out the narratives about “Indians and Eskimos” that had been passed down to us.

Many of the teachers I interviewed had similar memories, as well as an absence of memory. For example, when I asked E. Bishop what she remembered learning about Indigenous

Peoples, she reflected on the incomplete and elusive accounts that she was taught, both formally, in school, and informally, by way of public stories:

I did not learn anything...maybe I learned about the Eskimos in Grades 1 or 2...and as I got older I knew that natives lived on reserves, and that is where you went to buy cheap cigarettes. I am ashamed to say this but I knew nothing. I could recite you the history of John McCrae and later, the details of both World Wars, but I knew nothing of the peoples whose lands I lived on...who I lived right next to. I still don't know much, but my eyes are open.

By ruminating and reckoning over the narratives of public memory, we might reveal how the stories we tell and have been told are incomplete. Patrick Wolfe (1999) uses the term “split tensing” to describe narratives that place Indigenous Peoples as dead or dying and settlers as constructing and progressing. Wolfe writes that “settler colonies were [are] premised on the elimination of the native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers come to stay – invasion is a structure, not an event” (p. 1). Here, Jurgens (2020) reminds us that this presents a two-fold problem:

The first problem is that the historiographies of Indigenous Nations are severely impeded by the colonial project...within schools, millennia of Indigenous histories remain forgotten, positioned as bygone relics, as prehistory, or as folktales deemed irrelevant...the second problem is embedded within the Canadian imaginary...when history is talked about only in the imaginary of settlement, it leaves everyone with historical amnesia. History then becomes a mistelling, where one dominant historical narrative of pioneers and homesteading is told, and Indigenous nations are largely left out. (p. 123)

We can see “split tensing” in the following excerpts from my conversation with Billy, who was born in the United Kingdom, but came to Canada when he was twelve years old. In response to my questions about what he knew of Indigenous peoples, Billy replied:

As a young boy, my opinion about Indigenous peoples was molded or inherited from what other people said, mostly from movies, and in the history books. I learned about kings, monarchs, parliament and the history of the world wars. I got my imagery and understanding about Indigenous peoples from movies, which, as you can imagine, wasn't good, with it being the 1970's. This is not very appropriate, but I remember being a twelve-year-old boy and thinking that instead of boring history, we're going to learn about cowboys and Indians!! That was the prevailing understanding of North America. It was a new frontier country that was still relatively young. Even once I was in Canada, I didn't learn a very accurate history, from what I know to be true know. I went to school in a very multicultural area and I was just one of the many immigrants in the school. I loved Canadian history, and learning about the government and acts. I was good at memorizing and understanding but not aware enough to take it in and look at it critically at that age. I wasn't thinking about who was writing this history, or who was writing the curriculum or the textbooks we were using. Obviously, we were taught from a very British Canadian perspective, as the conquerors. I was just learning a one-sided story, but I could memorize that like nobody's business and spent hours and hours and get 100% and be able to tell that one story really well. I ended up becoming a history teacher because I loved these stories. Throughout my schooling, I would learn the same narratives in chronological order, from conquest on. Not until

moments like this, do I look back and think about why I continued with the same kind of history. Why did I not wonder about all the other stories I wasn't learning?

Billy, raised on a history of monarchy and conquerors, developed his understanding of Indigenous peoples from movies about the “new frontier.” Furthermore, we see how Billy is noticeably bewildered by his own lack of questioning these stories. His willingness to encounter his experiences has opened him up to ask about the possibilities of other stories.

Billy speaks directly to the historical amnesia of incomplete stories (Jurgens, 2020). Or, as Gadamer (1989) reminds us:

To ask a question means to bring into the open. The openness of what is in question consists in the fact that the answer is not settled. It must still be undetermined, awaiting a decisive answer...the sense of every question is realized in passing through this state of indeterminacy, in which it becomes an open question. Every true question requires this openness...the knowledge of not knowing. (p. 371-372)

Billy has been confronted by his “not knowing” and that the answers available to him were not settled, are still not settled. In Gadamer's terms, Billy's openness to what is in question is unsettling. Billy is embarrassed and baffled that he did not re-cognize, until now, that he had learned a one-sided story. We see a similar bewilderment in Kennedy as she reflects on her encounters with a one-sided version of Canadian history:

There wasn't a lot of exposure to or encounters with Canadian history from an Indigenous perspective even in my history classes, and I went to a very good private school. It makes me wonder if it was just the manner I was taught. I remember reading in a lot of textbooks and then writing essays on what we had just learned in the textbook. My story of Canada got a little bit muddled with the Americans and

how thanksgiving occurred. Of Native Americans with loin cloths and feathers. It sounds awful and it's embarrassing to say that I never questioned it. I just assumed that Canada was always like this-like what I knew. It never occurred to me that it could have been any other way or that we'd taken over. I just assumed we all live together happily. How naïve of me. I just didn't have any experience with any other stories.

Kennedy describes what she learned about Indigenous Peoples and Canadians as “muddled encounters” with inaccurate stories that portrayed Indigenous peoples as deficit to Europeans. McGuire-Adams (2020) writes about the importance of stories. “They inform how we make sense of our realities, our experiences, and the way we feel and think about each other, and indeed, the way we think and feel about ourselves” (p. 1). She maintains that deficit stories have been written, shared, and told about Indigenous peoples to “spin a rationalized space in the minds of settler-colonial people in order for their existence on stolen territory to make sense to them” (p. 2). McGuire-Adams reminds us that we must challenge deficit narratives in relation to how they maintain systemic racism and structural violence. Furthermore, when Indigenous Peoples return to ancestral stories of strength, they can counter such deficit narratives as part of their pedagogical encounters in the classroom.

I believe that it is a similar but inverse process for Canadians, who have been raised not on deficit stories about themselves but rather on the grandiose narratives of settlement and progress of their ancestors and cultures. These inflated narratives feature ancestors who toiled and tilled the land to make something for themselves. Through whilings and encounters with and within these narratives, Canadians work towards restor(y)ing relations. Moreover, as we witness in the stories of E. Bishop, Billy, and Kennedy, their openness to being “pulled up short” is significant to

restorying and restoring Canadian-Indigenous relations (Gadamer, 1989, p. 76). I will describe my understanding of what Gadamer means by being “pulled up short,” but first, we will return to the bridge and the sacred sites. The sun has now risen out of the fog and beckons me closer.

Being Pulled up Short: truth-telling on the bridge above the Kichi Zibi

The place where I have been whiling is the Chaudière Bridge, which marks the provincial political boundary between Québec and Ontario. Geographically, this spot is the centre of a 2-kilometre radius that includes the settler-colonial parliament of Canada, the sacred Akikodjiwan falls and Asinabka Island, and the school that has been my place of work and community for 16 years. For me, this place offers an opportunity to viscerally understand how settler colonialism has worked to perpetuate stories of Canada while ensuring the eradication of thousands of years of history of the First Peoples in this place.

In my theoretical framework, I outlined Donald's (2020) model for moving towards an ethically relational understanding of the relationship between Canadians and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and the Touchstones of Hope Process Reconciliation (Blackstock et al., 2006). The first steps in both are truth-telling and acknowledging what has gone on and how we are implicated in these truths. Though I have been cycling and walking across this bridge for several years, the history of this place was not something I understood. I did not know that the Chaudière Falls, named by Samuel de Champlain, was a sacred site for Anishinaabe people. Instead, I grew up hearing about the innovation of the hydroelectric dam built-in 1912. Likewise, it was only recently that I learned that Victoria Island, named after Queen Victoria, had been called Asinabka for thousands of years. Or that the Wilson Carbide Mill, which was built in 1900, contaminated the land due to calcium carbide production. These unsundered lands had been ceremonial, and burial sites before settlers colonized and corrupted them. I am standing in the presence of the past

as I, while here, reimagining the industrial signifiers of progress gone. While unlearning, learning, and teaching such truth-telling, I can encounter all my relations.

I have something else to attend to before returning to the teachers. It is the legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, my school's proud namesake and Canada's 15th Prime Minister. I was born during the Trudeau years, raised by a family who had been charmed by his charisma, multicultural policies, and quest for equity among all Canadians, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I posit that these sentiments and rememberings linger in mainstream Canadian public parlance years later.

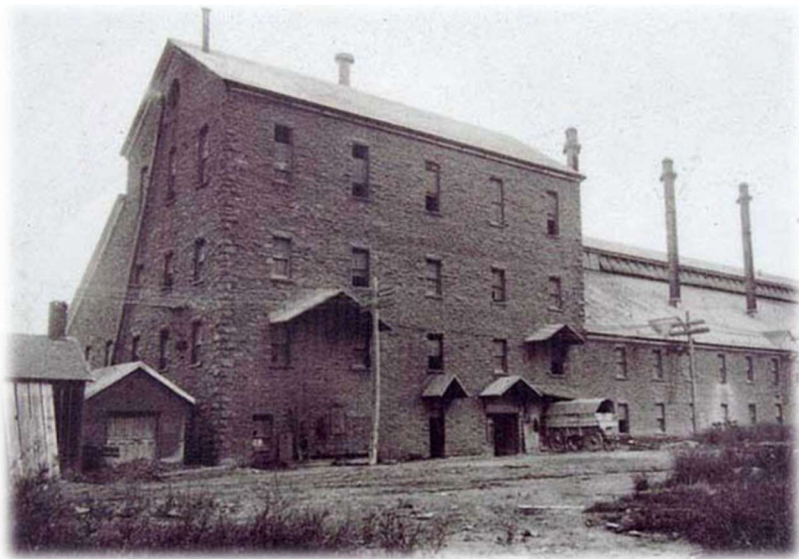


Figure 28: The Wilson Carbide Mill, early 1900s, on Asinabka Island (Source: Parks Canada, 2022)

However, his anti-Indigenous policies have largely gone untaught. One of these policies, notably known as the White Paper, sought to sever the unique legal relationship between First Nations and the government and proposed that Indigenous Peoples be “fully integrated into Canadian life.” Like his father before him, Justin Trudeau, elected our 23rd Prime Minister in 2016, exhibits an inadequate understanding of what it means to say that the “most important relationship is the one with Indigenous Peoples.” Trudeau recently spent the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation in the clouds on his ministerial private airplane, heading towards Tofino, where he

was spotted strolling along the beach. When the story of his trip to the beach was exposed on the news, many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples expressed feelings of hurt and anger, and many Canadians were baffled by his decision (Taylor, 2021; Turnbull, 2021). Within a day or two, Trudeau publicly proclaimed that he “recognized” his mistake, the story faded, and the Trudeau name largely remains an enduring cultural phenomenon in Canada.

I have, in Gadamer’s (1989) words, been “pulled up short” (p. 268) in my encounters with these misrecognitions. In *Red Skin White Masks*, Coulthard (2014) explains that there is an increasingly common idea that Indigenous-Canadian relations can be satisfactorily altered through recognitions of land, identity, and rights. Coulthard argues that the “politics of recognition in its contemporary form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples demands for recognition have sought to transcend” (p. 3). It is time we are pulled up short, re-cognizing how settler-colonial politics purposefully misrecognize that which threatens domination of the nation state and settler colonial ideals.

Being “pulled up short:” Gut-wrenching moments of truth

Kerdeman (2003) suggests that when we are “pulled up short,” we discover that our long-held views are inaccurate, or perhaps wholly untrue, causing us to re-think our opinions and encounter the “attitudes, qualities and behaviours we would prefer to disown, deny or recognize only insofar as we project them on to others” (p. 296). Pulling “up short” is the space where the possibilities for self-formation and transformation might occur (Kerdeman, 2003). Perhaps “pulling up short” it is a relational process of action that teachers take as they work towards truth and then perhaps, work towards “reconciliation.” In the next section, I examine the etymological roots of encounter, recognize, and being pulled up short to help my interpretations of the encounters that teachers shared with me. These conversations became very emotional as teachers struggled to

articulate their feelings about the colonial stories they were immersed in at home, in school, in their childhood play, and in the media.

The etymological roots of en(counter)ing(s), recognizing, and being pulled up short

The word *counter*, circa 1300, comes from the Anglo-French *countour*, meaning “one who counts or reckons” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). However, the word *countour* is an Old French merger of the Latin *computator* and Medieval Latin *computatorium*, both of which are from Latin the *computare*, meaning “to count, sum up, reckon together” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). Interestingly, the word's root meaning refers to a process of reckoning together, yet by the mid-15th century *counter* was now used to denote “contrary, in opposition, in an opposite direction” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021).

The word *counter* is widely used as a prefix in our lexicon today, including *counter-culture*, *counter-argument*, *counter-intuitive*, *counter-productive* and *counteract*. In each of these instances, its common linguistic usage is to oppose. The word *encounter*, circa 1300, means “to meet as an adversary” and comes from the Old French *encounter*, which means to “meet, come across; confront, fight, oppose” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). *Encounter* is associated with the word *intrigue*, circa 1640, as “clandestine or illicit sexual encounter” as well as the word *scrap*, denoting an “abrasive encounter” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). It is significant that *encounter* first came from the Late Latin *incontra*, meaning “in front of, against” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). If we think about the etymologies of these words, the early meanings refer to “reckoning together” and “in front of.” This appears to denote that to *counter* something is to oppose it by reckoning with what it is we are opposing. To experience an *encounter*, then, is to stand in front of the thing(s) we are reckoning with and to be addressed by this encounter. When we are addressed by something worthwhile, Jardine (2008) writes:

...we experience something being asked of us. In asking after worthwhileness, we are asked to find our measure in such things that awaken us and our interest. We are asked to learn and, in learning, to become something more than we had been before such encounters. (p. 3)

Once we open ourselves to the possibility of an encounter, an openness to reckoning, we might be able to re-cognize, or bring into consciousness, what we know.

The word *recognize* comes from the early 15 century, Old French *reconoiss*, which is the present-participle stem of *reconoistre* and means “to know again, identify, recognize” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). It also has roots in the Latin *recognoscere*, meaning “acknowledge, recall to mind, know again; examine; certify” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). The word-forming element *re*, circa 1200, is from Old French and directly from Latin as an inseparable prefix meaning “again; back; anew, against” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). The word mid-14th century word *conisance*, means “device or mark by which something or someone is known,” comes from the Anglo-French *conysance*, meaning “recognition,” and later, “knowledge,” and from *conoissance*, meaning “acquaintance, recognition; knowledge, wisdom” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021).

When we are addressed, we are called into an encounter, to stand in front of what we have been taught to recognize and re-cognize it once again. We are called into relation to counter and encounter, and it is through this process of (en)countering that we are often pulled up short. Importantly, Kerdeman (2017) reminds us that “being ‘pulled up short’ does not merely interrupt our assumptions about the world, but interrupts and alters our self-understanding” (p. 3). It is interesting to consider the etymologies of “pulled up short.” Pull, from mid-1300, means to move or try to move forcibly by pulling, to drag forcibly or with effort,” and is from the Old English *pullian*, meaning “to pluck off, to draw out” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). Up, as

recorded from the 1640s, means to “get up, rise to one's feet” and the word short, coming from the Proto-Germanic *skurta*, Old Norse *skorta*, and Old High German *scurz* all derive from the root *sker*, meaning “something cut off” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021). Putting all of this together, we can see what Gadamer meant by using these particular words. Quite literally, to be “pulled up short” is to be drawn upwards, off one’s feet, and then cut off. This makes sense when we think of being pulled up short as interruptive; it pulls us out of our assumptions and cuts them off. It leaves us with work to do. In the next section, we will witness teachers doing this work.

Encounters with Being Pulled up Short

One of the first interviews I had at PETES was with a teacher named Evelyne. Our conversation was startling in several ways. Her honesty was profound in as much as her willingness to ponder the questions I was asking and to blatantly talk about how her education, and lack thereof, has impacted how she feels about teaching First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives:

I grew up in a small town in northern Ontario. We lived near a reserve that was almost as big as the town. There were always a couple of kids in my class who would come in all the way from the reserve. Most of them were Ojibway, I think. We called them the bus kids. I didn't really know a lot about them. In university, I did a four-year honours history degree in modern British history. We learned about captives and slavery in Africa, but we never talked about British/Canadian colonialism of Indigenous peoples. It's baffling, and thinking about it now, it has really impacted how I feel I can teach. I feel like it's not my place to be talking about Indigenous history. It's a worry about not saying it right or not doing it properly because of my lack of education. I don't have the confidence to be able to do what I would like to do for fear of making the wrong choice or offending

somebody, and then becoming angry or upset with me for saying something insensitive. That's awful because you can tell I'm selfish or I am trying to protect myself. I think this way of thinking comes from white privilege. It's awful. But it's true.

In “Pulled Up Short: Exposing White Privilege,” Deborah Kerdeman (2017) argues that Gadamer’s philosophical notions are helpful because he explains what happens in the gut-wrenching moments, like the one Evelyn shared above, when our blindness’s are disrupted. She writes:

From Gadamer’s perspective, redressing white privilege requires insight into one’s own existence as a privileged racial being. Self-insight, in turn, is predicated on engaging in conversations with partners who interrupt one’s blindness regarding white privilege. Such conversations require and also promote a particular kind of ethical relationship. (p. 3)

Gadamer (1989) explains that “understanding begins when something addresses us,” and these encounters are acts of addressing, where you can happen upon something unanticipated” (p. 299). Through the experiences of being addressed by something, we open ourselves to the possibilities of being pulled up short. In being pulled up short, Evelyn encountered her racial privilege and sought to engage in conversations with others who could help her move through towards understanding and unlearning. Evelyn's lived experiences as a Canadian from northern Ontario were sharply juxtaposed with her living experiences in her classrooms with students from northern communities:

I started to realize how little I actually knew about the kids I grew up with- the kids on the bus from the reserve. I mean, I didn't even know what Nation they were from.

Teaching Cree kids, I know how important being Cree is to them. It is who they are.

They are so proud of it. But those kids I grew up with, nobody knew them.

Encounters with the juxtapositions of her lived, and living experiences are worthwhile to Evelyn. As she reflects on teaching children from Cree communities and how their sense of who they are and who they are from is so important to their sense of belonging, she is pulled up short. Growing up near a First Nations community, she was aware of the “bus kids” but had nothing to do with them and realized how “nobody knew them.” The whiling she is doing within the past and present help her reimagine and unlearn. For Evelyn, unlearning means changing something: “I am unlearning through a process of relationships and conversations in very small doses here and there. Every time I learn something new about a student, I have an experience with people; I think that’s how I change.”

Being “pulled up short,” then, is when we allow ourselves to encounter the limits of our understandings. For Gadamer (1981), the insights that come from being “pulled up short” are less of a self-achievement than an acknowledgement of limits, in that “we can choose to ignore, evade, or deny human limitation. Or we can choose to acknowledge our finitude and realize that every gain in self-understanding entails loss” (as cited in Kerdeman, 2003, p. 298). Evelyn understands that unlearning is a lifelong process that will never be complete. She also acknowledges that she often feels more confused than she used to and unsure of what to do. She is learning to live in these spaces of discomfort, of not knowing. Similarly, another teacher I spoke to at PETES is “pulled up short” as he describes his experiences growing up in Winnipeg as a Métis person. Here, Brian discusses how he felt both a sense of loss and agency as she gained an understanding of how racism functioned:

I grew up out west. There were so many stereotypes about Métis people...and my father fit that stereotype- he was alcoholic and abusive and was gone by the time I

was two. My mother is not Indigenous—she is from a Mennonite family—but she worked for Aboriginal organizations most of her career. When I was little, she worked for the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre of Canada. I grew up with people like Phil Fontaine and Jim Bear at meetings who knew my mom. All these big names that we would see at meetings, and who we would go to conferences with. On the other hand, in Winnipeg, I saw stereotypical native people on Portage and Main and the north end. That was a very big dichotomy and a big juxtaposition of what it's like to be native in Winnipeg in the 1980s. I knew about racism from different stories that would come up from the people my mom worked with. I remember a story about a Native woman my mom worked with who didn't realize that white people defecate. She had been told in residential school that pooing was something only dirty Indians did. I would hear a lot of the racism, but it wasn't directed at me. I had light hair, green eyes and freckles. I didn't necessarily feel I had the agency to be able to change it or challenge it. Feeling that discomfort of not engaging in it but not necessarily feeling that I had a right or power to shut it down is a juxtaposition I lived in...live in?

While encountering these juxtapositions is difficult for Brian, they helped him understand *who* he comes from. The encountering of juxtapositions has facilitated a return to his belly button and the acknowledgement that his identity includes light hair, green eyes, freckles *and* being Métis. He is from *both* the “big names” at meetings and the “natives on the corner of Portage and Main.” Kerdemen (2003) reminds us that being “pulled up short can liberate us to become more fully human and ‘present’ in the world....it arrests, reverses, or negates pre-reflective lived

understanding of world and self” (p. 298). In being pulled up short, Brian has accepted that juxtapositions are vital to encountering himself.

Worthwhile encounters with re-cognizing

Deciding that something is worthwhile, to while over, to stay awhile with as an encounter, can be a courageous choice because of feelings of shame, anger, frustration, and deception. Our encounters with these feelings often cause us to question who we are rather than who we think we are. We see this willingness to encounter and while over complicated feelings in the following excerpts of my conversations with Jordan, Harper, and Henry. By reflecting on their past understandings and dwelling within them, they are changed by their encounters with past stories. Here Harper shares:

I just feel so deceived...I get really emotional because I wasn't taught and I think it's shameful. I remember these images in the textbooks at school...they were very violent, or very congenial, where it appeared that colonialism was all agreed upon and everyone was happy. I didn't understand- and now I know it's because I wasn't taught- that colonialism meant taking over. We only learned about Québec history and it was so permanently repetitive that I think we just stopped listening after a while. I'm sure that I was probably starting to find out about the world but only getting a very limited story...and to find out that this story was so skewed...it is just so shameful. I don't want to be the teachers I had. So that's why I am trying to do it differently. To teach students that we have always had a relationship with Indigenous peoples. That we are treaty people, and what does that mean? This is the most important part of my job, and of who I am.

Listening, time, and space are connected as parts of an encounter. When Harper says that we “stopped listening after a while,” she refers to her decision that the narrative the curriculum-as-planned was no longer worthy to while over. Harper's encounters with feelings of shame and deception are worth whiling over. For Harper, the whiling has helped her form the identity of the teacher she wants to be. By countering the narratives that she was raised on, Harper is committed to being a different teacher from the teachers she had. We also see this struggle in Jordan, who recognizes that he is enacting the same colonial stories that he was taught while teaching the Québec curriculum. He is frustrated with himself and is “pulled up short” in the sense that the recognition of his limitations leaves him feeling “short”—short on time, short on knowledge, short on ability:

As a teacher in Québec, I am teaching almost the same curriculum as I learned. It's really hard. At the end of the day, the curriculum is what needs to be taught, but I have a moral struggle knowing I don't actually believe in what I am supposed to teach. Students can see through teachers when they aren't being authentic. I know my students don't buy what I'm trying to instruct when teaching the social studies curriculum. I turn to colleagues who have more experiences incorporating Indigenous perspectives into their curriculum. I signed up for an Indigenous Studies course from the University of Alberta because I have recognized that I don't know enough. My knowledge is so limited, despite efforts to unlearn the narratives that I have been taught. I know that I have much to unlearn and relearn.

Jordan is recognizing what he does not “know enough” of because of what was recognized as essential knowledge in the curriculum he was schooled in. For Henry, who was born and raised in

abroad, the images of what he knew about Canada had been informed by settler-colonial mythology as well:

I knew about the cowboys and the Indians and the western frontier. We played cowboys and Indians as kids, and the Indians were always the bad guys. I think I remember hearing about Eskimos, and I know I had a dreamcatcher hanging over my bed without knowing what it was. When I came to Canada, I had no contact with Indigenous people. It makes me cringe when I think back to the Grade 10 curriculum that I was teaching. I had a Venn diagram, and we used it to compare the Algonquin peoples to the Iroquois peoples in the 1500s. It was completing separating us from them in a very colonial way, but I didn't see it then. Like, I said, it makes me cringe.

As we saw with Evelyne, Brian, and Henry, the juxtaposition of their schooling and their lived experiences provided sites of unsettling. Jordan speaks to the perpetuation of narratives of separation in the Québec curriculum, in that Canadians and Indigenous peoples had nothing to do with each other and that there was only one story to hold up, teach, and remember. Moreover, the story is binary and historical, situating “Indians” as the “bad guys” and relics of the past. Unlike teachers that Dion described as falling into the “allure of the perfect stranger,” Henry is willing to encounter and recognize the impacts of the single story of separation, and it makes him “cringe.” Gadamer (1989) writes that “understanding begins when something addresses us” (p. 299). I believe that these teachers have been addressed.

Throughout this chapter, participants have referred to being “pulled up short” by encounters within their lived experiences. For some, these encounters are (re)encounters with assumptions

they once believed to be true. I posit that these encounters are acts of addressing where teachers have happened upon something unanticipated. Teachers are willing to while in the space of address, encountering the narratives of their previous schooling, their own pedagogical practices, and their acceptance of the curriculum as truth. Teachers are moving through the processes of truth-telling and acknowledging, staying to while in the uncomfortable emotions of shame, anger, embarrassment, frustration, and sadness.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, we have witnessed teachers as they have traversed through the often poignant processes of whiling within encounters of their past education, attitudes, beliefs, and worldviews. We have seen examples of how they have dared to be “pulled up short” and to counter these long-held understandings that worked to normalize the contradictions of being Canadian. When teachers stay in openness off address, they while in it. It is not easy or without loss. They must encounter the essential “belly button question” of “*Who* are you from?” rather than the stories of progress and settlement. They must voyage back in time and stand in front of the home and garden of John McCrae, asking why Canada continues to uphold McCrae as a national hero. They must unsettle their memories of playing Cowboys and Indians, their feelings towards the “kids who came in from the reserve on the bus,” and the textbooks that portrayed their ancestors as brave and hardy pilgrims. They must *while* there, and in doing so, they can work through the truth and acknowledge the implications of who they come from. As Nora says:

I never thought about land growing up. My mom has always lived in the same house. I had a really nice life, and I had everything I needed. I didn't know that I lived on Mi'kmaq land. I knew that there were Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia, but the history I learned was definitely edited. We learned about how they lived, and

what they used, and the fur trade and typical things that weren't about how colonization took over these people's lands. It wasn't presented in that way. It was just like, "Look at this these amazing houses they used to live in!" But we didn't learn that we were the colonizers or a descendant of the colonizers who took the Mi'kmaq people's lands. And that my house and my nice life took their homes and land and lives away from them.

Nora has been pulled up short in her re-cognizing the lessons of her schooling. She is now able to identify how she, too, is implicated in the past and the present and how her descendants constructed a story that ensured the erasure of the people Indigenous to the land that they settled.

In the next chapter, we will inquire how teachers are moving from a place of truth-telling and acknowledging toward attempts to restory and renew relations. In doing so, they must unlearn colonial logics to learn from Indigenous peoples. They are meandering among and upon the touchstones, being splashed by the waters that hold stories long untold.

Chapter 8: A Fusion of Horizons: Ethical Relationality as Pedagogy

People don't understand something until they've actually sat in the living room with someone and had them tell you a story.

(Stan, research participant, 2020)

Perpetuations of separate horizons: A well-designed manoeuvre

As I begin this chapter, I look out my second-floor window. A stocky black squirrel runs along a telephone wire, hurrying to a destination on the other side of the yard. It is only 3 O'clock in the afternoon, but the sun is already low in the sky, casting a hazy glow over the horizon I gaze out on. Today is the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, the longest night and the shortest day of the year when the sun stays below the North Pole's horizon (Byrd, 2021). Since ancient times, cultures around the world have celebrated the solstice as a time of rebirth, renewal, and return to the light. Ancient peoples understood the rhythm of the sun's path across the sky, knowing that this related to the length of daylight and also of darkness (Byrd, 2021). Without satellites and telescopes, they knew that the Earth's movement was inexplicably connected to the seasons, animal migration, crops, and the climate (Beard, 2019).

In other words, they understood that which they could not see beyond their own horizons and presumed that they were part of an interdependent relationship. Today, due to technology, we can often forecast our immediate weather and the exact times of astronomical events, but many of us are less connected to the natural world than the people who came before us (Kesebir & Kesebir, 2017). Several studies posit that we are becoming increasingly disconnected from our fellow human beings (Ali et al., 2019; Loney, 2019; Rotondi et al., 2017). This disconnection is partially fuelled by the ease and accessibility of technology and the feelings of gratification it triggers (Cacioppo et al., 2017). Individuals are increasingly separating themselves from the physical world

around them and relying on digital connectivity as a replacement for building and establishing connections with the natural world and human experience (Suliveres, 2014). Research demonstrates that this has serious consequences, including the rise of populist ideologies (Flew and Iosifidis, 2020), the unprecedented intensification of loneliness and isolation (Smith et al., 2021), the devaluing of nature and of being outdoors (Litleskare, 2020), and of our interdependent relations with the human and more-than-human world (Norman, 2021). These disengagements are exacerbated by social media that often initiates, promotes, and normalizes the systemic othering of marginalized groups (Harmer & Lumsden, 2019).

As we have seen throughout this thesis, Canadians and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have been long-placed on opposite sides of what Donald (2012a) refers to as “historic divides” (p. 535). These divides have purposely been created to convince us that we had and have no relations with each other. Indeed, it is clear from historical accounts, artifacts, and treaty agreements that Canadians and Indigenous peoples have had relationships with each other since contact. The consequences of the denial and interruption of these relations, manifested by colonialism, are the concerns of this chapter. Specifically, this chapter seeks to deepen our understandings of how ethical relationality might help teachers restory and repair kinship relations. To guide my understandings, I draw on Gadamer's theory of the “fusion of horizons”, described below, in my interpretations. How might learning from Indigenous students, knowledge keepers, and community members elicit a broadening of horizons and transform teachers' pedagogical and curricular perspectives and praxis from one of “integration” of Indigenous histories and perspectives to one of “fusion”?

Gadamer and the fusion of horizons: Unlearning as an opportunity for expansive perceptions

On the threshold of my classroom door, I stood there, not breathing. It was the third day of my second week of teaching at PETES. I was stuck in the doorway, unable to move in or out. Feelings of inadequacy engulfed me. I had 17 First Nations students in my class, and I had come to understand that I had no idea who they were. I knew that I needed to look beyond my own life experiences to begin to understand theirs, but I couldn't see over the horizon. And I had no idea what theirs looked like.

The above quote is from the journal I kept during my first year of teaching. I am sharing it here because it speaks to the narrowness of my horizons when I embarked on my teaching career. For Gadamer, the horizon is what we can see from our vantage point, and when fused with other horizons, the “limitations of our own horizons, their finite borders, their webs of gossamer constructions... come into sharp relief” (O'Neill, 2007, p. 66). I understand horizons as worldviews that can be both narrow and broad and thus have the capacity to expand and narrow further. As Gadamer (1997) writes:

...the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we continually have to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. (p. 306)

In this study, we have learned how many Canadians, including teachers, are not aware of their own histories, especially concerning the lands on which they live and the people who came before them.

We know from their stories that the histories about Canada that they were taught in school were subsequently reinforced in the dominant colonial culture. These curricular narratives provided a narrow horizon about the historical and contemporary relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. Moreover, the colonial stories they were told did not facilitate a fusion of horizons but did exactly the opposite by entrenching the divides. We are left standing across from each other, wondering what comes next. Donald (2012a) explains that “Aboriginal peoples and Canadians... [must] face each other across historic divides, deconstruct their shared past, and engage critically with the realization that their present and future are similarly tied together” (p. 535).

In the following excerpts from my conversations with teachers, we will read about how they feel about being schooled and raised within the narratives of these entrenched divisions and what they are doing to face and deconstruct their pasts and move toward a present and future that recognizes their relations.

Where the sun never sets: no end to the horizon of the colonial empire

Several teachers who participated in the interviews with me are from the United Kingdom, and Ireland. Their stories of growing up in these places include notions of the great British empire and the expanse of British dominance and dominions. Indeed, the concept of “place” is displaced when your country had dominion over so much of the globe that it became a common saying that “the sun never sets over the British Empire” (Halloran, 2014). Although the sun has been steadily dipping toward the horizon since World War 2, there is still an ever-present narrative of the great colonial empire of Britain. These narratives (mis)shape curriculum and promote an understanding of horizons as unending but disconnected and isolated. At this time of worldwide crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, the recent Russian invasion on the state and the people of Ukraine, and the increasingly cross-cultural, cross-border movement toward right-wing populism,

how might we get to a “heart of wisdom” (Chambers et al., 2012) that holds possibilities to promote and evoke a different kind of story?

Furthermore, how can we “engage in conversations and actions about social justice and more equitable participation of diverse discourse communities” (Hasebe-Ludt, 2016, para 5) as the TRC urgently called for. I hope to show, in the paragraphs below, how conversations and self-study about past histories can reshape relations in the present and future. Moreover, we will see that learning from Indigenous peoples broadens our horizons beyond that of the empire where the sun indeed sets.

“The kids became my teachers”: land, language, and horizons

As I read and re-read the transcripts, the concept of “students as teachers” resonated in many of the discussions. Particularly significant was how the relations with students broadened the teachers' horizons that their predominantly colonial understandings had shaped. The following excerpt is from my conversation with Stan, who reflects on the unlearning he has done about land and nature:

I think that land is something we take for granted because it's not interwoven into our experiences, What I mean by that is that, in my culture- I'm from the U.K.- we see ourselves as separate and superior to nature. I'm not sure if that goes back to our education and a colonial attitude that we are above nature and the we can conquer nature. Both my parents taught us to respect land but didn't teach us that we were part of it. The idea was that you visited nature and then you went back to what you were doing. Most of the kids I've worked with at PETES are either Cree or Algonquin and the connection that they have to land- to their lands- is profound. I think it's the way they've been raised, the way they interact with the adults in their community, and their relationship to the land. It's odd to say that a nine-year-old

has more wisdom about nature than you do, but I have been in conversations and felt that way.

What is clear to me from Stan's reflection is how his relations with Indigenous students have provoked a self-study of sorts about his relationship with land and nature. He is curious about how colonialism separates the natural world from human beings and promotes an ideology of superiority and domination. Through conversations with Indigenous students, Stan has an opportunity to unlearn colonialism and begin to reimagine his relationships with the more-than-human world. We see a similar reimagining in Nigel, who was born in the U.K. and immigrated to western Canada as a child:

When I came to PETES over a decade ago now, I really had such limited experiences with First Nations people, or knowledge of them, which is a crime, isn't it? So, the Indigenous kids at PETES have been my teachers. They come from different communities, you get to know them, to know what's important to them, and you get to know their traditions. I get to meet them and learn from them and this gives me energy. It has broadened my horizons in ways I can't put a value on.

Nigel's comments demonstrate how such inadequate experiences with Indigenous peoples limited his horizons, and that through interacting and learning from them, his horizons are broadening.

It is important to recognize that having limited horizons does not mean we do not have perceptions and expectations. In Gadamerian thought, our horizons establish expectations that accompany our perceptions. Although Nigel had very few experiences with Indigenous peoples before working with them at PETES, he had expectations and perceptions that shaped his horizons. When I asked Nigel about what he knew about Indigenous peoples before coming to PETES, he admitted that growing up in Alberta, he had heard that “reservations were cesspools of drunken Indians.” These racist stereotypes were part of Nigel's horizon. Although he told me he knew there

was “more to it than this story” he really did not have an awareness of Indigenous peoples other than what he knew. In expanding our horizons, we unlearn our perceptions. In our unlearning, our horizons are broadened, and our understandings are deepened.

As we read in the excerpt below, the process of unlearning, and fusing our horizons can be confronting, uncomfortable and cause us pause. Pamela shares:

I am a great user of idioms. About two weeks ago, I was in a classroom and I was working with a student and I said, “Just a minute... I need to have a little powwow with your teacher.” The teacher and I spoke, and then I had to leave the room for a moment. When I came back in the room, the teacher was explaining (to the class) that I had used a figure of speech and that we weren't actually having a powwow! Some of the kids had overheard me and had gotten excited about the prospect of a powwow. I thought to myself, 'Oh my goodness! I am completely taking a term that has so much meaning to many Indigenous people, and I am using it in a way that is not respectful. Having a little conversation with somebody is not what a powwow is. So how did that even get into our language, and how am I saying it without even thinking... I don't even really recognize that I am saying words in offensive ways. Words that might have sacred meaning to people. That was really a shock to me. I need to unlearn these terms. I am committed to being very careful and reflective as I move forward.

One could say that Pamela's horizons were broadened in that encounter, as she was provoked by her misuse of the word powwow. It was through direct experiences with students who understand what a powwow is that Pamela's understanding broadened. Simply put, by learning with and from people, rather than learning about them, we can expand our horizons that have kept us apart for so long. To understand more profoundly, we will look in-depth at the etymological roots of “horizon”

and “fusion” while asking how this relates to encounters with ethical relationality and teacher unlearning.

Horizons and Fusion: The unfixing of perceptions

Etymologically, the word horizon comes from the 13th century Old French word, *orizon*, meaning “bounding circle” and “bound, limit, divide, separate” (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). Interestingly, from the Latin *horizontem*, the word *horizontal* was used by the 1630s as the meaning for “flat” (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). Through this dissertation, many of the descriptions of the teachers’ knowledge about Canadian history, colonialism, and Indigenous peoples demonstrate narrow horizons, with descriptions such as *limited*, *divided*, and *separate* mentioned repeatedly. Rather than having a dynamic and evolving understanding of history, they were taught what we might call a “flat” story: one dimensional, “arranged or laid out so as to be level or even...fixed” (Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022). The story we are taught has been laid out for us. It has been *fixed* this way.

The word fusion, from the 1550s, means the “act of melting by heat” and comes to French from the Latin *fusionem*, meaning “an outpouring, effusion” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2022). By 1776, the word fusion had come to mean a “union or blending of different things; state of being united or blended,” and by 1817 was being used literally to mean “a blending of different things, blending or uniting as if by melting together.” By 1873, it was also used to mean meaning to “intermingled.” So, taken together, we might understand a fusion of horizons to represent the blending together of once limited perceptions and moving away from what was once a fixed story.

In the sections below, we will listen to the teachers living within a fusion of horizons through their work at PETES. We will read stories about how unlearning and learning from Indigenous students changed the perspectives they brought to their classrooms.

Eventually, I understood”: Moving (slowly) towards new horizons



Figure 29: Horizon along the Kichi Zibi (Source: Stockdale, 2021)

The following section acknowledges how broadening our horizons takes time. It is a slow process that requires teachers to embark on a journey of self-study, whereby they come to understand their past and present. It is, in many ways, the opposite of what many of us have been taught and thus requires a shifting of our notions of temporality and attention. In *Walking Meditations: Becoming place, place becoming* (2021), curriculum scholar Alexandra Fidyk writes that “while the art of seeing must be practiced, it comes quickly when coupled with the method of slow. Breathe; ground; attend” (p. 110). Likewise, Fidyk comments that for philosopher Simone Weil, “attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity,” a spiritual act, “prayer” (Weil, 1947/1999, p. 117). For Fidyk (2021), it “transforms attender and attendee,” where “attention, for her, is the beginning of education” (p. 110). When unlearning the colonial demands of progress and speed, teachers come to a space of slowness and of learning to attend to that which before they did not see. To tend and attend to their encounters. Nora, who taught at PETES for a decade, shares how she came to accept that unlearning was often a slow process:

I learned so much from teaching Indigenous students. I learned about how important language is and how it defines who you are as a person. I remember a little boy who was teaching us some Cree words and how happy that made everybody but especially him. I learned about how important the hunting season is. I have to admit, at first, I remember thinking, "Why are they [the First Nation students] not here? They're missing every everything I'm doing !" Eventually, I learned that's much more important to them and their families, and they have things to teach me about true education. I learned to pay attention to what was important to them. I learned that education has to be meaningful to them, which means you have to make links to what they know, which isn't always what I know, so I have to learn from them. We have to understand the past to hopefully change how people think and see things, and understand things. But it took me a long time to get to this understanding. I was impatient sometimes. I had to learn to slow down.

Nora speaks to what occurs when we learn from our students and the possibilities for our expansion when we are open to this learning and unlearning. Nora "learned to pay attention" to her students rather than the demands of the curriculum-as-planned and her own plans. She had to unlearn what to pay attention in order to be truly attentive to the lived-curriculum of her students. Nora admitted that she previously believed her students were "missing everything she was doing" rather than re-cognizing they were away from school to attend to an important cultural tradition and livelihood. Simply put, it was not about her, so it wasn't on her horizon. However, because she was open, she broadened her perspectives and learned from her students.

Gadamer (2004) refers to this as "openness that leads to experience....toward new experience" (p. 355). For Gadamer, the experienced person "has become so, not only *through* experiences, but because she has acquired the habit of continual openness to new experiences"

(2004, p. 355). Acquiring any new habit takes time, and unlearning takes even longer. It is the willingness to be open, to inquire, to be patient that matters. Nora shared that she felt “impatient sometimes” and had to learn to “slow down.” She had to unlearn the colonial ideals that value productivity, effectiveness, and hustle so to tend to her teaching and relations. Ethical relationality calls for a slowing down, to spend a while attending to someone else's lived experiences.

Attending to the lived experiences of those that have different lived experiences than we do requires us to come up against our horizons. Moreover, we must be able to look beyond, so we might be open to the horizons of others. In the following excerpt from my interview with Kennedy, we witness her struggle to move beyond her horizons:

I have learned so much in the past few years while working with First Nations students here at PETES. I have learned that building that relationship with the child and getting to know about what's happening with them, not in terms of school, but just as a person is so important. Sometimes they like talking about where they're from, what they've experienced, or what they've hunted or fished. One student who really impacted me was a grade 5 student who had a chronic case of head lice. I kept having to call her mom and not getting through and feeling frustrated that this poor girl had lice. I wasn't thinking that her mom might be overwhelmed or busy...I just assumed she didn't care about her child. I learned that there isn't just one way to raise your child.

For Kennedy, relating to students on an authentic level that transformed her teaching practice. She has realized that she must work to recognize her student's horizons. During the experience with her student with headlice, she was confronted by her perceptions and biases. Her past horizon told her that parents who care about their children treat head lice quickly and effectively. Obviously, headlice requires treatment, but for Kennedy, recognizing her assumptions about the student's parents not

caring caused her to unlearn. In her openness to understanding, Kennedy was able to confront these prejudices and consider other factors such as the financial costs, time investment, and the effects of multiple siblings on the ability to completely eradicate head lice. Instead of “othering” the student's parents, Kennedy was able to view them as fellow human beings who were trying their best.

For Gadamer, the willingness to be open to unknown experiences or against what we know is when a *fusion of horizons* can occur:

The experienced person is open to further experiences and thus open to understanding itself. The virtue of the experienced person is thus not that she knows, but that she is open to knowing, that she has the peculiar ability to reach an understanding over and over again in a variety different circumstances. (as cited in McMyler, 2000, p. 39)

E. Bishop shared her struggle with openness with me during our interview. She has been a teacher at PETES for many years and continues to navigate the provocations that unlearning brings up. According to O’Neill (2007), fusions of horizons can “disrupt our sense of the world, undercutting its solidity and stability....along with the sense of disorientation that comes, there is further potential disruption to the sense of self. (p. 66). In the following excerpt, the sense of disorientation and disruption to self and to her sense of the world—her world—is palpable:

I used to teach many of Indigenous students. And I remember struggling with that a lot. I had a lot of trouble connecting with students. I remember a particular student who called me racist-I was really shocked and disturbed by that. I remember having a hard time because sometimes the students wouldn't talk to me, and I didn't understand why they wouldn't look at me. I didn't know how to approach them at all, and I remember feeling like they didn't understand...or that they often misunderstood my cultural urgency. What I mean by that is the urgency, from my perspective, to get to know them. I felt that I was coming to understand their cultural aspects, but they

weren't understanding mine. I don't understand their lifestyle. But really, looking back on it, I think most of the problem was me understanding their cultural viewpoint. My experiences have taught me that I have a lot to learn. And I learned that they have roots in history that is just as important as mine, and an identity and a pride in that identity. Learning about Canadian history, and working with Indigenous students has been a personal growing experience for me. Even now, I still don't fully understand and so I go through periods of feeling guilty and conflicted. A little bit defensive. And that's the God's honest truth, because I don't want to be responsible for that kind of colonial history. That's the honest perspective from a white teacher teaching in Hull, in Gatineau, where sometimes I don't even understand my own culture. But I am open. To having these experiences, to being challenged by what I don't know. And by my own self.

E. Bishop shared that she had a hard time connecting with Indigenous students, and at first, she thought that was their fault- for not understanding her “cultural urgency” to know them. Like Nora, her horizon was limited by her encounters and by those she hadn't yet had. At the beginning of her time at PETES, E. Bishop viewed herself as separate from “them” (Indigenous students) and felt she did not understand “their lifestyle.”

Over time, she realized that it was her sense of guilt and conflict, of not wanting or willing to be implicated in the history that she was learning. When she says that this is a perspective coming from “a white teacher teaching in Hull, in Gatineau, where sometimes I don't even understand my own culture,” she shows an openness to understanding her discomfort and privilege. Prior to these experiences, E. Bishop felt proud of her identity as a Canadian and her sense of her own Scottish-Canadian culture. We are reminded of Gadamer's “coming up short” against something that we thought we once knew and now realize was mistaken. A fusion of horizons, I believe, is part of

coming up short, as it is “an encounter and contact where the new possibilities of understanding our relations with another may lie” (Krahn, 2009, p. 47). E. Bishop is coming up short, but her eyes are open.

Before we move on to the next section of this chapter, I will share an excerpt from the interview I had with Billy. Billy's openness to unlearning and to “shaking” up the traditional schooling system is evident, but so too is the unlearning process he has continuously gone through:

My awakening, or unlearning, about Canadian history and colonialism began when I was the vice principal at Phileomwright and Hadley. We were fully engaged in the traditional Canadian school system, that was about passing courses, math and English and science and history that was taught by from a colonial perspective. I was aware that we had many Indigenous students at the school, and they were immersed in this same system. Being in Québec, students had to pass grueling French exams in Grade 10 and 11 to graduate from high school. French was the third language for many of our learners, especially the Indigenous students, and 90% of our Indigenous students weren't getting their high school diploma because they could not pass the French exams. We applied one year to see if we could get a derogation to have Cree or Algonquin language replace the French and the reply from the ministry was quite complex and convoluted- it was next to impossible. That's when I woke up and realized that many Indigenous learners in our school board, in our school, weren't getting their high school diploma. I began to ask what was the school board or school, was doing or not doing to facilitate the success for the students in getting their diploma. It made me realize there's a problem in our system here. The problem is not the kids.

Billy's explanation that he was “fully engaged in the traditional Canadian school system” speaks to how the topic addressed him. He was addressed by how First Nations kids were “set up” not to succeed. He saw how the unjustness of a system designed to ensure certain people flourish and certain people fail, much like the pass system imposed by the Indian Act.

As Gadamer (1989) puts it, “understanding begins when something addresses us” (p. 299). And yet, Jardine (2012) points out, “it only *begins* there” (p. 4). Here Billy continues:

I have realized that it's not just learning history but of how we learn, and that we need to recognize that learning comes in many forms. The question of “what is learning?” is very present because of all the unlearning I am doing. My unlearning about colonialism is ongoing. I've learned about assimilation and residential schools, but it's those unconscious biases that I think about. They're inherent in all of our institutions that form what we are expected to believe in this curriculum and this history. This school system is a colonial system that doesn't necessarily lend itself to set everybody up for success, or the same success. If those of us who are part of the system, and who work in the system don't all see that, at varying levels of understanding, nothing's going to change. We've had hundreds of years in this colonial school system and colonial society. And we're only starting to be become awoken or awakened or awake.

Billy's comment about hundreds of years of colonialism and that we are only starting to become “awoken/awakened/awake” points to his feelings of how much time unlearning will take. Billy recognizes that he is implicated in a colonial system and wants others to recognize it too.

This section has examined how our horizons- those we are attuned to and those that lie beyond our view- impact how we recognize ourselves, each other, and our relationships. The Canadian school system has perpetuated a narrow and incomplete horizon regarding our

connection with Indigenous peoples. From the stories that teachers have shared, we've learned that unlearning broadens horizons and that experiences learning from Indigenous students and families have led to deeper understandings. In the next section, we will take up Donald's concept of ethical relationality in the processes of unlearning that teachers describe.

Unlearning, ethical relationality, and fusion: Living rooms, sweat lodges, and ice roads

During my conversations with participants, many spoke of the relational experiences they shared with Indigenous peoples as profound, illuminating, and life-changing. I believe that these lived experiences were transformative events because they are relational, and honour the humanness in one another. In “From What Does Ethical Relationality Flow?” Donald (2016) writes:

Ethical relationality does not deny difference nor does it promote assimilation of it. Rather, ethical relationality supports the conceptualization of difference in ecological terms as necessary for life and living to continue....and is tied to a desire to acknowledge and honour the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences position us in relation to one another, and how our futures as people in the world are similarly tied together. (p.11)

Donald teaches us about the Cree wisdom concept of wicihitowin. “The term wicihitowin,” he writes, “refers to the life-giving energy that is generated when people face each other as relatives and build trusting relationships by connecting with others in respectful ways” (p. 11). By engaging with each other this way, we “demonstrate that we recognize one another as fellow human beings and work hard to put respect and love at the forefront of our interactions” (p. 11). Thus, building respectful relationships with our fellow human beings through connection and love is at the centre of enacting

ethical relationality. It is in the spirit of *wicihitowin* that I share the following story from the conversation I had with Stan:

Teaching Indigenous students has changed my relationship with the way I listen. I think it has opened my mind to listen more and to listen to understand. When I went up to Mistissini [a Cree community many of our students come from] a few years ago, I sat in an Elder's living room and she told us story about the day the Indian Agents came to Mistissini to take the kids away, to the Residential School in Moose Factory. I'm getting emotional now thinking about it. When she told the story, I was absolutely embarrassed. Usually, I would have a question and I would have something to say. But I just sat there listening. She told us how she remembered opening her door the day after the children had been taken. All she could hear were dogs barking, when normally there were kids playing. But all the kids were gone. Just gone. Imagine a community with no children. I think a lot of times people don't understand something until they've actually sat in the living room with someone and had them tell you a story. I had never spoken to a Cree woman who lived through it. I thought residential schools were something that happened in the 1940s and learning that it happened right up to 1996 was shocking and awful. Colonialism as a concept is hard to imagine because it is something so big and violent. But when you speak to an individual person, the impact is different. Going to Mistissini and sitting in the Elders living room listening as a fellow human being changed me profoundly.

As I reflect on the passage above, I am struck by Stan's gratitude regarding different forms of encountering and listening as he sat in the “living room” with the Elder. For many of us, a “living room” is a room in our homes for gathering with friends, sharing, telling tales, and coming together. Living, as an adjective, circa 1200, means “alive, not dead,” and also “residing, staying”

(Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). From the Old English *rum*, room means “space, extent; sufficient space” (Online Etymology dictionary, 2022). So, a living room is a room that is “alive with space.” This feeling of being present in life and aliveness is evident in Stan's experience- for him, the aliveness is spurred by the relation he feels to the story told by the Elder. *The living room is alive with relation*. Billy, who was with Stan in Mistissini, recounts the experience this way:

We sat in an Elders home, and listened as they told the story of the big black plane that would fly in and land on Lake Mistissini. As they told us they story, they rocked in time in their rocking chairs. They told us how the Indian agents would take the children when they were 5 or 6 years old each September to the Residential schools. The way they were telling that story, and the silence... it was so raw and it was as if you were there, and you could see the children getting onto the plane and fingers on the on the window, and the yelling, “Please don't let us go. Please don't let us go.” The Elder told us that every year, when this black plane came into the community and took the children, the sadness that descended upon the community was palpable. She was one of those children that was taken, and she never forgave her mom. She had a relationship with her mom again, but she couldn't forgive her for letting them take her away. Listening to these stories made me realize how deep this pain goes in generations. I feel that this was one of the most powerful moments that I've been part of in any Canadian conversation...it made me want to not just learn more, but be better.

When the Elder shared the sounds and the silences of children being taken away from the community, Billy felt intense emotions. This encounter had profound effects on his relationship with the past. The residential school system was no longer an article he read about on the news or in a book but rather the living and breathing experience of a policy the Canadian government

enacted for more than 150 years. Sitting in the living room with the Elders connected both Billy and Stan to the presence of history. They have been “pulled up short” by listening to the Elders, and in being pulled up, they are in relation with past and present, and what this means for the future.

There are many other ways that being in relation to Indigenous students and their families has transformed and broadened the horizons of teachers at PETES. The following are excerpts from my conversations with Peter, Harper, and Nigel (respectively):

Working with Indigenous students has changed me for the better. I have become calmer—I don't yell [at students]and anymore and I have gotten looser. Learning about their cultures has influenced me as a teacher; in the sense that I feel that they are teaching me more than I'm teaching them. My perspective is now so much broader than what you hear in the media or what I was taught in school.



I have taught many Indigenous students over the years and what I have learned from them is profound. As a teacher, it's been very challenging, but as a person, it's been enriching and wonderful. I think it's like trying to fit like a square peg in a circle hole. The curriculum and our teaching doesn't always fit for Indigenous students I have been trying to deepen my pedagogy and learn what works best with our Indigenous students. I think knowing more about the history and understanding the past has helped me understand. One parent in particular did not trust me because of how I looked. I just felt like she thought, “You don't know what you're talking about lady,” and that I represented all the negative from the past, just because I'm white. I had to have those conversations to build those relationships.



I have developed some really meaningful relationships with certain First Nations kids. One thing I would do in my room was put an old picture of Ottawa on the monitor. The kids loved trying to guess where it was in the city. One day, one of the kids asked me, "Can you take me there? Can we go there together"? I was blown away. I'm still blown away by that. Because this kid never relied on any of his peers for anything. He's so unique in that way. In yet, he wanted me, a white guy decades older than him, to take him on a walk. His parents gave me permission, so we started doing walks, once a month to different place. I think it was so meaningful for me because he had come from a completely different culture, 15 hours north from here, in yet he saw something in me that made him want to spend time with me. It's really heartfelt.

Peter suggests that his perspective is much broader on account of everything he is learning from Indigenous students and that "they are teaching me more than I am teaching them." Harper speaks to her profound learning experiences but also to the struggle she has had when teaching Indigenous students. Harper recognizes how the school system demands the student to change, rather than the system responding to the student. She is implicated in this system and recognizes this as problematic. Harper understands that it will take continual work and ongoing commitments to have difficult conversations to build relations. Finally, I want to reflect on the joy that Nigel felt when walking with his student, as well as the surprise by the student's desire to spend time with him. These walks brought "a white guy decades older than him" and a twelve-year-old Cree boy together, allowing them to "be in [their] bodies and the world without being made busy by them" (Solnit, 2000, p. 5). As Peter and the boy walked, they walked beyond being pulled up short and toward relations.

Redress and reparations with Indigenous people

In our conversations, Henry and Billy both spoke to how being involved in activism with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students, families, community members, and leaders impacted them, specifically through their participation with *Shannen's Dream*, *Project of Heart*, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and leaders including Cindy Blackstock. Henry remembers:

When I became involved with Shannen's Dream and Project of Heart in 2011, that opened my eyes to the reality. And the work of Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations child and family and Caring society, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. At that time, the population of First Nations kids at PETES was growing and many Cree students were coming from up north. I wanted to know more. I remember meeting Zach and Crystal in my first year at PETES in 2010 and knowing that they had learning challenges and emotional issues, but without really understanding the background. I think after a year or two of doing the work that we were doing, I understood that a bit more, and changed my approach. I also think becoming a father softened me...now I try to come around alongside, rather than straight on. Becoming more aware that some First Nations students were suffering from intergenerational traumas and emotional scars really helped me understand. But I also learned about resilience and strength. Going to Fort Albany really changed me, to witness the incredible culture and spirit of the people. Standing on the ice road, being in the sweat lodge, I'll never forget that.

Henry connects his learning of “realities” with his understanding and a change in his approach. He spoke about being a pupil at an all-boys Catholic school, where he was taught to respect his teachers through discipline. He spoke about how many interactions were direct, brash, and punitive. As Henry unlearned the ways he was taught to be a teacher, his approaches when working with students changed so that he now “comes around alongside.” Coming around alongside

respects the student as a relational being, gives space, acknowledges difference, and offers human connection.

Henry also spoke about the trip he and I and one other teacher facilitated in 2013. We took twelve grade 6 students from our school to Fort Albany for five days as part of a YMCA-YWCA Exchange program. Fort Albany First Nation is a Mushkegowuk Cree community situated on the southern shore of the Albany River, 10 km east of the coast of James Bay. While in the community, we were treated as honoured guests and given a house to stay in. The fact that the community offered us the house despite a chronic housing shortage was truly overwhelming. Even more poignant was that this house was considered the “best house” in Fort Albany, despite the limited heating, numerous holes in the floors, plumbing issues, and bars on the windows to prevent vandalism. We were sincerely moved by the community’s generosity. During our time in Fort Albany, we spent time in the bush, learning how to make trails in the deep snow, set snares, and boil tea from cedar boughs.

As Henry mentioned during our conversation, we also stood on the vast James Bay ice road and were taught about the “relocation” of Old Fort Albany, which we could see from where we stood on the ice road. Old Fort Albany was on an island between the two modern-day communities of Fort Albany and Kashechewan First Nations. Missionaries separated the community into Anglican and Roman Catholic sections and moved them to separate sites. Edmund Metatawabin, an Elder and former chief of Fort Albany told us that the divisions caused by the churches decision



Figure 30: Old Fort Albany, 1898 (Source: Wikipedia, 2022)

to splinter the communities is present to this day. Many community members remain estranged from former friends, neighbours, and relations due to the colonial divides that were imposed upon them.

The next day, Edmund took us to his sweat lodge and welcomed all of us and several community members. Henry and I and our students took part in the sweat for several rounds and emerged with sweat coating our bodies and tears on our faces. As we made our way back to the house, Henry and I talked about the sweat. I expressed how it felt as if I was melting—physically, spiritually, emotionally—with those around me, with the Earth, with the willow bows that stretched overhead. I felt whole, connected, and grounded in the heat and the darkness. I felt fully human. For me, and for Henry, being in the sweat with community was the essence of being in relation. Of finding common ground.



Figure 31: On the James Bay ice road (Source: own photo).

Our Dreams Matter too

We now travel back to Gatineau, and to PETES, to a day nearly eleven years ago. On this June day in 2011, my class hosted a press conference for the release of *Our Dreams Matter Too*, a report from the *Shannen's Dream Campaign* to the United Nations Committee on the *Rights of the Child*. With numerous letters from First Nations students and Canadian students, the report detailed how inequity in education affects all Canadians. The report was clear about the devastating impacts the chronic inequities have on First Nation children and youth. Billy remembers that day well:

I remember the day we had the press conference at our school with Charlie Angus and Cindy Blackstock. I think of my own life and this is both a marker and milestone. From that day on, of the value and importance our school community placed on working towards ending the injustices, unfairness and the inequities of school systems and funding distribution. Learning from Cindy Blackstock alone has

been life changing. The students have an understanding of the injustices in our system and in our society because of the perspectives that you've allowed them to see from.

Billy recognizes that our school community has been transformed by learning from First Nations leaders, children, and youth. When he said, “The students have an understanding of the injustices in our system and in our society because of the perspectives that you have allowed them to see from,” he speaks to how encounters with horizons we have not seen before changing our perspectives. Billy refers to this as magical. These transformations occur when we are willing to broaden our horizons and be pulled up short.

A Gentle Response: How things might have been (and can be) different

During my conversations with teachers, I asked them what they understood about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. To this, many teachers spoke about what they had not been taught and how they are continually learning that they are in a relationship with not only Indigenous peoples but with the land, water, and life around them. Harper said:

Our history lessons have taught us that we have nothing to do with each other. Our government removed Indigenous people from view. What stories we do know are based on racist ideologies and stereotypes. We were purposefully kept from knowing each other. Now we are learning that we've actually been in relationships for hundreds of years.

I was curious to understand how, with this recognized, teachers might work towards building relations and helping their students understand the relationships and responsibilities that living in Canada comes with. Brian spoke of a gentleness that is required to help guide learners through the process:

When I think about the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples, I think it's evolving. I have a really hard time putting words to my feelings. I have a feeling about it, but I don't necessarily know if I understand it or grasp it yet. I don't know much of the history. I have an uncle who has traced our family and where we lost lands where we gave up our treaty rights. I have those numbers, but I don't fully understand what they really mean. So, for me, understanding the relationship is more in a playing out of how I respond to people. How I respond to my students, how I respond to their families. How I respond to new Canadians. When I introduce the explorers, from the grade four curriculum, we talk about how things could have been different. We talk about how different people live and how when the explorers got sick, they needed medicines and the First Nations helped them and had medicines to offer them. With newcomers, I introduce the history very gently, as many of them have this notion that Canada's a glorious place. We talk about how every country goes through their struggles and Canada has some bad times in its history too. Part of that gentleness is to try to relieve some of the shame for what is going on in their own country. I want them to feel confident being part of the change.

Donald speaks to this gentleness in working with students towards ethical relationality. On the podcast “FooknConversation,” Donald explains the process he takes with his own students:

What I've been promoting around here is a very different notion of what it means to be a human being living in a particular place. So instead of this idea of Canadian nation and nationality that everybody has to adjust to, I use that image of the treaty handshake that's on the metal. And so, what does that really mean? Well, what it means is that we have people who call themselves Canadians, and we have this

history, we have this tradition, this inheritance that we call Canadian nation and nationality. And we have to honour that that's part of us. But we also have localized Indigenous understandings of what it means to live in a place. And what's the wisdom associated with how to live well there. So, there is a way where this handshake can actually be honoured. And my view is that it doesn't matter who you are, where you come from. If you live in this place, then you are part of this treaty agreement. And so, it's your responsibility as an educator to learn how local indigenous people understand themselves as human beings and what that has to do with the ecosystem because my what I tell them is that the ecosystem is very intimately connected to the knowledge system. I try to help them overcome all their fears about, "I'm not indigenous, I don't have the right to do this." I try to show them that there's actually kind of an urgency for them, to begin to accept that the ecosystem, the place where they live might have something to do with their own identities. And so, unlearning comes through this process that I try to do, where I tell as many stories as I can, because one of the things I say is that if you want to know the land, if you want to know the people, you got to know their stories.

(2020, 41:49 min)

To move forward with truth and then reconciliation in Canada, how we seriously consider nationhood, identity, responsibility, and place- matter. Teachers in this study stress that it requires spending time unlearning the narratives we've been taught and have retold. And we need, first and foremost, to learn from the wisdom traditions of the people whose lands we live on, asking ourselves, "How might these stories and traditions help us learn ways of living together that promote balance, reciprocity, and truth-telling?"

The stories we learn while spending time in living rooms, on ice roads, in sweat lodges, and rethinking how we come to know things contribute to our unlearning. They expand our horizons and, in doing so, grow our willingness to be open to what is unknown to us. These stories ask us to remember that we are part of something larger than our classrooms, schools, families, and lives. We are part of the land on which we walk and live, and we are part of the treaties, signed and unsigned. We are part of the politics of unceded territories and by being here we have kinship relations with those around us. In *Being Alive Well*, Naomi Adelson (2001) shares a story told to her by a Cree Elder. The story is as follows:

I knew and heard that there were many people who wouldn't easily get tired even if they work so hard and carry heavy loads many miles...that's how people were a long time ago. That's how strong people were in the past. That's the main thing. People got strong and miyupimaatisiiu because they moved around all the time. They would work hard every day because they knew they were miyupimaatisiiu enough to do hard work. (p. 95)

For the Eeyou, *miyupimaatisiiu* is the concept of “being alive well.” To me, this story teaches us many things that are connected to ethical relationality. It reminds us that being alive well means “moving around.” While the Elder who told this story meant physically moving around, which is essential, we must also “move around” spiritually, intellectually, emotionally. Second, the story teaches us that even if we are tired, there is work to do and that if we are living well, we can do the work. And we have work to do.

A walk alongside Akikodjiwan: Let us help each other understand these things once more

As mentioned in the methodology section, I hoped to facilitate a community sharing circle with teachers, administration, and Indigenous parents at PETES. Due to reasons related to COVID-19 that were previously explained, this was impossible, and a subsequent reimagining of Phase 3

was necessary. After speaking with Albert Dumont about Akikodjiwan, and the proximity of this sacred place to PETES, we decided that inviting teachers for a walk might be an opportunity for them to do some unlearning by hearing new stories and being in place.

On a blustery October morning, five teachers and one administrator joined us for a walk and a community sharing circle by Akikodjiwan. Albert spoke about the sacredness of the falls, the impact colonization has had on the people who have always lived here, and on the animals, plants, water, and sky. He spoke about how teachers can help their students learn how to live as “good human beings”:

To be a human being is to keep well...It is not going to be how much money you acquired in your life that will mean something spiritually whenever you leave this world physically. It is going to be how good of a human being you were that will amount to something. It is not going to be how good of a Canadian you were. It's not how much you saluted the flag or stood for the national anthem that will mean something after you physically die. It's going to be how good of a human being you were.

For Albert, being a “good human being” means returning to the ways human beings were taught to live- that is, by living in balance with each other and the earth, through ceremony, prayer, and kindness towards all “kinship relations.” As the teachers listened, some of them asked Albert what that would look like in the classroom- how can they be honourable? How can they help their students be good human beings? To this, Albert replied:

Come here to this place...I implore you to come here and feel the energy and the spirit of this place, the tranquility and the peace, the love. The people who came here came here for ceremony sake- not just for the Algonquin Nation, the Ojibwe and the Cree, the Mi'kmaq, the Maliseet and other Nations came here, too. We

should renounce hatred, not just here; renounce it wherever hatred is taking place. Wherever oppression is taking place, let us do what human beings are called upon to do and renounce it. And find the courage to do so. It is normal and natural to renounce oppression. It is abnormal and unnatural not to. So I ask that you come here to Akikodjiwan. And reinvigorate your spirit and whatever it is that defines you, as a human being. Let us think of the future generations...let us help each other understand these things once more.

As Albert spoke, I watched the faces of the teachers gathered there. They appeared relaxed, open and “pulled up short”. It was apparent to me that they were whiling in Albert's words, but at the same time, they were trying to figure out how to practically “apply” this to their classrooms. It was clear to me that this process of unlearning would take time. How do you translate “being a good human being” into pedagogy and curriculum?



Figure 32: Community sharing circle at Akikodjiwan (Source: own photo)

Concluding Thoughts: Horizons from under the Bank Street Bridge

Early this morning, I walked along the riverbank of the Rideau River. The icy snow crunched beneath my mukluks as my dogs ran ahead. The section of the river I walked along stretches under the bank street bridge and provided shelter for the numerous birds that call the river home. I am fascinated by how the different species of ducks, along with the pigeons, seagulls, and lingering Canadian geese, encounter each other. They rest, swim, hunt, and exist beside one another in Ottawa's urban centre. Their survival is fused by geography and habitat, by the offerings and confines of this watershed. I look out from under the bridge and at the brightening horizon. The sun is low in the sky, casting a hazy orange glow upwards. I glance at the birds, call for my dogs to follow, and trudge home.

Chapter 9: Final Thoughts

Some people say that time is a river into which we can step but once, as it flows in a straight path to the sea. But Nanabozho's people know time is a circle. Time is not a river running inexorably to the sea, but the sea itself – its tides that appear and disappear, the fog that rises to become rain in a different river. All things that were will come again.

(Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 206-207)

It is now the month of ziissbaakdoke giizis, the sugar moon, on unceded Algonquin territory where my family and I make our home. The sky is grey and heavy this morning. Snow is on its way. Although the calendar tells us that spring will soon be here, the seasons on these unsundered lands are subtler than a fixed date. They slip and slide into one another, overlapping, gesturing, one giving way to the next in due time. A temporality of their own, an unending conversation with one another as life awakens from winter sleep.

Albert tells me that whereas winter is the time for stories, spring is the time for awakening and renewal when life comes forth. I see this beginning as I take my daily walks along the river and witness the seasonal cycle. The once snow-covered trail now has cracks of ice pushing forth, and, on warm days, mud oozes onto the bottoms of my boots. The dogs are enchanted by the birdsongs that have been quiet since the solstice. And, here, at the desk where I have written most of his dissertation, looking out onto the glorious maple tree, these words are coming to an end. These words, perhaps, might become part of an unending conversation. I offer these final thoughts as understandings of the stories shared with me. It is our openness to dialogue with others that Gadamer sees as the basis for a deeper solidarity (Warnke, 2012). These final thoughts are an invitation to openness and solidarity.

In this chapter, I present my final thoughts by revisiting my research questions and the interpretations I made throughout. I will also speak to the study's limitations, challenges,

strengths, and implications for future research.

Revisiting the Research Questions

The relations of co-inquiries

Overall, the central concern of this study was how the ways that teachers understand the relationship between Canadians and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples directly influence how they teach about the relationship, which influences what and how students learn. This inquiry came out of my years of work in education and educational research and learning from my Eeyou students about their beautiful Eeyou Istchee.

Specifically, it became the central focus of concern after the research I had completed for my Master's thesis with teachers working toward reconciliation and social justice in Québec. That research found that although the teachers I interviewed overwhelmingly wanted to learn from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and engage in social justice work with them, there were several barriers, including access to resources, support from administration, time, and the absence of a curricular policy mandate (Howell, 2017). Moreover, there were emotional and personal struggles regarding fears of cultural appropriation, apprehension about inadvertently offending First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Another concern was a worry that it was inappropriate for non-Indigenous teachers to teach about “Indigenous issues,” leading to an avoidance of engaging in the work (Howell, 2017).

Throughout the years before and after my Master's, I have had the opportunity to work with teachers in various contexts, including as a mentor coach, a workshop facilitator, a part-time professor, and a research assistant. I noticed how many Canadian teachers struggle with similar obstacles that I had found in my Master's research. Indeed, there is a growing field of research on education for truth and reconciliation that confirms the very genuine struggles that teacher

candidates and teachers face across Canada when teaching First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives. These include “resistances” to uncomfortable knowledge, claims of not knowing “enough,” feelings of inadequacy, and a lack of knowledge regarding treaties (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Brant, 2017; Dion, 2014, 2016; Rice et al., 2022; Tupper, 2011, 2012, 2019).

Of being from this place and not from this place

I witnessed the complexities of these struggles in many teacher candidates in my classes at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. In community sharing circles, I ask teachers to identify where their ancestors come from and acknowledge the place they call home. During these circles, I observed the contradictions of being a Canadian who is *from* this place and *not from* this place. Many students declared themselves “settlers” with European ancestry. These students often asserted that they were committed to “anti-colonial” work, confronting their white privilege, decolonizing, and teaching truth and reconciliation to their students. Other students identified as Canadians- not knowing where their ancestors came from- and believing that this was not important, anyway. It was through the hard work of their ancestors' that Canada came to be, after all. I recall one student who had tremendous difficulty understanding that colonial culture was embedded in Canadian systems and structures. She was a “proud” Canadian and did not like that she was being “made to feel guilty” for being here because, as she told me, “my family has been in Canada for more than 200 years!”

Encounterings in being pulled up short in teacher education

The student I mentioned above often emailed me after our classes about her feelings regarding things I had said, or concepts that provoked her, and “pulled her up short”. Through several email encounters and conversations she and I had that term, she was able to work through many of her blockages, and in the end, she thanked me for providing a safe space for her to express

her feelings that she deemed “too politically incorrect to bring up in class.” I began to think about how the divisive language we use and the way we identify ourselves perpetuate the work of restor(y)ing and reparations we must make to renew relations. It seemed to me that the heart of working toward the transformational changes the TRC advocated for needed to be taught *from the heart* in a gentle, yet provoking way. Moreover, transformational change needs to directly address the colonial impasses and stumbling blocks that Canadians, and in particular, Canadian educators, are encountering. Teachers need to be “pulled up short” and asked to “while” in the stories they have learned, the ones they tell, and the stories that have not been told.

The provincial and territorial ministries of education can develop curriculum, school boards can offer professional development for teachers, and resources can be offered in truth and reconciliation education. This is important, but teachers must have the opportunity to learn *from* Indigenous peoples, knowledge, and wisdom traditions rather than *about* them. Until teachers begin to unlearn colonial logics and comprehend that they are in a relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples- that they are in a relationship with place, and that they are implicated in these relationships- there is a significant probability that curricula, professional development, and resources will not manifest in the transformational change that the TRC so urgently called for.

Québec: tensions and possibilities in a move towards openness

In the Québec context specifically, transformational change and support for teachers to make meaningful and sustaining moves toward truth and reconciliation are urgent. As previously mentioned, Québec has taken minimal measures to respond to the TRC Calls to Action (Kairos, 2018) and recommendations from teachers to update curricula to include consultations with Indigenous leaders (Ann, 2021). Currently, Québec is updating teacher professional competencies, and a parallel joint effort was carried out by Indigenous organizations to develop a competency

that addresses anti-Indigenous racism in Québec. Competency 15¹¹, however, is not recognized in any way by the Ministry, or by the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement (CAPFE), which is the accrediting body for Teacher Education institutes in Québec. Moreover, Francois Legault, the Québec Premier, refuses to acknowledge the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Canadian Press, 2021). These realities specific to Québec contribute to the tensions and possibilities that my study revealed as teachers at PETES grapple toward the touchstones of acknowledging, truth-telling, restor(y)ing, and relating. We know from research conducted in Faculties of Education across Canada that this unlearning process is complex and non-linear. The curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality to the process of unlearning colonialism become particularly important when we understand the urgency of the work before us.

What are the curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality to the processes of unlearning colonialism?

My main research question asked what the curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality, as conceptualized by Donald, are to processes of unlearning colonialism. According to Donald (2009), ethical relationality holds that the “past occurs simultaneously in the present and influences how we conceptualize the future. It requires that we see ourselves as related to, and implicated in, the lives of those that have gone before us and those yet to come” (p. 7). To my knowledge, ethical relationality, as a concept for teacher unlearning, is unique to Donald's

¹¹ Comp. 15 came about because the members of the Table nationale sur la réussite éducative des élèves autochtones were asked to provide feedback on a preliminary (draft) version of the Ministry's working framework of 14 teacher professional competencies. This was part of the province-wide feedback processes. On seeing the relative absence of attention to Indigenous peoples' perspectives and concerns, members of the Table proposed drafting an additional competency. The Ministry representatives agreed to review a proposed competency, which the developers numbered as 15 – given that the Ministry draft document had 14 competencies at the time. However, Comp. 15 was rejected. So the FNEC and partners decided to release it independently.

approaches within his teacher education classes, and therefore what I learned about ethical relationality came from the stories his former students shared with me and is new to the field of truth and reconciliation education. Once again, I remind my readers that ethical relationality is not a transferrable model or pedagogy, but rather a concept that we might draw on to understand the sacred ecology, knowledges, and wisdoms of the place(s) where we live.

Pedagogical significances: Unlearning as an imperative for transformation

Perhaps one of the most powerful understandings that come from my study are the transformative pedagogical changes that ethical relationality requires and affirms. As teachers and teacher educators, we cannot expect to maintain the same pedagogical choices and achieve different results. This work requires us to unlearn our assumptions and approaches about *how we teach*, and *where we teach* as much as *what we teach*. Elsa, Mae, and Ava all spoke about Dwayne's pedagogical choices as he put forth ethical relationality as praxis. His way of teaching was challenging yet gentle and respectful. His linguistic considerations were consistently mindful of fostering relational learning rather than perpetuating divisions.

An opening up: Encountering the upward pull

Dwayne's pedagogical decisions also provided a place for students to think critically and deeply about their thinking and facilitated the grappling of questions about knowledge. Rather than engaging in “decolonizing strategies” that might enable teachers to *do something*, Dwayne’s teachings empowered them toward a *way of being*, which Elsa explained as “unlearning by starting from the ground up rather than taking something away.” Unlearning is not about forgetting, but rather about being cognizant of the blockages that we might not have known were there. The process of working through these blockages so that a new story might emerge requires that we allow our “bellybuttons to be pushed.” Thus, a pedagogy of provocations is a significant

consideration for unlearning colonialism when facilitated in a respectful way that encourages students to accept that “not knowing the answers” is integral to the process. As Ava lamented, “I am constantly thinking about how much I don't know. How do I think about other ways of knowing? Why do I think certain ways? How do I engage when I don't understand?”

Another pedagogical significance of ethical relationality to the process of unlearning was the integration of body, mind, spirit, and emotional being and the recognition of the importance of engaging students on all levels. One of the most poignant activities during the course for Elsa, Mae, and Ava were the walks in the River valley. During the walks, students learned about themselves in relation to place and shifted their temporality to go back in time. Elsa spoke at length of how challenging the walks were for her initially because of the cold. She said she did not understand why Dwayne “couldn't tell the same stories in the warm classroom where we wouldn't be freezing.” It took her time to work through the meaning of walking in place, and the implication of walking, of movement. Mae and Ava shared how the walks made them feel alive and challenged what they knew about the river valley, often bringing up strong emotions. Mae shared that, “Being out there, on the land, along the river, where people walked before us, and taking food for the coyotes during the kindness moon, completely opened me up to the ways of living that have been lost.” For Mae, walking in place pulled her up short, nurtured unlearning, and facilitated the arrival of new stories.

Curricular Implications: opportunities to attune to new stories and place

Rather than maintain a curriculum that has historically worked to train students in settler colonialism, ethical relationality invites students to unlearn their colonial training by conceptualizing the past as occurring within the present. This ethic has substantial bearings on how we approach curriculum and the stories we tell. Understanding ourselves as implicated in the lives of people who walked before us, who are walking with us, and who have yet to walk demands a

radically altered curricular narrative. A curriculum that honours a relational ethic of past, present, and future would demand an attunement to place and to the knowledge held within that place. It requires learning *from* the people of that place rather than learning *about* them as remnants of the past. Moreover, it asks us to unlearn what many of us have learned about Indigenous knowledge, which is seen as knowledge that provided a foundation to our knowledge today, or, at worst, invalid, antiquated, and irrelevant.

Ava, Mae, and Elsa spoke about how Dwayne attended to the curriculum in ways that respected other ways of knowing. Ava explained how “Dwayne weaved curricular artifacts together to help us intermingle our knowledge with other ways of seeing. It’s kind of like growing veins through other ways of understanding.” Ava explained that Dwayne approached treaty teachings by looking at written treaties, the manuscripts of the treaties, and the stories that the Elders and the knowledge keepers shared about the treaty. Dwayne's way of intermingling knowledge rather than breaking knowledge apart facilitated unlearning by looking at a curriculum document or artifact through several viewpoints in ways which were both respectful and critical.

A curriculum of Place

In “Where are we? Finding common ground in a curriculum of place” Chambers (2008) raises four dimensions of a curriculum of place and its significance for our lives and education. I posit that ethical relationality as praxis advances Chambers' curricular calls. First, Chambers tells us that a curriculum of place calls for a different sense of time. A different place of time would help us “recognize our position in a place that is in relation to the circumstances of that place” (p. 115). I think back to the student who claimed that the length of time her family had been in Canada- 200 years- meant that she *knew* this place. Chamber tells us that the Blackfoot refer to the settlers that came a century and a half ago as having “just arrived” (p.116). To really know a place, knowing what is appropriate to do in that place takes a long time. Longer,” writes Chambers, “than

a lesson plan or a unit, a reporting period or a semester; longer than the scope and sequence cycle or budget year. Longer than the term of a single government or even a series of governments” (p. 116). Longer, I say, than 200 years. Ethical relationality- the concept that we are implicated in the past, present, and future of a place and the people's lives in that place-helps teachers reimagine what they might have to learn about this place- from the land and the people.

A curriculum of place is enskillment, where “a person’s being is constituted through the tasks that he or she conducts as he or she dwells in a particular place within a region of places” (p. 116). In other words, as we learn the skills necessary to live in the place we are, we become who we are, and we understand who it is we are from. In turn, we form intimate relations with the land, water, sky, animals, and peoples around us as *we become part of our ecology*. We learn these skills from mentors through stories and songs, and we pass them down as we become the mentors. Chambers writes that in a curriculum of place, knowledge is therefore technical and social; “the knowledge is social because it is learned through the social relations of being educated; it is technical because it requires enskillment” (p. 120). I think of the many skills my Eeyou students had that my Canadian students generally lacked. Many Canadian students had no connection to the land they lived on, the people who came before them, or the skills they might have once needed to survive. My Eeyou students knew their land and their people—of how to make a track in the deep snow and of how to make the call of a moose to attract them towards the hunting blind. They knew what to do when their gun froze up in the winter. They learned these skills by watching and then doing them. However, in most classrooms, these skills- this knowledge- this curriculum-as-lived is routinely dismissed and made null (Aoki, 1986). Ethical relationality as praxis honours this knowledge as necessary for life and living and respects that students learn with their minds but also and with their hands and hearts.

Third, Chambers (2008) posits that a curriculum of place calls for an education of awareness that comes from watching intensely. Like most of us need to learn how to listen, we also need to learn how to watch in order to honestly know a place. An education of awareness asks us to attune ourselves to our surroundings, with an openness to listening and learning- to feeling and knowing. To noticing the cues of a place and knowing what to do in that place- and how to care for the animals, land, water, sky, and each other. Ethical relationality invites us to recognize ourselves as relatives and act accordingly.

Finally, a curriculum of place is a wayfinding. Wayfinding is learning about a place as you go and travel throughout that place. Chambers (2008) shares a story about her wayfinding with her friend and fellow scholar, Narcisse Blood, as they travelled through Blackfoot territory with their students:

...throughout the journey, Narcisse narrates previous experiences in those places, experiences through which he continually reconstitutes himself as *Kainai*. And through these stories, he renews our relationship as people who have travelled to these places together, and with our students. It is through these stories we become friends and relations. And traveling and visiting places in *kitaowahsinnon* has been significant for the student teachers and practicing teachers who attended the summer institutes, as well. At these sites, those of previous generations told stories about these places, sang the songs to be sung in each place. As the students visited the sites and each other at these places, new stories and songs were created and composed. At the sites, both teachers and students became apprentices to what was to be learned in those places... we practiced doing things that were appropriate to do in that particular location at that particular time. ... students returned to the sites with their friends and family and, in some cases, their own students. (p. 123)

The walks in the river valley promote a curriculum of place and wayfinding. As students walk, they learn about that place through Dwayne's stories about it. They listen, watch, and become attuned to the cues of the river valley. They revisit. Elsa and Mae continued walking in the river valley for months after their course with Dwayne was finished. "We wanted to be there- to see the place Dwayne had taken us in the winter- how would they be different in the summer?" Mae said.

Ethical Relationality: an invitation to embark on a journey towards a new story

The curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality to processes of unlearning are numerous. In Chapter 2, I reviewed research in relation to the emerging field of truth and reconciliation education. I analyzed several studies that have and/or are being done in Faculties of Education across Canada. Although there are meaningful ongoing initiatives, including approaches that seek to reshape the ways that teacher candidates learn truth and reconciliation, difficulties and resistances remain a serious concern (Rice et al., 2022).

Another major issue that the literature pointed to was the dearth of professional learning opportunities for teachers that involved opportunities to learn from Indigenous peoples and apply that learning to their own lives and teaching practice. Unfortunately, its professional learning continues to focus on skills and content rather than the "porousness and complex engagements" that Indigenous scholars have called for. Moreover, research shows that the colonizing assumptions and practices that professional learning often seeks to disrupt are embedded in professional learning initiatives themselves (Washington and O'Connor, 2020). My study with teacher candidates and teachers shows that we must have opportunities to be "pulled up short" to broaden our horizons beyond what we recognize as our relationship to place and each other.

The "allure of the perfect stranger" (Dion, 2016) including the denials that settler colonialism is pervasive within Canadian colonial culture was a major focus of research previously done with teacher candidates (Brant, 2017). So, too were the "moves to innocence" Dion (2016, p.)

explains as the way that teachers distance themselves from Indigenous peoples while remaining the ever polite Canadian. As I reviewed this literature, and thought about my own experiences in education, I visualized the ‘perfect stranger’ positional in relation to the metaphorical train many Canadians remain on. The lull of the train protects us from the truths beneath the tracks, as the sealed-off windows keeps us from being attuned to the land as we speed by. The train feels good. For some Canadians, the train, and educational training, elicits pride and sense of identity. The lull and the sway narrate the story of Canada. It is time we got off.

My research study shows how ethical relationality promotes a response that gently invites us to question the lull and disembark from the colonial train(ing). I posit that there are several ways this occurs. First, ethical relationality promotes a *different way of being* as a person living in Canada. Rather than perpetuate the radical bifurcation of Indigenous peoples and Canadians, it positions us as relatives on shared land. However, being relatives and sharing land does not dismiss historical discrimination and current injustices against Indigenous peoples. Rather, ethical relationality facilitates unlearning what it means to call a place home and the amount of time needed to know a place truly. It promotes an awareness that most of us are relatively new here and have things to learn from Indigenous peoples. Second, ethical relationality proposes that the past and present co-occur and that, by the very fact that we live here, we are implicated in both what happened then and what is happening now. In short, that we have a responsibility, and living here demands something from us. We are asked to learn stories- which might be new to us- about the particular place we live in, and to learn the skills needed to live in this place to know what is appropriate to do and how to act. Learning these stories from Elders and knowledge keepers about the land, sky, animals, water is an education of awareness. This demands that we watch and listen with our whole being- our hands, heart, and head. Third, ethical relationality asks us to locate ourselves as enmeshed in the sacred ecology of the place in which we live. This means seeing

ourselves as part of an interdependent relationship with what Donald refers to as our kinship relations (2021). If we reimagine ourselves as part of this ecology, rather than separate from it, we might take care of it rather than viewing the environment as ours to exploit. We might stand with the land defenders on Wet'suwet'en territory as they protect their ancestral lands from pipelines; we might support the Anishinaabeg community members when they impose a moose moratorium in hopes of assisting the local moose population. We might recognize Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people as our fellow human beings and support the calls for justice through our electoral privileges. And, we might stand across from each other on these deep divides and see each other as relatives. Only when we are “pulled up short” and encounter the bifurcation of people and the dichotomous story of Canada will we get to the heart of colonialism.

Ethical relationality promotes the emergence of a new story about the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples by calling on Canadians to learn “who they come from” in relation to the ethics of living in place. As we have seen throughout this thesis, story is essential to *who we are*, whom *we believe* ourselves to be, and *who we are from*. Stories are the foundation of our curriculum-as-lived and shape how the curriculum-as-planned is framed and realized in classrooms across the country. Indeed, stories have the potential to tell truths but also perpetuate myths. We must be careful of the stories we tell and retell and think critically about the ones we are told. In *The Practice of Story Stewardship*, Bréne Brown (2021) writes that “Story stewardship means honouring the sacred nature of story—the ones we share and the ones we hear—and knowing that we’ve been entrusted with something valuable or that we have something valuable that we should treat with respect and care” (para.4). In the TRC final report, a Canadian who witnessed a survivor sharing her life story said, “By listening to your story, my story can change. By listening to your story, I can change” (2015, p. 21). Ethical relationality facilitates the different kinds of listening that many participants refer to as “transformative, emotional, and spiritual.”

Finally, ethical relationality offers us an opportunity to conceptualize our individual and collective futures as implicated in kinship relations, and the chance to “while” together as we walk- and as we listen. Brant-Birioukov, Ng-A-Fook, and Llewellyn (2019) conceptualize “ethical listening,” whereby settler historical consciousness impels “listeners who not only listen to understand historical events and experiences, but also actively engage with this past and advocate for new relationships in solidarity with Indigenous communities” (p. 117). The facilitation of “an other” story is possible when we learn to listen differently, and when ethics becomes the concern of the listening.

My study asked two other questions concerning the pedagogical and curricular significances to the processes of unlearning colonialism. I will discuss each of these questions in the section below, drawing on the stories that teachers at PETES shared with me. I was curious about the intersections between the teacher’s previous lived experiences and their relationships with Eeyou students at the school. Did being in relation with Eeyou students help them unlearn the stories of their lived experiences? Were they “pulled up short” in their encounters and how did this influence the way they approached the curriculum-as-planned and their pedagogical praxis?

Stories that make us and stories that break us: What does it mean to be *part of the story*?

Stories matter. Whole and truthful stories matter, for they hold power to change our worldviews, expand our horizons, and allow us to speak up when we hear stories that are inaccurate and dismissive. In, *The truth about stories*, Thomas King (2003) writes, “Just don't say in years to come that you would have lived differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now” (p. 167). This inspired me to ask how the stories teachers learn impact how they understand -and teach about the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 6 concerns the stories that teachers at PETES grew up with- the ones they were told and the ones they retell. I believe that the colonial stories embedded in the curriculum and the dominant culture directly impact both *what* and *how* teachers teach. All of the teachers I interviewed at PETES spoke at length about “learning nothing” about Indigenous peoples at school, or only learning incomplete and inaccurate narratives, and harmful stereotypes that promoted and normalized anti-Indigenous racisms. Many teachers spoke about tropes such as the “drunken” Indian, the “lazy” Indian and the Indian as a past story. Other dominant narratives that were revealed in conversations were of the benevolence of Canada and Canadians towards the First Peoples, as well as the myth of peace and treaty-making.

The stories that teachers were taught in school centred on these myths about peaceful relations and left students believing that the treaties were promises that were no longer relevant. The *lack* of education and the *miseducation* are problematic and have dire consequences. A colossal blockage for many teachers comes from the stories of dismissal, which have left them feeling unrelated to Indigenous peoples. So, even if they want to engage and learn from them, they do not know how to because Indigenous peoples are *unrelatable* to them. The historical bifurcation of savage and civilized seeps into the present. We saw this in the teachers' stories, as when Evelyne said, “The Native kids came in on the bus. I didn't know them. I had nothing to do with them.” Or in Henry's story, when he said, “I knew about the cowboys and Indians as that's what we would play as kids. It was very colonial- the Indians were always the bad guys.” Or E.Bishop, who knew that “reserves were where the natives lived and that's where you went to buy cheap cigarettes .”I could continue with countless examples. The point is that these stories taught a narrative that normalized divides and perpetuated colonial thinking. The remnants of this narrative linger and cause teachers to claim they “do not know enough about Indigenous peoples, don't want to be

offensive, and don't want to tell the wrong story.” Still, some teachers fear conveying the same false narratives that they were taught about Indigenous peoples.

Disrupting perfect strangeness

When teachers begin to hear another story, especially when they hear these stories *from* Indigenous people themselves, they begin to see themselves as *part of the story*. It is in their openness to being pulled up short that this seeing occurs. Many teachers can then acknowledge harmful truths, listen deeply, and begin the work of restor(y)ing relations. Nora shared:

I grew up in Nova Scotia and the only thing I learned about the Mi'kmaq people was that they built amazing houses hundreds of years ago. That's it. No stories about their innovations or contributions or culture or leaders. And no stories about what colonialism did to them. What my ancestors did! So, there I am living on this land, I don't know a thing. And I think, I need to start learning. I need to learn how to live with them. I really didn't know anything until I started teaching at PETES.

Like Nora, many teachers at PETES disclosed that they knew very little about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people before teaching at the school. They began learning new stories as they formed relationships with Indigenous students. For many teachers, these opportunities to *relate* to their students are how they began unlearning colonialism. As they heard their student's stories about living on the land, hunting, ceremony, and ways of being, teachers expanded their horizons. As Peter said, “They are teaching me more than I am teaching them.”

Many teachers were “pulled up short,” when encountering stories about manifestations of intergenerational trauma, addiction, suicide, and education and health inequities in communities. So, too while unlearning stories of “Canadian” symbols such as the Canada goose, which I came to know as “nisk.” Whiling in these encounters often brings about shame, guilt, and sadness, but

teachers must have the courage to listen and make reparations, such as standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities and leaders. Many are doing this.

Learning stories from Indigenous peoples are transformative, as they were for Billy and Stan, who were able to visit an Elder in her living room in Mistissini First Nation. As Stan said, “You don’t really know someone’s story until you sit in their living room and hear them tell it.” Other teachers, including Harper, spoke about how learning from Elders and knowledge keepers was a “life-changer...I suddenly got it. That I was part of this. That there are so many ways of knowing.” These stories about other ways of knowing are of particular importance because they disrupt colonial cognitive dominance and encourage thinking about how we might *know things* differently and how we might *do* things differently. Doing things differently might mean walking along the river during “science class” and learning about the plants along the trail. It might mean daily sharing circles in classrooms whereby students learn to listen deeply as community members. It could mean that teachers look at the curriculum-as-planned critically and think about what kind of stories it tells or does not tell. It might mean thinking about layering in parts of the “an other story” to facilitate a new story.

At PETES, new stories are being told and taught, and there are firm commitments to unlearning, innovation, and student centred pedagogy, which PETES should receive accolades for. However, despite deeply articulated commitments, PETES is not mindfully taking up the TRC Calls to Action, which Billy, the principal acknowledges. The ability to recognize that there is work to do is a strength of the PETES leadership and the community of teachers.

The stories that former Indigenous staff members and families, and also teachers shared, reveal the layered complexities of transformative work. The concerns raised need to be taken seriously, and seriously considered. A former Indigenous staff member believes that some teachers were treating them “less than”- and that “the story in their [teachers] heads was one of 'they

[Indigenous staff] are getting more funding and resources than us.' And that 'they are reliable or trustworthy to make their own decisions'. I think stereotypes about native people really affected how they thought of us." Moreover, the consistent removal of the Indigenous support teacher to cover other classrooms weaves a narrative that very loudly says, according to Jordan, "Indigenous kids aren't our priority." The Indigenous student I spoke to certainly felt that this was the story: "The non-Indigenous people took away our cultural room because it is not important to them." These are powerful statements and feelings that PETES has an opportunity to hear and respond to.

Schools are a microcosm of society, and, like in many institutions, we see colonial stories that are influencing the relationships between Indigenous students, families, and staff members at PETES and non-Indigenous community members. It will be necessary to sit down and listen to the stories being told and work through how to facilitate the emergence of more respectful ones. Teachers will require opportunities to learn and unlearn in meaningful and sustained ways to do this. Many teachers in my study indicated that they wished to have opportunities to engage in unlearning the colonial stories they had been raised with. In the next section, I will discuss some of the learning opportunities teachers have to learn about truth and reconciliation, asking if these opportunities have played a role in teachers' understanding of Canadian-Indigenous relationships.

"Not enough and not adequately": a desire to be pulled up short

There is frustration among teachers at PETES who are annoyed about their lack of opportunity to unlearn colonialism and learn how they might teach a new story. Teachers overwhelmingly felt that it was up to them to find opportunities, whether by taking a MOOC or by expanding their knowledge by reading books written by Indigenous authors—both which involve their own time and money. Teachers who participated in the school board professional development felt that there was worth to the learning they experienced, but there was little time or priority given to sharing their learning with other staff members.

Quite a few teachers advocated for “mandatory professional learning” for all staff—from the administration, the teaching staff, and the support staff. “So many people are in the dark and just don't know,” Harper said. “You get pockets in the school where there is good work happening, and then other places where kids are learning about the Iroquois Indians in 1500. We need to get everybody on board.” Teachers felt that the truth and reconciliation projects put forth by the Caring Society and Project of Heart provided professional learning opportunities for staff. Indeed, throughout the years I taught at PETES, many educational assistants told me that they only started learning about historical injustices such as Residential schools while working in my classroom. While professional learning opportunities provided by the school board and school are essential, it is imperative for teachers to take on the work of learning and unlearning in their own lives, and to bring these experiences and initiatives to the school community.

Reimagining teacher education and teacher professional learning

We know from this research study and many studies before it that teachers struggle to unlearn colonialism due to colonial ways of thinking and the inherent assumptions that come with it. When confronting the “old stories” they grew up with, teachers must be open to encountering uncomfortable truths about Canada and their own identities as Canadians. They must be willing to “while” there, and remain open to being “pulled up short.” In these instances, “being ‘pulled up short’ does not merely interrupt our assumptions about the world, but interrupts and alters our self-understanding” (Kerdemen, 2017, p. 3).

Therefore, professional learning opportunities for teacher candidates and teachers must be sites of encounters with matters “worth whiling” about. *How* professional learning is facilitated is needs to be reimagined. Harper said:

It was when I got to be out on the land with the Elder that I felt most like I got what it meant to be in this place. And that I was connected to this place. That I was from

here, and that meant something. That I had things to learn to know how to be a home in this place. How to be a good relative.

When teachers learn *from* Indigenous people and *with* them rather than *about* them, powerful revelations about Canadian-Indigenous relations occur. *After about*, therefore, means a transformation of the stories we tell, the logics we live by, the curriculum we teach, and the pedagogies we consider. Therefore, teacher education, for both pre-service and in-service educators, must move towards ethical relationality in order for education to be the site of the transformative changes the TRC called for.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the pedagogies we employ to do this work are fundamental to how the story will be heard. This asks that we dare to reimagine teacher education and teacher professional learning as acts of embodied engagement that consider all aspects of the human being—physical, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive. Gone would be the days of sitting at a table eating doughnuts and drinking coffee as an expert “talks at you.” Of course, direct instruction, and coffee and doughnuts, have value, but for too long have been upheld as how professional learning is conducted. For professional learning to give way to ethical relationality, teachers need to be taken out on the land, for walks in the river valley, for circles alongside Akikodjiwan. These experiences implicate them in the past and present of these places- and cause them to pause as they consider the future. It is clear from the stories that teachers shared at PETES that being in relation with Indigenous students, families, Elders, and knowledge keepers were among the most profound experiences of their lives. I believe this is the case because it awakens in them that which has been unnurtured or considered null. Ethical relationality draws our attention to that which we have been trained to disregard. As I come to the end of this section, I will close with what Elsa shared with me:

So many teachers are looking for strategies and resources...everybody wants the answers, but the answers already exist, and they're waiting for us in place, out on the land. I think this completely illustrates the Canadian-Indigenous relationship- people are looking for resources, but they're forgetting that we're trying to be in relation with Indigenous people and Indigenous people are already doing all of that, just by being who they are. So, by looking for strategies, you are actively undermining what's right in front of you because it's not clearly valued or considered legitimate.

Limitations and Challenges

As stated throughout this thesis, the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the continuous reshaping of this study. As I write this, it is precisely two years to the day that the World Health Organization declared the pandemic. A month before, I had met with my principal, and we chatted about my position at the school come September 2020. I was set to return three days a week to support Indigenous students in the classroom and their families within the school community. My role was also to work with teachers to co-plan a curriculum that would support unlearning colonialism and teach truth and reconciliation. Part of the reason I wanted to return to the school was to renew relations with the school community as I conducted my fieldwork. I was grateful that I would be returning-I had deeply missed the connections and conversations. Sadly, this was not too be.

Locked down and in by COVID-19

When I was 17 years old, I was diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis, a chronic autoimmune disease whereby my immune system attacks healthy joints, tendons, and ligaments throughout the body. By the time I was 34, I was unable to walk and had difficulty with my vision from the

inflammation in my eyes. Since then, I have been on a weekly cocktail of immunosuppressant injections that inhibit my disease. These drugs make me susceptible to severe respiratory, fungal, and a host of “opportunistic” infections, among other side effects. Therefore, I received a medical exception from the Ministry of Education and taught virtually for the 2020-2021 school year. The collection of students that formed my virtual classroom were from across the school board. These students also had medical conditions and were a collection of students from across the school board. I came to care deeply for these children, who also had medical conditions and enjoyed teaching elementary school once again. However, it was not helpful to my research at PETES and made it difficult for me to be “in the field” and connect with students and families.

Moreover, many Eeyou families stayed in their communities that year, as the rates of COVID-19 were significantly lower than in Gatineau. I felt strongly that it was not the time to reach out asking for interviews. Consequently, I could not connect with many Indigenous students and family members or bring teachers and Indigenous parents together. The background information from my interviews with teachers helped illuminate some of their colonial blockages and frustrations with the school. However, I do not feel that I was able to “do” anything to bring anyone together.

Another limitation that COVID-19 presented was the format of the interviews and community sharing circle, in that everything had to be conducted via zoom. Although I have become significantly more comfortable on zoom, I do not feel that meeting virtually holds the same opportunity for connection, especially when conducting interviews that often bring about strong emotions. I tried to mitigate these issues as best I could by establishing a warm rapport at the beginning of the zoom meetings, approaching the interview as an open-ended conversation, and by offering participants many opportunities to follow up with me afterwards.

Yet another challenge to this research was how COVID-19 shifted teachers' sense of time. COVID-19 blended into the time before the pandemic and disrupted an imagining of the time *after*. COVID-19 enabled the justification of stories about the possibilities of things. It occupied a central focus in all of my interviews because it occupied so much of my participants' lives. Québec teachers were among the first educators to go back to work after the first lockdown in 2020, long before vaccines were available and before much was known about COVID-19, except that it spread quickly and, at times, indiscriminately.

Being a novice hermeneutic researcher

Finally, my methodology has limitations in that my interpretations are just that- my interpretations. I am also a relatively inexperienced hermeneutic researcher, which brought up many feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy, which I detailed in my methodology chapter with descriptions of been “awashed in the sweat of hermeneutics.” Though I spent vast amounts of time reading, thinking about, and taking notes on the stories, and searching within Gadamerian texts, I continuously felt as if I was writing in a dark fog. I came to enjoy this feeling and found whole days passing by as I contemplated the meanings of words and the meanings of these meanings. I came to understand that hermeneutics is everywhere; it is the air we breathe and the quiver of the smallest leaf on the tree we walk under. It is in a poem that we have read and remembered. It is in the work of many scholars and many philosophers. It is in me. However, I am acutely aware that hermeneutics is always the answer to a question that could have been answered differently (Gadamer, 1960/1989). If my questions could have been answered differently, what does it mean for the validity, much less the impact? Ah-ha! Here I am reminded that *I am* a limitation to this work, for here is the question that conveys my assumptions about research-that to be “valid”-

answer a question, prove a theory, or assess a program. I was not after any of these things. As a hermeneutic researcher, I was simply attempting to come to deeper understandings.

Potential Contributions

This research contributes to the emerging field of Truth and Reconciliation Research and Education in Canada when schooling systems and teacher education programs seek to do more and to do things differently. Although many initiatives are taking place, research on the impacts of work being done is just emerging in terms of policy, implementation, and lived experiences.

Ethical Relationality as praxis

To my knowledge, this is the first research study on the curricular and pedagogical significances of ethical relationality as a process of unlearning colonialism. I am not aware that there are many studies on unlearning colonialism either. I think, therefore, that this study contributes to our understanding of how the transformative changes that the TRC called for might come to be. The TRC (2015) was empathic in its assertion that:

The education system itself must be transformed into one that rejects the racism embedded in colonial education systems and treats Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian knowledge systems with equal respect. (p. 239)

The literature that I reviewed early in this dissertation shows that resistance to unlearning colonialism and colonial blockages directly impacts *what* teachers teach and *how* teachers teach about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. It also impacts their ability and understanding of how to create respectful, empathetic learning environments (TRC, 2015). As I have shown throughout this thesis, ethical relationality as praxis holds promise towards the emergence of a new story that helps teachers work through their understandings and reimagine

themselves as relatives. It also promotes a pedagogy that honours all aspects of life and learning-spirit, emotion, mind, and physical. I hope that this study might inform how we reimagine teacher education and our classrooms.

Another strength of this study was that I already knew something about the topic. Gadamer (1960/1989) said that “always, already” is the starting point for hermeneutics and that, in hermeneutics, we are stepping into something that already is- something we know something about already. Therefore, my years of experience working *with* teachers, and working *as* a teacher, in hermeneutical terms, was a strength-I was not beginning at *the beginning*. I had well-formed, long-standing relationships with many of my participants and the school. I knew many of the particulars of the place. Smith (1991) writes that interpretive work makes us more susceptible to the particulars of a place. I believe that my attunement to the particulars of PETES made me able to understand the complex contexts represented in the stories in ways another might not have. As Smith (1991) reminds us, we can never separate ourselves from understanding as hermeneutic researchers. I was addressed by the topic years before this research began, and I am certain I will continue to be addressed by its particulars in the years ahead.

Honouring relational work

Finally, this work builds on my long affiliation with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. I began collaborating with the Caring Society as a teacher in 2010. During my entire Ph.D., I worked as a research assistant and research project manager on “Just Because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Education for reconciliation in the elementary classroom.” I conducted research with teachers who had taken up Caring Society campaigns in their classrooms throughout these years. Based on the findings, I worked collaboratively with Caring Society staff to develop curriculum, learning guides, resource videos, and a virtual school for teacher

professional learning. The findings from my doctoral research contributed to the work I do with teachers who participate in the Caring Society reconciliation campaigns, and I have witnessed how ethical relationality has influenced how teachers approach the campaigns. For many, learning from Indigenous leaders such as Cindy Blackstock, Shannen Koostachin, Jordan Rover Anderson, and others has led to life-changing learning about what it means to be Canadian. In our research report, a teacher shared:

It's changed my whole worldview ... just my personal understanding of our history and particularly the responsibility of non-Indigenous Canadians to be a part of this process. This is not an Indigenous issue—reconciliation, this is for everybody...and as teachers we have such an important way to impact that and an important role to play. I am learning along with the students, and they have a lot of questions that I say, "I'm not sure"... you know, we're all learning this together....my whole worldview and mindset have really opened. (Howell & Brittain, 2022, p. 26)

Ethical relationality gives me hope because of how it brings relations to the forefront of our engagements with the past, present, and future. It positions pedagogy and curriculum as sites of inquiry rather than prescriptions to be consumed. This is where transformation is possible.

After About: Further Research Inquiries

It is peculiar to begin thinking about new research as I come to the end of this Ph.D. research that has happily occupied the last four years of my life. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity I've had to learn and unlearn, think about my thinking, and read a vast body of work- deeply. It is a privilege to be able to be a thinker.

Learning and thinking over these years have ultimately led me towards a state of habitual curiosity and openness. This study brought up new questions for me. What might it look like to develop a curricular and pedagogical framework for unlearning? How would ethical relationality manifest *as praxis* in teacher education- not only in the courses that directly take up Indigenous ways of knowing and perspectives but in *all* courses? What might it mean to the vision of education programs, curriculum development, and pedagogical philosophies if we take seriously that our past and present co-occur and that we are implicated? What might that mean to the sacred ecology of the particular places we call home? What would it mean to our collective futures if we unlearn colonial logics, work through the blockages, and begin to learn from this place, for this place, and of this place (Chambers, 1999)?

I imagine that it would take time. Ethical relationality demands something of us that colonial culture has trained us to forget. It asks that we understand ourselves as connected in the web of life around us, and that we hold responsibilities and relations with the past, present, and future. Throughout this process of unlearning colonialism, we will find ourselves “pulled up short” as we learn who we come from, encountering our own bellybuttons. We will falter and stumble, and perhaps in this faltering, we will begin to write a new story. We'd have to be open to the touchstones of truth-telling and acknowledging the injustices we have not been taught. Only then might we come to a place where we can restore(y) and renew our relations. We will have to disembark from the train and wander to the river's edge to stand along the stones that have always been there to guide us, and will remain there, after the about.

Epilogue

The sound of the ice breaking up along the Kichi Zibi is faint at first but grows louder. It begins with the unmistakable hums of cracking ice, hardly audible above the roar of the urban

sprawl. A train rumbles by, the tracks being less than 1 kilometre from here, clickety-clacking as it sways along the iron ties. But when the ice breaks off in enormous sections, those of us who walk along the shore hear the roar. We feel the reverberations and witness how the gushing water pushes the ice forward. The leaves left on the maple trees from the autumn before fall to the ground. It is the month of the Sugar moon, Ziissbaakdoke Giizas, and the maple sap begins to run inside the veins of these great trees. The Elders say that this is the moon when we learn about maple syrup, one of the main medicines given to the Anishinaabe. The sap balances our blood and heals us, and during this time, we are encouraged to balance our own lives, too.

Above me, I hear the distinctive squawks of the “Canadian” geese returning home from their southern sojourn. I smile and whisper “nisk” to myself and look up in wonder, remembering my Eeyou students who shared their knowledge and love of their land so freely with me. And of my Canadian students who had to unlearn the story of “Canada's goose” so they could learn “an other” story about the nisk, about the lands they live on, and the responsibilities they hold.

I continue walking and come to the bridge I have crossed countless times, throughout the months of all the moons. The multi-million dollar condo project's bright orange banners flutter along the roadway, boasting “Zibi”. In resistance, prayer ties that many Anishinaabe community members and others have tied to the bridge are continuously replaced as they fade in the elements. This place, Akikodjiwan, is sacred to the people who have always lived here—who, for thousands of years before the Europeans came, travelled on and within this watershed and these lands. Who are still here.

I walk through the parking lot and traverse the concrete barriers and rubble of construction to make my way to the falls. It is a warm day and windy as I step along the stones by the

embankment's edge. The stones form a path that guides me towards the water, towards truth-telling, acknowledging, restorying, and relationships. In *this* place, I am in relation *with* place. The train has left the metaphorical tracks, and the lull has given way to the stones beneath. These stones hold the stories and wisdom that have always been here, long before the about.



Figure 33: Prayer Ties at Akikodjiwan (Source: own photo).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Touchstones of Hope Process for Reconciliation

To this day, “power-over” relationships between Indigenous Nations and western researchers continue to exist due to the colonial impacts of displacement and relocation of Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories, forced removal of their children to residential schools and child welfare, and historical exclusion from knowledge systems (Castellano, 2008). Moreover, systemic racism in policy and praxis continue to deny communities equitable access to infrastructure, health, education, housing, and child welfare services. Therefore, research with and about Indigenous communities must be done for the benefit of the community and must also work to dismantle the structures of racism and discrimination.

Image 5: Touchstones of Hope Processes



Touchstones of Hope is a Reconciliation model that is used in First Nations Child welfare and has the potential to disrupt structural racism. According to Auger (2012), it was developed in 2005 during a gathering of non-Indigenous and Indigenous child welfare delegates and incorporates 5 principles and 4 processes. Through leadership training sessions, community consultations, and participatory action research, touchstones of hope offers a model of collaboration to bring reconciliation to child welfare. Touchstones of hope grew out of a recognition that a reconciliation model should be used to address harms done to Indigenous children and has been used successful in other contexts such as healthcare and education (FNCFCFS, 2019). Briefly, the Touchstones Model incorporates 5 principles: Culture/language, Self-determination, non-discrimination, structural interventions, and a holistic approach (Blackstock et al., 2006). These principles guide 4 processes of reconciliation: truth telling, acknowledging, restoring, relating (Blackstock et al., 2006). Applying *Touchstones of Hope* to my research ensures a framework that prioritizes reconciliation as praxis and invites “Indigenous people to reclaim their dreams for their children

and their Nations” (Blackstock, 2018). Moreover, the processes and principles of the *Touchstones* framework engages multiple forms of knowledge and knowledge expression, including Indigenous knowledges, to understand the legacy of colonialism in Canada (Blackstock, 2018).

Touchstones Process for Circles with Indigenous families, teachers, and administration

1. Truth telling: Telling the stories of families and teachers lived experiences.
2. Acknowledging: Learning from these stories, seeing one another with new understanding, and recognizing the need to move forward on a new path.
3. Restoring: Doing what we can as a school community and individuals to redress the harm and make changes to ensure it does not happen again.
4. Relating: Moving forward together in a respectful way, along a new path, to achieve better outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and families, and for teachers as they unlearn the stories they were taught.

**Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in Interview/Community sharing circle /Walk
(Teachers/teacher candidates/administrators)**

[Letterhead: uOttawa Faculty of Education]

Date:

Project Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Name of Researcher: Lisa Howell, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education,

Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Greetings,

My name is Lisa Howell and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Ottawa, on the unceded territories of the Anishinaabe Nation, in Ottawa, Ontario. I am conducting research for my PhD dissertation, which examines the curricular and pedagogical significance of ethical relationality to processes of unlearning colonialism. I would like to invite you to participate in a conversational interview (and perhaps a community sharing circle and a walk) with me.

The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of unlearning. The project will help understand the processes of unlearning in relation to teacher candidates and teachers. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Your involvement in the study would consist of an audio-recorded interview (with your consent) of 60-90 minutes, conducted by me. You might also be invited to participate in a community sharing circle with other teachers. You will also be asked to review the transcript of your interview to ensure that the interview accurately represents your experiences and ideas, and to add or omit anything you would like. I will send you a copy of your transcript within 30 days of the interview. Once I make your changes to the transcript, you will have another chance to review it if you wish before the transcript is finalized. In both cases, you will have 15 days to respond with your changes.

Interviews/community sharing circles will be loosely structured and conversational, and they will be audio recorded in a space of your choosing (a classroom, office, or other location where conversation can be confidential). In no case will you be interviewed at a private residence. In-person interviews are highly preferable, but due to preference, geographical considerations, and COVID-19, interviews/community sharing circles may be conducted by telephone or zoom.

Once your transcript is finalized, I will immediately erase any identifying information. I will keep all data in a secure manner. After transcription, electronic copies of the transcripts and audio

recordings will be password protected and only I will have access to them. Any hardcopy notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Nicholas Ng-A-Fook's office at the University of Ottawa. Lisa Howell will retain copies of her notes and transcriptions for a minimum of five years.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time *before* your transcript is finalized without providing a reason. If you withdraw from the study before your transcript is finalized, any and all audio-recordings or other data previously collected will be destroyed immediately. After your transcript is finalized, all identifying information will be removed from your interview data, and it will be added to other de-identified data for analysis.

If you accept, you will be offered the gift of a book from a roster of books by First Nations authors with a value of up to \$20. For Indigenous participants, and informed by the participant's wishes, I will also follow traditional gifting protocols.

The potential harms and risks of participating in the interview are low and may include possible emotional impacts from conversations around unlearning colonialisms, the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and/or racisms and discrimination in Canada. We will ask you to identify key resources for your support prior to the interview, and will also provide you with numbers for a suitable confidential, free, 24-hour help line.

By participating in this study, you will help build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Please respond to this email if you agree to be part of this study, and I will contact you shortly to set up an interview time and platform that is most convenient for you.

Thank you for considering my request

Most sincerely,

Lisa Howell,
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Ottawa

**Appendix C: Participant Consent Form for Interviews/Community sharing circle /Walk
(Phase 2: Teachers/ administrators at PETES)**

[Letterhead: uOttawa Faculty of Education]

Date:

Project Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Name of Researcher: Lisa Howell, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Funding: The researcher thanks the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* (SSHRC) for a Doctoral Fellowship Award.

Purpose:

The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of unlearning. The project will help understand the processes of unlearning in relation to teacher candidates and teachers. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Participation:

My involvement in the study would consist of an audio-recorded interview (with your consent) of 60-90 minutes, conducted by me. I am also invited to participate in a community sharing circle and a walk (2-3 hours) with other teachers, the researcher, and an Elder. The community sharing circle will be audio recorded. After the community sharing circle and the walk, I will be asked to complete a questionnaire about my experiences on the walk and in the community sharing circle . The questionnaire will take me approximately 20-40 minutes to complete. I understand that I may be asked for a follow-up interview to clarify any statements that I made in any of the interviews and or community sharing circle .

I understand that will also be invited to review the transcript of my interview(s) to ensure that the interview accurately represents my experiences and ideas, and to add or omit anything I would like. The researcher will send me a copy of my transcript(s) within 30 days of the interview(s). If I would like to make changes to my transcript(s), I will have another chance to review it if I wish before the transcript is finalized. In both cases, I will have 15 days to respond with your changes.

Interviews/community sharing circles will be loosely structured and conversational, and they will be audio recorded in a space of my choosing (a classroom, office, or other location where conversation can be confidential). In no case will I be interviewed at a private residence. In-person

interviews are highly preferable, but due to preference, geographical considerations, and COVID-19, interviews and the community sharing circle may be conducted by telephone or zoom.

Risks:

My participation in this study will entail that I share experiences that I have had as a teacher candidate working towards ethical relationality. 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 and identity. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. I understand that my participation is voluntary and it is always up to me to decide what I wish to share. While the anticipated risks of participation are minimal, conversations about residential schools, the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and/or racisms and discrimination in Canada, can have an emotional impact on educators, and especially on Indigenous educators. To minimize the potential impacts of these discussions, the researcher will leave time at the end of the interview to discuss any impacts the discussion had on me. If I feel distressed after the interview, the researcher encourages me to reach out for support from a trusted person in my life. Alternatively, I could call an anonymous local helpline such as the Ottawa Distress Line at 613-238-3311 or the Gatineau Distress Line at 1-866-676-1080.

I understand that the community sharing circle and walk will take place in person. I understand that the researcher has taken every precaution to mitigate any risks associated with COVID-19. I understand that I will be asked to complete a COVID-19 self-assessment prior to the research activities, and that the walk and the circle will take place outdoors. I understand that I will be required to wear my mask and stay 2 metres apart from other participants, the Elder, and the researcher at all times. Hand sanitizer will be available at all times.

Benefits:

My participation in this study will contribute to an understanding of how teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of unlearning. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Confidentiality:

I understand that the name of the school, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, will be used in the study, and therefore my anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will be used for academic purposes, including the researcher's Ph.D. 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 (by way of a pseudonym of my choice) in the study unless I choose to identify myself. 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 staff member at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School in Gatineau, QC.

Furthermore, I understand that due to the in-person nature of a community sharing circle , that my anonymity cannot be kept if I choose to participate in this activity. I also understand that there will be an Elder present at the community sharing circle .

Conservation of data:

The data collected (recordings of interviews, transcripts, researcher notes and life writings) will be kept in a secure manner by Lisa Howell. After transcription, electronic copies of interviews and community sharing circles will be password protected and only Lisa Howell will have access to them. Hardcopy interview and community sharing circle transcripts, researcher notes, and journal writings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Lisa Howell's home office.

She will retain copies of her notes and interviews indefinitely.

Compensation:

I understand that I will be offered a \$20 gift card to Tim Hortons, Octopus Books, or Beaded Dreams. The gift card will be given to me after the interview. If I chose to withdraw from the study, I will still receive the gift card.

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, with the exception of the community sharing circle data. To withdraw from the study, I simply contact the researcher using the contact information listed below. Furthermore, my participation is completely separate from the school and has no impact on my employment there now, or in the future.

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. Ng-A-Fook.

- I give consent for my interview to be audio-recorded **OR**
- I DO NOT give consent for my interview to be audio-recorded.
- I understand that the community sharing circle will be audio recorded.
- I give my consent to my name being published in the results **OR**
- I wish to remain anonymous.

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
There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: (Signature)

Date: (Date)

Researcher's signature: (Signature)

Date: (Date)

Appendix D: Invitation to Participate in Interview/Community sharing circle

(Indigenous students & families of PETES)

[Letterhead: uOttawa Faculty of Education]

Date:

Project Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Name of Researcher: Lisa Howell, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education

Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Greetings,

My name is Lisa Howell and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Ottawa, on the unceded territories of the Anishinaabe Nation, in Ottawa, Ontario. I am conducting research for my PhD dissertation, which examines the curricular and pedagogical significance of ethical relationality to processes of unlearning colonialism. I would like to invite you to participate in a survey and or conversational interview and or community sharing circle with me.

The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism by engaging in ethical relationality. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of unlearning. The project will help understand the processes of unlearning in relation to teacher candidates and teachers. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities. This will no doubt affect how teachers take up the relationship between themselves and Indigenous students and family members.

Your involvement in the study would consist of an audio-recorded interview (with your consent) of 60-90 minutes, conducted by me. You might also be invited to participate in a community sharing circle with teachers to share your experiences as a student/parent & guardian at PETES. You will also be asked to review the transcript of your interview to ensure that the interview accurately represents your experiences and ideas, and to add or omit anything you would like. I will send you a copy of your transcript within 30 days of the interview. Once I make your changes to the transcript, you will have another chance to review it if you wish before the transcript is finalized. In both cases, you will have 15 days to respond with your changes.

Interviews/community sharing circles will be loosely structured and conversational, and they will be audio recorded in a space of your choosing (a classroom, office, or other location where conversation can be confidential). In no case will you be interviewed at a private residence. In-

person interviews are highly preferable, but due to preference, geographical considerations, and COVID-19, interviews/community sharing circles may be conducted by telephone or zoom.

Once your transcript is finalized, I will immediately erase any identifying information. I will keep all data in a secure manner. After transcription, electronic copies of the transcripts and audio recordings will be password protected and only I will have access to them. Any hardcopy notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Nicholas Ng-A-Fook's office at the University of Ottawa. Lisa Howell will retain copies of her notes and transcriptions for a minimum of five years.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time *before* your transcript is finalized without providing a reason. If you withdraw from the study before your transcript is finalized, any and all audio-recordings or other data previously collected will be destroyed immediately. After your transcript is finalized, all identifying information will be removed from your interview data, and it will be added to other de-identified data for analysis.

If you accept, please inform me of your wishes with respect to any traditional gifting protocols.

The potential harms and risks of participating in the interview are low and may include possible emotional impacts from conversations about the impacts of colonialism, residential schools, and/or racisms and discrimination at PETES or in your life. We will ask you to identify key resources for your support prior to the interview, and will also provide you with a phone number for an Indigenous confidential, free, 24-hour help line.

By participating in this study, you will help build understanding in how to help teachers engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Please respond to this email if you agree to be part of this study, and I will contact you shortly to set up an interview time and platform that is most convenient for you.

Thank you for considering my request

Most sincerely,

Lisa Howell,
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Ottawa

**Appendix E: Participant Consent Form for Interviews/Community sharing circle s/
(Indigenous students & families of PETES)**

[Letterhead: uOttawa Faculty of Education]

Date:

Project Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Name of Researcher: Lisa Howell, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa,

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of teacher unlearning. The project will help understand the processes of unlearning in relation to teacher candidates and teachers and how they take up the relationships between themselves and Indigenous peoples. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Participation:

My participation will consist participating in a conversational interview with the researcher to discuss my experiences as a current or former Indigenous student or parent/guardian at PETES. . 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 September-December 2020. The conversation will take between 60-90 minutes. I may also be asked to participate in a community sharing circle with teachers and family members of the PETES school community. The community sharing circle will be held in the winter of 2021 and will take 1-2 hours. During the community sharing circle , I will be asked to share my experiences at PETES. I will be asked to listen to the experiences of others in the circle. Additionally, I may be asked to engage in a journaling process called life writing throughout the study. I will blank out the names of any students, colleagues, etc., rendering the samples anonymous. I understand this is completely voluntary.

Risks:

My participation in this study will entail that I share experiences that I have had as an Indigenous student or parent/guardian at PETES. Sharing these things may bring up uncomfortable or distressing emotions for me. 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. To minimize the potential impacts of these discussions, interviewers will leave time at the end to discuss any impacts the discussion had on you, and discuss a plan for you to process them if needed. To aid in this process, we will ask you to identify at least one key resource of support for you to access if needed directly after the interview, and in the following days. This

resource could be support from your school, family, community, or an anonymous help line. One source of anonymous help would be the 24-hour First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Line number (1-855-242-3310), run by Health Canada.

Benefits:

My participation in this study will contribute to an understanding of how teachers and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism when they are engaged in relationships with Indigenous students and families. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Confidentiality:

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will be used for academic purposes, including the researcher's Ph.D. 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 an Indigenous student or parent/guardian in the Province of Québec.

Conservation of data:

The data collected (recordings of interviews and community sharing circles, transcripts, researcher notes and journal writings) will be kept in a secure manner by Lisa Howell. After transcription, electronic copies of interviews and community sharing circles will be password protected and only Lisa Howell will have access to them. Hardcopy interview and community sharing circle transcripts, researcher notes, and journal writings 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. Ng-A-Fook.

I give consent for my interview/community sharing circle to be audio-recorded.

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
There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: (Signature) Date: (Date)

Researcher's signature: (Signature) Date: (Date)

**Appendix F: Invitation to Participate in Interview
(Phase 1: Dr. Donald's former teacher education students)**

[Letterhead: uOttawa Faculty of Education]

Date:

Project Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Name of Researcher: Lisa Howell, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education,

Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Funding: The researcher thanks the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* (SSHRC) for a Doctoral Fellowship Award.

Greetings,

My name is Lisa Howell and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Ottawa, on the unceded territories of the Anishinaabe Nation, in Ottawa, Ontario. I am conducting research for my PhD dissertation, which examines the curricular and pedagogical significance of ethical relationality to processes of unlearning colonialism. I would like to invite you to participate in my research, by way of a conversational interview and through optional life writing exercises.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers, administrators, and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Specifically, it takes up their relationships with Indigenous students and families, and their understandings of colonialism. How do these understandings affect their pedagogy and how they might take up curriculum? Moreover, it uses “ethical relationality” as a framework. Ethical relationality is “an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other. This form of relationality is ethical because it does not overlook or invisibilize the particular historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a particular person understands and experiences living in the world. It puts these considerations at the forefront of engagements across frontiers of difference” (Donald, 2009, p. 6). This study will contribute to understanding how to engage ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Participation: Your involvement in the study would consist of an audio-recorded interview (with your consent) of 60-90 minutes, conducted by me. If you choose, you may also wish to consider submitting “life writing” about your experiences teaching. Life writing is non-fiction writing and could be in the form of journal entries, poems, photo essays etc.

You will also be invited to review the transcript of your interview to ensure that the interview accurately represents your experiences and ideas, and to add or omit anything you would like. I will send you a copy of your transcript within 30 days of the interview. Once I make your changes to the transcript, you will have another chance to review it if you wish before the transcript is finalized. In both cases, you will have 15 days to respond with your changes.

Interviews/sharing circles will be loosely structured and conversational, and they will be conducted by telephone or zoom, based on your choice.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: In this study, you will be referred to as “teacher candidates who took a course with Dr. Dwayne Donald at the University of Alberta.” The name of the course, or year that you took it will not be mentioned. You will have the choice to identify yourself by name, or remain anonymous through use of a pseudonym. Once your transcript is finalized, I will immediately erase any identifying information (unless you have chosen to identify yourself). I will keep all data in a secure manner. After transcription, electronic copies of the transcripts and audio recordings will be password protected and only I will have access to them. Any hardcopy notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet my home office. I will retain copies of my notes and transcriptions for a minimum of five years.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and is completely separate from the University of Alberta. There will be no impact on you for participating or not participating. Furthermore, you can withdraw from the study at any time before your transcript is finalized without providing a reason. If you withdraw from the study before your transcript is finalized, any and all audio-recordings or other data previously collected will be destroyed immediately. After your transcript is finalized, all identifying information will be removed from your interview data, and it will be added to other de-identified data for analysis.

Compensation: If you accept, you will be offered the choice of a gift card (\$20 Value) from Tim Hortons or a local shop in your community.

Possible Risks: The potential harms and risks of participating in the interview are low and may include possible emotional impacts from conversations around unlearning colonialisms, the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and/or racisms and discrimination in Canada. I will provide you with the number for a suitable confidential, free, 24-hour help line. Alternatively, you may wish to reach out to a support person in your life if needed.

Possible Contributions: By participating in this study, you will help build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Please respond to this email if you agree to be part of this study, and I will contact you shortly to set up an interview time and platform that is most convenient for you.

Thank you for considering my request
Most sincerely,

Lisa Howell,
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Ottawa

**Appendix G: Participant Consent Form for Interviews
(Phase 1: Dr. Donald's Former Students)**



University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education, 145 Jean Jacques Lussier, Ottawa ON
K1N 0N5, Canada. www.uOttawa.ca 613-562-5804

Date: October 12, 2020

Project Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Name of Researcher: Lisa Howell, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Funding: The researcher thanks the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* (SSHRC) for a Doctoral Fellowship Award.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers and teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of unlearning. The project will help understand the processes of unlearning in relation to teacher candidates and teachers. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Participation:

My participation will consist participating in a conversational interview with the researcher to discuss my experiences of unlearning colonialism as a teacher candidate taking a course with Dr. Dwayne Donald at the University of Alberta. Due to geographical limitations and COVID-19, this conversation will take place on the telephone or a media platform such as zoom and will be scheduled at my convenience, sometime during the months of August-October 2020. The conversation will take between 60-90 minutes. I have also been asked to engage in a voluntary journaling process called lifewriting, to which I have received a guide from the researcher. Lifewriting may be published in the researcher's doctoral thesis, in publications, and at conferences. Anonymity will be guaranteed, unless I have given consent to have my name used, by way of omitting or renaming any identifying information/names/place. I will blank out the names of any students, colleagues, etc., rendering the samples anonymous. I understand that I may be asked for a follow up interview to clarify anything that the researcher may have questions about.

I understand that I will also be invited to review the transcript of my interview to ensure that the interview accurately represents my experiences and ideas, and to add or omit anything I would like. The researcher will send me a copy of my transcript within 30 days of the interview. If there are changes I would like to make to my transcript, I will have another chance to review it if I wish before the transcript is finalized. In both cases, I will have 15 days to respond with my changes.

Risks:

My participation in this study will entail that I share experiences that I have had as a teacher candidate working towards ethical relationality. 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 and identity. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. I understand that my participation is voluntary and it is always up to me to decide what I wish to share. While the anticipated risks of participation are minimal, conversations about residential schools, the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and/or racisms and discrimination in Canada, can have an emotional impact on educators, and especially on Indigenous educators. To minimize the potential impacts of these discussions, the researcher will leave time at the end of the interview to discuss any impacts the discussion had on me. If I feel distressed after the interview, the researcher encourages me to reach out for support from a trusted person in my life. Alternatively, I could call an anonymous helpline. For First Nations and Inuit participants, one source of anonymous help would be the 24-hour First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Line number (1-855-242-3310), run by Health Canada. For others, the researcher will provide a local, 24-hour crisis line.

Benefits:

My participation in this study will contribute to an understanding of how teacher candidates unlearn colonialism. Moreover, the study asks what the pedagogical and curricular significance ethical relationality might hold as a process of unlearning. Moreover, it will contribute to build understanding in how to engage in ethical relationality in faculties of education, school districts, school communities, and teacher professional learning communities.

Confidentiality:

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will be used for academic purposes, including the researcher's Ph.D. 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 (by way of a pseudonym of my choice) in the study unless I choose to identify myself. 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 former/current teacher education student at a University in Alberta who took a course with Dr. Dwayne Donald. The name of the course and the date I took the course will not be mentioned.

Conservation of data:

The data collected (recordings of interviews, transcripts, researcher notes and lifewriting) will be kept in a secure manner by Lisa Howell. After transcription, electronic

copies of interviews and sharing circles will be password protected and only Lisa Howell will have access to them. Hardcopy interview and sharing circle transcripts, researcher notes, and journal writings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Lisa Howell's home office. She will retain copies of her notes and interviews indefinitely.

Compensation:

I understand that I will be offered a \$20 gift card to Tim Hortons or a local shop in my community of my choosing. The gift card will be emailed or mailed to me after the interview. If I chose to withdraw from the study, I will still receive the gift card.

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. Furthermore, my participation is completely separate from the University of Alberta and has no impact on my studies there now, or in the future.

I understand that because this interview will take place over the telephone or media platform such as zoom, that the researcher will also ask for my verbal consent, which will be recorded.

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. Ng-A-Fook.

- I give consent for my interview to be audio-recorded.
- I give my consent to my name being published in the results **OR**
- I wish to remain anonymous.

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

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: (Signature)

Date: (Date)

 Researcher's signature: (Signature)

Date: (Date)

Appendix H: Interview Guide Phase 1- Former students of Dr. Dwayne Donald

Part A: Obtain informed consent prior to interview

Procedures for obtaining informed consent:

- At least 5 business days prior to scheduled interview, send participant a copy of the written Consent Form (send earlier if participants request) via email;
- In the email, ask the participant to review the Consent Form before the meeting, if possible. Invite them to send questions about the Consent Form or the process by email, or save questions to discuss in person before the interview. Let them know that you will also review the Consent Form with them in person. Answer any questions prior to the scheduled interview, as necessary.
- When you meet participant and before you start the interview, review the consent form verbally, highlighting the following:
 - The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The participant will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the transcript before it is finalized. The participant's name and any other identifying information will be removed from the approved transcript. The presentation of results will be anonymous.
 - The participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the time their data is de-identified (when the interview is finalized). If they withdraw before data is de-identified, their data will be destroyed.
 - Provide a chance for the participant to ask questions.
 - If the participant agrees to participate and signs the consent form, collect the form and proceed with the interview.

Part B: Interview Strategy and Guiding Prompts

Interviews will be semi-structured and conversational. The interviewer will ask the following broad, open-ended questions, following the participant's lead while asking follow-up questions with the goal of generating data that will be useful for the developing theory. The interviewer will provide a copy of the questions to the participant before and during the interview if requested.

1. Which course(s) did you take with Dr. Donald, and when/where did the course(s) take place? Was the course mandatory or optional?
2. What were your expectations of the course(s) before you began?
3. Please explain your experiences during the course.
4. How do you understand ethical relationality? Unlearning?
5. Did your understanding of colonialisms and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians change during the course? If so, how?

6. What might be the impacts of your experience in this course on your own teaching praxis? What about on you as a human being?

7. What is “the one thing” that you carry with you? What resonates?

8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Note: As concepts develop through concurrent data collection and analysis, the interviewer may modify questions in order to generate conversation on the issues most pertinent for the developing theory.

Part C: Debriefing (at the end of the interview)

THANKS: The researcher will thank the participant for being part of study.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE STUDY: The researcher will let all interview participants know that if they have any questions or concerns about the study, to please contact Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, who is supervising the study at nngafook@uottawa.ca. Alternatively, participants may wish to contact the 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

ETHICS & PRINCIPAL APPROVAL: The researcher will explain that this project has been approved by the University of Ottawa Ethics Research Board.

PARTICIPATION: The researcher will explain that their participation is completely voluntary. They can withdraw from the study at any time before their transcript is finalized without providing a reason. If they withdraw from the study before your transcript is finalized, any and all audio-recordings or other data previously collected will be destroyed immediately. After their transcript is finalized, all identifying information will be removed from their interview data, and it will be added to other de-identified data for analysis.

RESULTS: The researcher will ask and make note of whether the participant wishes to be notified about results of the study and resources produced. Offer to provide them with links to further information about the topic if they are interested.

POTENTIAL HARMS AND RISKS AND SUPPORTS: The researcher will advise participants of the potential harms and risks. Ensure that they understand that they have the ability to withdraw from the study any time before their interview transcripts are finalized and their data de-identified. Provide them with numbers for confidential, free, 24-hour help lines. Specifically, provide First Nations and Inuit participants with Health Canada’s First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Line number (1-855-242-3310), and the Ottawa Distress Line: 613-238-3311) for all others (First Nations and Inuit participants will receive both numbers).

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES: The researcher will explain the follow-up procedure regarding member checking. The interviewer will transcribe it within 30 days of the interview, and provide the participant with a transcribed copy in a format whereby they can apply direct comments and track changes (e.g., Microsoft Word). The participant will be asked to review the transcript within 15 days to ensure it reflects their comments and experiences (member checking), and to provide comments and track changes on the original transcript in Microsoft Word, or another format that is agreed upon by the interviewer and participant. The review process provides the participant with an opportunity to clarify any points they think need clarification, and gives them the opportunity to extract any information they do not want to be part of the research, or to add any information they wish to add. If there are amendments to be made to the interview after the participant completes the first review; the interviewer will make those amendments to the transcript, and provide the participant with a second transcript within 21 days to give the participant the opportunity to ensure the transcript reflects any changes they intended. Participants will have 15 days to respond with any additional changes. Once participants have provided final feedback on their interview, the interviewer will de-personalize (anonymize) interview data. In some cases, the interviewer may ask for a second interview with a participant to follow up on issues that come up throughout the process of concurrent data collection and analysis. If the participant agrees, the interviewer and participant will repeat the member checking process outlined above, unless the second interview is given prior to this process (in which case member checking can be done on both interviews at once.)

Appendix I: Interview Guide -Teachers & Administrators at PETES

Part A: Obtain informed consent prior to interview

Procedures for obtaining informed consent:

- At least 5 business days prior to scheduled interview, send participant a copy of the written Consent Form (send earlier if participants request) via email;
- In the email, ask the participant to review the Consent Form before the meeting, if possible. Invite them to send questions about the Consent Form or the process by email, or save questions to discuss in person before the interview. Let them know that you will also review the Consent Form with them in person. Answer any questions prior to the scheduled interview, as necessary.
- When you meet participant and before you start the interview, review the consent form verbally, highlighting the following:
 - The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The participant will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the transcript before it is finalized. The participant's name and any other identifying information will be removed from the approved transcript. The presentation of results will be anonymous.
 - The participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the time their data is de-identified (when the interview is finalized). If they withdraw before data is de-identified, their data will be destroyed.
 - Provide a chance for the participant to ask questions.
 - If the participant agrees to participate and signs the consent form, collect the form and proceed with the interview.

Part B: Interview Strategy and Guiding Prompts

Interviews will be semi-structured and conversational. The interviewer will ask the following broad, open-ended questions, following the participant's lead while asking follow-up questions with the goal of generating data that will be useful for the developing theory. The interviewer will provide a copy of the questions to the participant before and during the interview if requested.

1. Where did you grow up and what knowledge do you have of the land? Can you describe that place and the meaning it holds for you?
2. Looking back, what were you told/taught about Indigenous people growing up? How did you know/learn this? What were you taught about colonialism?
3. What do you understand about Indigenous people, Canadians, and colonialisms now? How have your understandings changed?
4. Can you describe how and why you became a teacher?
5. How you conceptualise teaching and learning and how does it manifest in your teaching?
6. How does the curriculum take up the relationship between Indigenous people and Canadians? How do you take it up in your teaching/living?

7. Do you teach or interact with Indigenous students? What has this experience been like? What have you learned? What are you continuing to learn? What are the tensions and complexities?
8. What might be the impacts of your experiences with Indigenous students and their families on your teaching praxis? What about on you as a human being?
9. My study is framed by a concept called “ethical relationality”. What does that bring to mind for you?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?
11. Would you be interested in participating in a community sharing circle with other teachers and Indigenous students/family members?

Note: As concepts develop through concurrent data collection and analysis, the interviewer may modify questions in order to generate conversation on the issues most pertinent for the developing theory.

Part C: Debriefing (at the end of the interview)

THANKS: The researcher will thank the participant for being part of study.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE STUDY: The researcher will let all interview participants know that if they have any questions or concerns about the study, to please contact Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, who is supervising the study at nngafook@uottawa.ca. Alternatively, participants may wish to contact the 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

ETHICS & PRINCIPAL APPROVAL: The researcher will explain that this project has been approved by the University of Ottawa Ethics Research Board and by David McFall, principal of PETES. The study has also been guided by an advisory group, including Aisha Thomas, Indigenous youth worker, PETES.

PARTICIPATION: The researcher will explain that their participation is completely voluntary. They can withdraw from the study at any time before their transcript is finalized without providing a reason. If they withdraw from the study before your transcript is finalized, any and all audio-recordings or other data previously collected will be destroyed immediately. After their transcript is finalized, all identifying information will be removed from their interview data, and it will be added to other de-identified data for analysis.

RESULTS: The researcher will ask and make note of whether the participant wishes to be notified about results of the study and resources produced. Offer to provide them with links to further information about the topic if they are interested.

POTENTIAL HARMS AND RISKS AND SUPPORTS: The researcher will advise participants of the potential harms and risks. Ensure that they understand that they have the ability to withdraw from the study any time before their interview transcripts are finalized and their data de-identified. Provide them with numbers for confidential, free, 24-hour help lines. Specifically, provide First Nations and Inuit participants with Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Line number (1-855-242-3310), and the Ottawa Distress Line: 613-238-3311) for all others (First Nations and Inuit participants will receive both numbers).

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES: The researcher will explain the follow-up procedure regarding member checking. The interviewer will transcribe it within 30 days of the interview, and provide the participant with a transcribed copy in a format whereby they can apply direct comments and track changes (e.g., Microsoft Word). The participant will be asked to review the transcript within 15 days to ensure it reflects their comments and experiences (member checking), and to provide comments and track changes on the original transcript in Microsoft Word, or another format that is agreed upon by the interviewer and participant. The review process provides the participant with an opportunity to clarify any points they think need clarification, and gives them the opportunity to extract any information they do not want to be part of the research, or to add any information they wish to add. If there are amendments to be made to the interview after the participant completes the first review; the interviewer will make those amendments to the transcript, and provide the participant with a second transcript within 21 days to give the participant the opportunity to ensure the transcript reflects any changes they intended. Participants will have 15 days to respond with any additional changes. Once participants have provided final feedback on their interview, the interviewer will de-personalize (anonymize) interview data. In some cases, the interviewer may ask for a second interview with a participant to follow up on issues that come up throughout the process of concurrent data collection and analysis. If the participant agrees, the interviewer and participant will repeat the member checking process outlined above, unless the second interview is given prior to this process (in which case member checking can be done on both interviews at once.)

Appendix J: Sharing Circle Guide (Indigenous community)

Using the Touchstones of Hope framework (truth telling, acknowledging, restoring, relating) as a guide for engagement, participants will be asked to share their experiences. Possible questions to guide the conversation might include:

1. What has your experience as an Indigenous student or parent/guardian been at PETES?
2. What would like to have acknowledged in this circle?
3. What needs to be restored? Or created?
4. How might we move forward together, in a (re) new(ed) relationship?

Appendix K: Letter from David McFall (principal of PETES)

École Pierre Elliott Trudeau School

2 Millar Street, Gatineau, Québec, J8Y 3N3

June 12, 2020

Re: Lisa Howell's PhD Research

Dear Ottawa University Ethic's Board:

My name is David McFall and I am the principal of Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary school (PETES) in Gatineau (Hull), Quebec. We are an large English elementary school and we enjoy collaborating with universities and researchers to better understand pedagogical trends and movements in education.

Lisa's commitments to our school community are significant and longstanding. This is why I am very supportive of Lisa's upcoming PhD research with our school community in the 2020-2021 school year.

As a school community, there is always more that we can do to facilitate wellbeing and a sense of belonging for all of our students and families. Lisa's research will help our staff understand the experiences of Indigenous families and students at the school, as well as our role in those relationships. We are hopeful that Lisa's research will contribute to increased understanding and relationship between us all.

We look forward to collaborating with Lisa in her research project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely,



Appendix L: Letter from Aisha Thomas (Indigenous special technician, PETES)

June 11, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I had the privilege of working with Lisa Howell for three years in my role as an Indigenous Special Education Technician at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School (PETES). It has been a true honour to know this fine woman and I wholeheartedly support her research at PETES. Members of diverse Indigenous communities at the school support Lisa Howell whole-heartedly – as she is truly a diamond in the eyes of everyone who(se) experience(d) injustice(s).

I would like to take this opportunity to express how I strongly believe Lisa is without a doubt one of the most outstanding teachers that I have the absolute honour and privilege to work with. She consistently applies problem solving skills to prioritize ‘what counts as knowledge’ from a holistic Indigenous lens which often shifts from community to community – however, is always mindful that our communities are ever-changing environments to which she skillfully adapts to.

Lisa is a natural leader, as she draws upon her vast network, resources and as well, experience in working to gather and link information to benefit/further the knowledge of youth, community members (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) colleagues and working professionals equally. Lisa continuously engages within the Indigenous community to inform herself of what the current issues are – which as a result, informs and develops direction and work-plans... such as Jordan’s Principle, Shannen’s Dream, Truth and Reconciliation, Have a Heart Day, and the impact of Residential Schools...to name a few.

Lisa has both influenced and created projects based on thorough understanding and relaying of both First Nations (FNIM) and non-Indigenous student requirements and priorities. Lisa is beyond resourceful, she has a vast (impressive) network as she communicates and liaises with relevant parents in the community. I have seen her seek the opinions of others which highlights her considerate and all-inclusive nature as she demonstrates an appreciation for diverse (and creative) perspectives from persons she works with and the students she provides education to. She is in tune to those around her. She leaves no-one out.

Lisa is not self-serving. She is a teacher/mentor to others by assisting and guiding innovative approaches to find solutions, to meet changing project needs. She leads by example, and openly expresses appreciation when she has learned from others. Overall, Lisa has gained respect by parents and staff owing to her aforementioned strengths and attributes, especially within the Indigenous community. She has gained the trust of staff, parents and members of the community alike.

Lisa demonstrates values and ethics. Lisa draws on community members when leading meetings. She continuously seeks/ ensures your participation. Lisa’s work ethic can be described as having a right approach, positive attitude, professional behaviour, respect for others and engaging communication, as well as being accountable, honest, and responsible as she takes responsibility for her actions and is dependable – which serves as a good example for others. Lisa is trustworthy as she maintains confidence in her professional ethics, and is respectful with the people she serves.

The research that Lisa wishes to pursue with Indigenous families and students at PETES will no doubt be done in a respectful, reciprocal, and relational way. She has the support of our communities.

Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at

In the Spirit of Caring,

Indigenous Special Education Technician, PETES

Appendix M: Letter from _____(Indigenous parent, PETES)

June 11, 2020

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to confirm that I am supportive of Lisa Howell's research project with Indigenous families and students at Pierre Elliott Trudeau School (PETES).

I have been a parent at PETES since September 2016 and have five (5) children that attend the school. Lisa taught my son, Roby, for two years.

As a teacher, Lisa was very supportive and always made sure I was aware when something came up with Roby or any of my other children that attended PETES. I was also deeply honored with the way she ran her classroom; it taught my son to continue learning about our Cree culture and our way of life. One of the things that stood out the most for my son and I was "The Senior buddies' program" this program taught my son to love and respect elders. Since that time, my son has always enjoyed been around elders and I am thankful that this program came with the class that she taught.

As a parent, I appreciated Lisa because she was the person that my children could trust and they have grown fond of, even after all these years, Lisa's name is often spoken by my children.

I think that Lisa's research is important because Indigenous parents and students at PETES need to receive the proper support when moving from their home communities and coming to a city. Often times our children suffer from "Culture Shock" as a parent I can say that my children suffered this, but eventually got used to it and began to love living in Gatineau, but their hometown always remained close to their hearts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at or my email at

Sincerely,

Appendix N: Post-Walk and Circle Questionnaire (Teachers & Administration)

Thank you for participating in my doctoral research. Please take the time to fill out this questionnaire. I truly value your input. This questionnaire is anonymous.

1. Why did you decide to participate in the walk and community sharing circle ?
2. Please explain your experiences during the walk and the community sharing circle .
3. Did the walk/community sharing circle help deepen your understandings of colonialism and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians? If so, how?
4. How did the walk/community sharing circle impact you as a teacher, administrator, or as a human being?
5. What is “the one thing” that you carry with you from participating in the walk and the community sharing circle ? What resonates?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with me

Appendix O: COVID-Safe Research Plan

1. a) Consult your Faculty's Research Remobilization Plan.
2. b) Complete and submit this form to your Vice-Dean Research to ensure your plan is aligned with the Faculty's research remobilization plan.
3. c) Once your plan is finalized and your Faculty has signed off, append a copy of the form to your ethics application (in Question 2.6 of the eReviews form).
4. d) Please note that if you require more space to answer the questions, a Word version of this form can be requested to the Office of the Vice-Dean, Research of your faculty.

Name of the PI: Lisa Howell

Name of the Supervisor (if applicable): Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook

Department / Faculty: Education

Title of the Project: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of Ethics File

Number (if known): S-07-20-5924

Proposed date when in-person contact with participants will start or resume: Sept 17 OR Oct 15 2021

In-Person Research Activities (It is preferable to conduct as many activities as possible remotely.)

1. Indicate the type of research activity that will be taking place.

- Recruitment
- Interviews
- Community sharing circle
- Observation
- Participant observation Questionnaires

How & where: **Outdoors**

Number & duration: **6 participants, 2 hours**

- Physical testing
- Community-based research (provide details):

X Other (provide details):

A group of 6 teachers from Pierre Elliott Trudeau School in Gatineau, QC, will go on a walk **OUTDOORS with Elder Albert Dumont and myself.**

2. Indicate if research activities require close contact with participants, whereby physical distancing cannot be maintained.

All participants will wear masks, adhere to 2 metre distances, and be outdoors the entire time. We will meet at Chaudière Falls, Gatineau.

Participant Information.

3. Describe the targeted participant sample and include the number of participants.

See above.

4. Indicate if the target participant population have physical or physiological factors that make them more vulnerable to becoming seriously ill if exposed to COVID-19 (e.g., age, underlying medical conditions).

All participants are fully vaccinated.

5. Indicate if participants will be recruited from a site where the population is considered highly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 (e.g., long-term health care facilities, homeless population). If yes, provide details.

Participants are teachers at elementary school. Although most children at the school are under 12 years of age and not vaccinated, research with the school-age population demonstrates that transmission and illness among children is low. The school has masking, sanitizing, cohorting, and distancing protocols in place.

Project Jurisdiction

In what geographical location will the project take place (name the community/province/state/country)?

Chaudière Falls, Gatineau, QC

Who is the local health authority for your research area?

Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais

Provide a website link for the local health authority and/or other relevant government site.

<https://ciyss-outaouais.gouv.qc.ca/language/en/covid19-en/>

9. Provide confirmation that:

You will be able to enter the region or country (if applicable).

You are prepared for any mandatory quarantine period (away and home) and all associated requirements.

10. Indicate if permissions or agreements will be required to access the region/community/country. If yes, provide supporting documentation.

No, there are no permissions required to access Gatineau at this time.

Travel and Accommodation

11. Does the project involve travel (outside of your current location)?

- No – Skip to Question 12
 Yes – Answer the questions below

1. a) Who is required to travel?

I will be required to bike 4 km from my home to the Chaudière Falls. Albert will drive from his home in Kitigan Zibi.

2. b) How are they travelling (e.g., car, train, plane)?

See above

3. c) Does the travel require overnight or longer stays?

No

4. How often will travel be required?

Once

5. Provide information on COVID-19 measures that will be considered during travel and lodgings.

Participants will walk to the site in a socially distanced manner, wearing masks.

Project Setting

12. In what physical space is the project taking place?

uOttawa (lab, classroom, office). Provide details:

Institution with its own COVID-19 regulations (school, hospital). Provide details:

Outdoors.

Provide details:

A walk and a circle

13. Indicate if permissions or agreements will be required to conduct in-person research activities at the research site/organization. If yes, provide supporting documentation.

No permission needed.

14. Indicate the number of individuals (researchers + participants) that will be in the same physical space at any given time.

At the most, there will be 8 of us. We will be outdoors at all times.

15. Indicate if the physical space will allow for physical distancing between individuals whenever possible, in accordance with applicable guidelines (including the faculty remobilization plan). If no, provide details.

Yes, as we will be outdoors, we will have lots of room to distance ourselves.

16. Indicate if there is adequate ventilation in the space. Yes

No / Don't know N/A (outdoors)

Surfaces and Equipment

17. Indicate if the research activities will be conducted in a physical space that has surfaces that people may touch often (e.g., doorknobs, elevator buttons, chairs/benches). Provide details.

We will be outdoors only.

18. Indicate if the research activities involve sharing any equipment/tools/documents between researchers and/or participants. Provide details.

There will be no sharing of anything.

19. Explain any sanitization, decontamination, and/or cleaning measures that will be used.

No one will be touching anything or anyone, but hand sanitizer will be on site.

Safety Protocols

The following resources may provide guidance in establishing your safety protocol:

- uOttawa Campus Health and Safety Resources
- Public Health Ontario Public Resources and Safety Measures Government of Canada Measures to Reduce COVID-19

20. Select the measures that will be integrated into the research protocol in order to reduce risks of person- to-person or surface transmission.

- Regular handwashing and/or hand sanitizing
- **Supplying hand sanitizer**
- **Physical distancing (as recommended by the local health authority)**
- Sanitizing of high-touch surfaces and shared equipment between individuals
- **Screening measures for participants (e.g., complete the COVID-19 self-assessment)**
- **Screening measures for research team members (e.g., complete the COVID-19 self-assessment)**
- Limiting sharing of pens/paper (i.e., written vs. verbal consent, data collection activities)
- Scheduling sessions __ minutes apart
- Escorting participants throughout the visit (when on uOttawa campus)
- **Wearing of face masks/face coverings**
- Wearing face shields or goggles
- Wearing gloves
- Wearing lab coats
- Supplying participants with any needed Personal Protective Equipment (masks, shields), even though participants should be asked to come with their own mask.
- Using Plexiglas barriers
- **Other (provide details):**
We will be outdoors at all time and 2 metres apart. There will be no touching or sharing of any equipment. All participants will be asked to complete a COVID-19 self-assessment before participating.

21. Provide any additional information that may be relevant for the assessment of risk for this project, including when the researchers may not be able to comply with local public authorities recommended precautions.

This walk and circle is important to do in person to follow Algonquin protocol and land based learning. I have taken all COVID-protocol into consideration in my planning, including doing both the walk and the circle outdoors.

Communications

22. Describe how all research team members will be informed of the Safe Research Plan requirements.

I will speak to Albert about the protocols before the walk/circle. I will ask Albert to complete a COVID-19 screening and I will provide him with a mask/sanitizer.

23. Describe how participants will be informed of COVID-19-related safety measures that will be taken.

All safety measures will be communicated by email to participants before the walk. They will be repeated at the beginning of the walk. All participants will be asked to do a self-screening before the walk begins.

24. Indicate if signage will be used (e.g., physical distancing, travel patterns, use of common areas).

Yes No

As the Principal Investigator:

- I take responsibility for ensuring that all necessary COVID-19 protocols are in place, including, but not limited to cleaning, screening and PPE requirements, as per uOttawa and other applicable health authority guidelines.
- I will ensure that all research team members will complete the mandatory online training “Preventing COVID-19 Infection in the Workplace” prior to their involvement in the project.
- I have a plan in place to collect personal contact information for contact-tracing purposes (by health authorities), in the event that members of the research team and/or participants may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the research site.
- I will provide the necessary COVID-19 information to participants in the Consent Form Addendum (see template).
- I have a plan in place to shut down the project in the event of public health directive (e.g., tightening of restrictions related to pandemic status in the control of COVID-19).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I confirm that research protocols will continue to comply with the most up-to-date, recommendations, directives, and advisories about the spread of COVID-19 from government and public health officials and with those from institutions, organizations or funding agencies relevant to the research project.	
PI signature	
Date	August 26, 2021
<p>This plan is in line with the Faculty’s Research Remobilization Plan.</p>	
Authority signature	
Date	August 27th 2021
Name and title:	Isabelle Bourgeois, Vice-Dean Research

Appendix P: uOttawa Consent Information Addendum- COVID-19 Risks

Principal Investigator: Lisa Howell

Study Title: After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality

Please read the following statements carefully and feel free to ask questions if anything seems unclear.

We are putting in place safety precautions to reduce exposure to COVID-19, but the risk of exposure can still exist. COVID-19 can result in severe illness, medical expenses, and loss of income and in some cases, death.

If you are considered vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 (e.g., an older adult; underlying medical conditions or a compromised immune system), please discuss your participation with the research team before consenting to participate.

If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any potential COVID-19 symptoms leading up to the research session, please stay home and notify the research team that you cannot attend. Should you experience symptoms in days following the session, please also notify the research team.

Potential COVID-19 symptoms include: new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, temperature equal to or over 38C (100.4F), feeling feverish, chills, fatigue or weakness, muscle or body aches, new loss of smell or taste, headache, gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting), or feeling very unwell.

To reduce the possibility of COVID-19, we have implemented the following safety procedures

- Providing hand sanitizer at all times
- All research activities will take place outdoors
- Wearing of face masks/face coverings
- Physical distancing (as recommended by the local health authority).

Please advise a researcher if you believe a safety measure is not being taken, or that your safety is at risk.

Considerations for the Participant:

We ask that you:

- Wear a mask or face covering. Masks will be provided by the researcher if you do not have one. If you feel that you are unable to wear a mask, discuss your participation with the research team.
- Complete a screening assessment before each research session.
- Wash or sanitize your hands upon arrival. Hand sanitizer will be provided.

- Maintain physical distancing to the extent possible during the in-person research activities.

We ask that you follow the health-related directives above for your safety and the safety of the researcher.

Information for Contact Tracing

We are collecting personal contact information for contact-tracing purposes, in the event that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the research site.

Your name and contact information:

- Will not be stored with the research data
- Will always be securely stored
- Will only be used if requested by Public Health authorities for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes
- Will be held only for the time required by Public Health authorities

Right to Withdraw

You are under no obligation to participate. You can stop participating or withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher using the contact information above.

Thank you for your interest and participation.

Lisa Howell, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix Q: Certificate of Ethics Approval

11/08/2021

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number	S-07-20-5924
Titre du projet / Project Title	After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de doctorat / Doctoral thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Renouvelé / Renewed
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	08/10/2020
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	07/10/2022

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Rôle
Lisa HOWELL	Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Nicholas NG-A-FOOK	Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education	Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CÉR) de l'Université d'Ottawa, opérant conformément à l'*Énoncé de politique des Trois conseils* (2014) et toutes autres lois et tous règlements applicables, a examiné et approuvé la demande d'éthique du projet de recherche ci-nommé.

L'approbation est valide pour la durée indiquée plus haut et est sujette aux conditions énumérées dans la section intitulée "Conditions Spéciales ou Commentaires". Le formulaire « Renouvellement ou Fermeture de Projet » doit être complété quatre semaines avant la date d'échéance indiquée ci-haut afin de demander un renouvellement de cette approbation éthique ou afin de fermer le dossier.

Toutes modifications apportées au projet doivent être approuvées par le CÉR avant leur mise en place, sauf si le participant doit être retiré en raison d'un danger immédiat ou s'il s'agit d'un changement ayant trait à des éléments administratifs ou logistiques du projet. Les chercheurs doivent aviser le CÉR dans les plus brefs délais de tout changement pouvant augmenter le niveau de risque aux participants ou pouvant affecter considérablement le déroulement du projet, rapporter tout événement imprévu ou indésirable et soumettre toute nouvelle information pouvant nuire à la conduite du projet ou à la sécurité des participants.

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, which operates in accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (2014) and other applicable laws and regulations, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above-named research project.

Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and is subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions or Comments". The "Renewal/Project Closure" form must be completed four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval or closure of the file.

Any changes made to the project must be approved by the REB before being implemented, except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) only pertain to administrative or logistical components of the project. Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes that increase the risk to participant(s), any changes that considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project or the safety of the participant(s).

Safaa LAMHOUJEB
 Coordonnateur de l'éthique / Ethics Coordinator
 Pour/For **Barbara GRAVES** Président(e) du/ Chair of the **Comité d'éthique de la recherche en sciences sociales et humanités / Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board**

Appendix R: Certificate of Ethics Approval Renewal

Dear Lisa Howell,

Thank you for submitting a renewal request for your research project titled "After the About: Curricular and pedagogical possibilities of unlearning colonialism through ethical relationality".

Please find attached the renewed certificate of ethics approval, valid until 07-10-2022.

Funded research: A reminder that you must provide a copy of this certificate to **Research Management Services**.

If you have any questions, please contact the Ethics Office at ethics@uottawa.ca or by telephone at 613-562-5387.

You can view your project at any time by logging into **eReviews**.

Best regards,

Safaa Lamhoujeb
Ethics Coordinator

This is an automated message. Please do not reply directly to this email.

Attachement(s) / Attachment(s)
[approvalLetter1628704529827.pdf](#)

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
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613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca