

Reconciliation in Pedagogical Praxis:
A Case Study in Pre-Service Teacher Engagement with Indigenous Perspectives

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Abstract

In the years following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015b), Ontario universities have made significant efforts towards integrating Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming. This research provides an in-depth analysis of how teacher candidates engage with Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary perspectives as part of their teacher-training. This project further seeks to describe whether/how teacher candidates envision integrating Indigenous perspectives into their future praxis. Using a case study methodology, this study draws data from both a focus group and individual interviews with teacher candidates at an Ontario university. Of the eight teacher candidates who participated in this research, seven are non-Indigenous, and one self-identifies as being of First Nations heritage. Using a thematic analysis, this study examines three themes. First, a highly racialized conceptualization of settler identities is observed among teacher candidates. While this positioning recognizes the dominance of White Canadians, it implicitly excludes People of Colour from their rightful place within the reconciliation process. The second theme in this research concerns the efficacy of teacher-education programming in addressing knowledge gaps and discriminatory discourses. The potential of teacher-education as a catalyst of systemic change highlights the role of education in Canada's reconciliation process. Finally, teacher candidates express significant concerns regarding integrating Indigenous knowledges, pedagogies, histories, and cultures into their future teaching praxis. In particular, they report feeling inadequately prepared to teach Indigenous perspectives without further knowledge and training. This research thus advocates for the continued facilitation of personal relationships between teacher candidates and Indigenous peoples, and the absolution of imperfection. While education has long been used to marginalize and control Indigenous peoples, this research examines how it can be repurposed as a tool of reconciliation and healing.

This work is dedicated to the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children of Canada.

You are the heart of this work, and
I truly hope it will be of use to you.

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Glossary

Aboriginal	The term “Aboriginal” refers to the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples whose Aboriginal rights are recognized under the <i>Constitution Act</i> , 1982. While I use “Indigenous” throughout this study, the term “Aboriginal” sometimes appears in quotations. In such instances, the term is used in order to remain true to the original quote.
First Nations	First Nations peoples are the original inhabitants of Canada, and were present for thousands of years prior to European contact. They are recognized as distinct from the Inuit or Métis (see below.)
FNIM	This acronym is composed of the terms First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. FNIM is sometimes used interchangeably with “Indigenous” throughout this study when referring to a Canadian context.
Indigenous	Like “Aboriginal”, “Indigenous” is a term used to encompass First Nations, Métis and Inuit identities. However, it is more widely used by international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) or in global contexts. Indigenous communities or nations are historically continuous with pre-colonial societies within what is now Canada.
Indigenous Perspectives Course	The course on Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences is compulsory to all teacher candidates as part of their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programming at the Ontario university where this study takes place.
Inuit	Recognized as a distinct group, the Inuit are Indigenous peoples whose traditional territory lies within the far north of Canada, as well as some areas of Siberia, Greenland, and Alaska.
Métis	“Métis” is a complex and often contested term originally referring to the children of Indigenous and European parents prior to colonization. It now refers to a distinct nation of those who self-identify as Métis, are of Métis heritage, and are accepted by the Métis nation (Métis National Council, n.d.)
Non-Indigenous	Individuals or groups who are not of Indigenous heritage. This term is often used synonymously with “settler” (see below) to refer to those who live on Indigenous territories but are not themselves Indigenous.
Pre-Service Teacher/ Teacher candidate	The terms “pre-service teacher” and “teacher candidate” are used interchangeably throughout this study to refer to students enrolled in teacher-education programming. In the case study used for this research,

teacher candidates were all enrolled in the same B.Ed program at an Ontario university.

- Race** A socially-constructed notion used to categorize individuals or groups based on physical characteristics, such as skin tone. Race is further often substituted with “culture,” which sometimes “performs the work of racial difference” (Visweswaran, 2010, p. 3). Race is frequently deployed as justification for dominance, exclusions, violence, and control.
- Racialization** Racialization refers to processes through which social constructions of race are applied to groups and individuals. While race is a social invention rather than a biological reality, perceptions of race continue to categorize, exclude, and marginalize groups. Economic, social, and political facets of life are all affected by social constructions of race. Simply put, racialization is about the process of racial categorization and classification, which may serve as a precursor for exclusions and racisms (Ibrahim, 2014a; Stanley, 2011). The racialization of Indigenous peoples through myths of shared physical (Monchalin, 2016) or cultural traits continues to propagate anti-Indigenous racisms.
- Reconciliation** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (2015a) describes reconciliation as being “about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country” (p. 6). I further use the term “reconciliation” to describe the process of healing, particularly in terms of intergenerational and ongoing trauma resulting from the abduction and abuse of Indigenous children forced into Indian residential schools. Because reconciliation is an ongoing endeavor, I often apply the term “reconciliation process” to acknowledge that reconciliation has not yet been achieved.
- Reconciliatory Pedagogy** This term refers to pedagogical practices that align with the principles of reconciliation in both theory and praxis. For instance, the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges within school curriculum is a critical component of reconciliatory pedagogy. Further aspects include teaching history that honours Indigenous perspectives and contributions, rather than approaching history as a narrative of European colonial expansion.
- Settler** I use the term settler to encompass all non-Indigenous peoples who live in Canada. Consequently, I do not distinguish between those who were born in Canada and those who were not. While I capitalize the first letter in “White” to acknowledge the role of racialization in the experiences of groups and individuals, there is no common racialization among non-Indigenous peoples residing in Canada. As a result, I do not capitalize the “s” in settlers to avoid essentializing non-Indigenous experiences.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Contextualizing Reconciliation in Canada

Canada's reconciliation process is multifaceted, unsettling, and arduous. Canada was one of only four countries to vote against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in September of 2007, combating recognition of Indigenous rights such as sovereignty, cultural practice, and freedom from discrimination (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). While Canada eventually adopted UNDRIP nearly a decade later, it was ultimately accepted in a "sanitized Canadian form" that fails to enforce the principles of the Declaration (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017, p. 158). It was not until June 11th, 2008 that then Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered Canada's first formal apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, describing the forced removal and abuse of Indigenous children as "a sad chapter in our history" (Harper, 2008, para 1). In 2017, this apology was extended to include former students of Indian residential schools of Newfoundland and Labrador by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (2017), who emphasized that

We understand that reconciliation between the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples can be a difficult process and is ongoing-and we know it doesn't happen overnight. But it is my hope that in apologizing today, acknowledging the past and asking your forgiveness, that as a country, we will continue to advance the journey of reconciliation and healing together. (para 16)

While formal apologies acknowledge the atrocities committed at Indian residential schools and the necessity of national healing, they are meaningless until inequity is addressed and reconciled in both policy and praxis.

The term "reconciliation" itself evokes conflicting interpretations. For the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (2015a),

The Commission defines *reconciliation* as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Métis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process. (p. 16)

The TRC (2015a) further argues that “reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one” (p. vi). Senator Murray Sinclair also frames reconciliation as a shared responsibility among Canada’s Indigenous and settler populations, stating “if you feel connected to the future of this country, and if you feel responsible for the future, then you need to care about reconciliation, for the sake of the future of this country” (Anderson, 2016, para 7.). For Dion (2016), “reconciliation is to restore mutual respect between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. To resolve, settle, put to rights, bring back together, make peace between” (p. 472). Building on these definitions, I conceptualize reconciliation as an epistemic, a political, and a socio-historical framework, as well as a process of mutual healing, and the rebuilding of nation-to-nation relationships. I further agree with the TRC (2015a) and Senator Murray Sinclair (Anderson, 2016) that reconciliation necessitates the participation of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Jurisdictional justice stands as a central concern in defining reconciliation. As activist and professor Cindy Blackstock (2008) of the Gitksan First Nation argues, “reconciliation requires not just *saying* the right thing but *doing* the right thing” (p. 174). For example, Blackstock was instrumental in establishing the implementation of Jordan’s Principle, a child-centered initiative providing vital services for First Nations children in Canada (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, n.d.-b; Indigenous Services Canada, 2020). Sheppard (2018) evokes Jordan’s Principle as a specific facet of reconciliation that “affirms an entitlement to non-discriminatory

governmental services and benefits” (p. 9). Within this framework, reconciliation concerns the implementation of urgently needed changes in laws, policies, and social practices that discriminate against Indigenous peoples.

For many, reconciliation is not about nation-to-nation healing nor addressing inequities, but rather an insidious rebranding of colonial practices. As Alfred (2009) attests, “I see reconciliation as an emasculating concept, weak-kneed and easily accepting of half-hearted measures of a notion of justice that does nothing to help Indigenous peoples regain their dignity and strength” (p. 181). Alfred (2009) thus advocates for a process of “restitution”, explaining

Restitution, as a broad goal, involves demanding the return of what was stolen, accepting reparations (either land, material, or monetary recompense) for what cannot be returned, and forging a new sociopolitical relationship based on Canadians’ admission of wrongdoing and acceptance of the responsibility and obligation to engage Indigenous peoples in a restitution-reconciliation peace-building process. (p. 183)

Like Alfred (2009), Manuel and Derrickson (2017) perceive reconciliation as a disingenuous renaming of colonial practices, arguing that “the term ‘reconciliation’ now covers any and all manipulations or diminution of our rights and title” (p. 200). They are particularly critical of federal and provincial governments and Indigenous leaders who “speak incessantly about reconciliation without demanding recognition of our title and recompense for past abuses” (p. 201). For Manuel and Derrickson (2017), the term “reconciliation” is thus used to broadcast an illusion of unity without reallocating power or resources. Rather than rely on the rhetoric of “reconciliation”, Manuel and Derrickson (2017) call for “decolonization”, arguing

We will know that Canada is finally decolonized when Indigenous peoples are exercising our inherent political and legal powers in our own territories up to the standard recognized by the United Nations, when your government has instituted sweeping policy reform based on Indigenous rights standards and when our future generations can live in sustainable ways on an Indigenous designed and driven economy. (p. 278)

Similarly, Tuck and Yang (2012) reject the notion of reconciliation, framing it as the safeguarding of settler normalcy and futurity at the expense of Indigenous peoples. They thus demand not reconciliation but decolonization, arguing that “decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1). Reconciliation is perceived by Tuck and Yang (2012) as a remanufacturing of colonial practices, decorated to connote nation-to-nation healing without truly addressing ongoing injustices. Within this interpretation, reconciliation is incompatible with decolonization, with the former safeguarding settler futurity and the latter concerning the undoing of colonization to secure the futurity of Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012). I disagree with Tuck and Yang’s (2012) assertion that reconciliation concerns exclusively settler futurity, interpreting reconciliation instead as a process of mutual healing and restoration.

It is worth noting that a problematic component of the term “reconciliation” is that it implies the existence of a prior state of harmonious co-existence (Koelwyn, 2018). Chrisjohn and Wasacase (2009) call this imagining of Canada’s history “an interesting fable,” but argue that “there is more history to *Star Wars* than to this scenario” (p. 222). Canada has long been wedded to the notion of itself as a nation of peacekeepers, which complicates the reconciliation process as settlers resist being forced to confront painful realities (Regan, 2010).

Despite conflicting interpretations of “reconciliation”, common criteria are called upon to establish justice for Canada’s Indigenous peoples. The TRC’s (2015a) definition of reconciliation concerns “concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change” (p. 16), echoing calls for tangible action put forth by Indigenous activists and scholars (Blackstock, 2008; Manuel and Derrickson, 2017). The TRC’s (2015a) conceptualization of “reconciliation”, and Alfred’s

(2009) advocacy for “restitution” further share the common belief that a restructured social-political relationship and respectful engagement are integral to building mutually constructive relationships. Finally, a critical purpose of the TRC is the acknowledgement of Canada’s historic and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015a), which supports the calls of Indigenous scholars to reject the fantasy of a peaceful Canadian history (Chrisjohn and Wasacase, 2009; Regan, 2010). While there is much disparity in interpretations of “reconciliation”, “restitution”, and “decolonization”, each calls for mutually respectful relationship-building, judicial justice, and reform. In the following section, the role of education in implementing such reconciliatory changes is brought to closer examination.

The Role of Education in Reconciliation

Education is invariably heralded as being among the most critical means through which reconciliation may be implemented and maintained. Under Article 14.1 of UNDRIP, “Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination” (United Nations General Assembly, 2007, p. 5). Senator Murray Sinclair further identifies education as a tool of forced assimilation as well as liberation, arguing “education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out” (Anderson, 2016, para 10). The TRC Calls to Action (2015b) also recognize the role of education in rebuilding nation-to-nation relationships and fostering mutual respect, advocating for the integration of Indigenous perspectives in mainstream schools.

This thesis is grounded upon the TRC Calls to Action (2015b) concerning the role of teacher-training to ensure educators possess the knowledges and efficacy required to effectively deliver pedagogical material pertinent to Indigenous peoples. As Korteweg and Fiddler (2018) argue, settler teachers and teacher-educators “carry the core responsibility of implementing

reform efforts to develop curriculum that represents accurate historical truths, respect Indigenous knowledge (IK) systems and perspectives, as well as promote holistic Indigenous pedagogies for greater understandings and well-being for all students” (p. 255). To contribute to more inclusive and equitable pedagogical practices, teacher-education programs across Ontario have implemented Indigenous content into their programming (Ng-A-Fook, Ingham & Burrows, 2018). It is within this context of teacher-education as a tool of reconciliation that the current research is conducted.

Research Objectives and Question

The purpose of this study is to examine how teacher candidates engage with Indigenous knowledges and perspectives as part of their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) program at an Ontario university. The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To explore teacher candidate perceptions of Indigenous knowledges and cultures.
- 2) To describe whether and how teacher candidates intend to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their own future teaching praxis.

The intention behind this research is ultimately to serve the Indigenous future students of teacher candidates. In contributing to a greater understanding of how teachers can best be prepared to integrate Indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies into their praxis, this study seeks to inform policy and contribute to the support and training available to pre-service educators. The intent behind this research is thus to support Indigenous children and youth by supporting their teachers.

This study will be guided by the central question: “How do teacher candidates engage with, interpret, and conceptualize Indigenous perspectives?” This study further poses a

secondary question, seeking to understand “how/do teacher candidates intend to implement Indigenous perspectives into their own future teaching praxis?”

These questions are investigated using a qualitative approach, which is applied using a case study research design. Data is drawn from both a focus group and individual interviews, all of which were conducted in March and April of 2019. These interviews were informal and semi-structured in nature, which allowed research participants to direct their answers as needed. In total, eight pre-service teachers participated. After interviews were completed, they were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy. Finally, common themes were identified throughout multiple interviews. These reoccurring themes were colour-coded, and organized into a thematic analysis.

Three themes emerged from this study. First, a racialized conceptualization of settler identities is recognized, as research participants consistently situate settler identities as being tied to Whiteness. Secondly, this study highlights the potential of teacher-education programming in resolving knowledge-gaps and confronting harmful stereotyping discourses. Finally, this research turns towards the secondary research question, which asks “how/do teacher candidates intend to implement Indigenous perspectives into their own future teaching praxis?” In this section, teacher candidates express fears of failure, of “doing it wrong,” and of feeling inadequately knowledgeable or prepared. In exploring teacher apprehensions and concerns, this study seeks to inform policy regarding how to meaningfully prepare future teachers to include Indigenous perspectives within their pedagogical praxis.

Project Structure

In Chapter 2, I provide the research context and rationale of this study. Indigenous children and youth are frequently immersed in a mainstream education system that routinely

marginalizes their cultures, knowledges, and histories. They are largely perceived from a deficit framework by educators (Kanu, 2005; Tupper, 2012; Whitley, 2014) and the historic contributions, cultures, and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples are routinely excluded from lesson material (Neeganagwedgin, 2013). The lack of educational resources and funding allocated to Indigenous children and youth further perpetuates inequality (The House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2017; Šlezić, 2017). In addition to contextualizing this research, I use Chapter 2 to situate myself as a settler educator and researcher.

In Chapter 3, I take up perspectives offered from the literature, focusing on the works of McInnes (2017), Pratt and Danyluk (2017), and Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi (2013). Each of these authors put forth distinct approaches to infusing Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming.

Chapter 4 of this study concerns my theoretical lens, for which I use a decolonizing framework. I use this approach to emphasize the need for the inclusion of Indigenous voices (Davidson, Shotton, Minthorn & Waterman, 2018) to unsettle Eurocentric approaches to knowledge and learning. In addition, a decolonizing framework acknowledges both the existence of colonialism and its ongoing consequences.

In Chapter 5, I provide an outline of my methodology, drawing from the work of Stake (2010) to describe the qualitative approach used in this research. I further refer to Yin (2014) to discuss the efficacy of a case study methodology to explore “how” questions such as that in my research.

Chapter 6 concerns the findings of this research, including the three themes outlined above that presented themselves throughout focus group and individual interviews. I further offer

an analysis to accompany each theme. Finally, Chapter 7 serves to provide concluding thoughts on the lessons, recommendations, and limitations of this study, as well as its implications for future research.

Teacher-education is uniquely situated for bringing reconciliatory pedagogy to mainstream education. It affords teacher candidates the opportunity to familiarize themselves with curricular material and teaching resources that honour Indigenous perspectives. This is of particular importance, as many teacher candidates were not themselves taught about Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives during their prior schooling experiences. Furthermore, teacher-training programs allow pre-service teachers to confront longstanding perceptions and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples. As Blackstock (2008) argues, “if reconciliation does not live in the hearts of children, it does not exist at all” (p. 175). By facilitating engagement with Indigenous perspectives, teacher-education programming makes a critical contribution towards bringing Canada’s reconciliation process into schools.

Chapter 2

Study Context and Rationale

This research was conducted during a pivotal turning point in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada. It occurred in the immediate aftermath of the TRC Calls to Action (2015b) and alongside Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's frequent commitments to improving nation-to-nation healing. Despite these commitments, inequity and an ongoing suicide crisis among Indigenous youth continues (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018). In this chapter, I contextualize the necessity of research pertaining to bringing reconciliation into pedagogical praxis, and acknowledge my own positionality. I begin by acknowledging the ongoing effects of displacement, cultural loss, and intergenerational trauma on Indigenous youth, recognizing that suicide rates among Indigenous youth have risen to crisis levels (Chiefs Assembly on Education, 2012; Indigenous Services Canada, 2018). Next, I take up the Calls to Action put forth by the TRC (2015b) to emphasize the need for research that examines the role of teacher-education in implementing reconciliatory pedagogy within Canadian schools. Finally, I rely upon the work of Absolon (Minogizhigokwe) (2011) and Waldorf (2014) to situate my positionality as a non-Indigenous researcher and teacher. I therefore approach this research with a paradigm and schema shaped by my position as an uninvited settler to Indigenous territory.

A Context of Crisis

As both the inheritors of intergenerational trauma and the casualties of contemporary political marginalization, Indigenous youth exist in a state of ongoing crisis. Forced displacement, cultural loss, and the intergenerational trauma of the Indian residential school system contribute to profound ongoing suffering, and exacerbate high rates of suicide among Indigenous youth (Barker, Goodman, & DeBeck, 2017). Suicide rates among First Nations youth

are recorded as being five to seven times higher than those of non-Indigenous people in Canada (Chiefs Assembly on Education, 2012), while suicide rates among the Inuit are approximately nine times higher compared to non-Indigenous rates (Kumar & Tjepdema, 2019).

Education stands at the forefront of solutions to reaching a greater state of equity and well-being for First Nations youth (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018). Yet despite the emphasis on education as a critical tool of healing and resolving equity gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (Government of Canada, 2020; TRC, 2015a), on-reserve schools continue to struggle with a lack of funding and resources (Šlezić, 2017). High school graduation rates among First Nations on-reserve youth hover at 44%, precisely half the completion rate as compared to other Canadians (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018). Within Inuit communities, youth have indicated that limited self-governance regarding education and an insufficient number of course options contributed to poor perceptions of available education (The House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2017). Inuit youth have further stressed the difficulty of leaving families behind to access higher-quality schooling outside of their communities.

Among Indigenous youth who do attend school off-reserve, the lack of representation of Indigenous content in curriculum and deficit-approaches from teachers are significant barriers to student success (Crooks, Burleigh, Snowshoe, Lapp, Hughes, & Sisco, 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) (2015) found that only 65% of teachers report teaching material related to Indigenous peoples, and within this group only 34% reported doing so regularly. Among the 26% of teachers who report noticing anti-Indigenous racism in school, 91% witnessed negative stereotyping (CTF, 2015). Critically, discriminatory treatment from professionals such as educators frequently reduces the probability

of youth seeking support when needed (The House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2017).

While sovereignty over education is frequently recommended to support the learning and academic success of Indigenous youth (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018; Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019), it does not necessarily incorporate those Indigenous youth who live and attend school off-reserve. Furthermore, non-Indigenous youth also stand to benefit from an equitable school system that incorporates the histories and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples into lesson content. Participating in reconciliatory efforts such as Have a Heart Day (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, n.d.-a) further allows non-Indigenous youth to exercise their understanding of Canadian colonization and anti-racist advocacy.

To integrate public education into the reconciliation process, schools situated both on and off reserves are required to contribute to creating educational environments and lesson content that recognize Indigenous youth. To guide and inform reconciliation in education, the TRC Calls to Action (2015b) state:

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students. (p. 7)

Section 63 of the TRC Calls to Action (2015b) further attests:

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.

- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above. (p. 7)

The purpose of this research is founded upon the TRC's Calls to Actions (2015b) section 63.iv, and speaks to the necessity of preparing teachers to integrate reconciliation into their pedagogical praxis. Research has already examined knowledge deficits among educators (Furo, 2017; Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Whitley, 2014), resistance to learning about reconciliatory pedagogy (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018; Regan, 2010), and facing teacher candidate resistance to learning new models of knowledge and principles (Hopper, McGregor, Sanford, & Williams, 2012). However, little research is dedicated to exploring when pre-service teachers *do* engage with Indigenous perspectives. This project further moves beyond the existing literature to question how teacher candidates conceptualize their own role in the reconciliation process. By exploring how pre-service teachers conceptualize Indigeneity and reconciliation as part of pedagogical praxis, this study is committed to identifying obstacles that limit pre-service teachers from obtaining the efficacy and knowledges necessary to meeting the Calls to Action put forward by the TRC (2015b).

Situating the Researcher

As a non-Indigenous researcher and a White settler in Canada, I approach Indigenous histories, cultures, and political paradigms from a schema founded upon an asymmetrical balance of power. As Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe) (2011) argues, “we, as learners and searchers, accept responsibility for our intentions, understandings and knowledge by writing self into our research” (p. 67). Drawing from the work of Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe) (2011), Waldorf (2014) further asserts that “the researcher is as much a part of the research as the research itself” and situates herself using the following three guiding questions: 1) “who am I?”, 2) “why am I

doing this?” and 3) “who am I doing this for?” (p. 72). I borrow these questions from Waldorf’s (2014) work to recognize my own position as a non-Indigenous researcher whose work pertains to the integration of Indigenous perspectives into public education.

“Who am I?”

I am a White settler of Austrian and British heritage, and was born on the Squamish territory *k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw* (North Vancouver, B.C.). The city of Vancouver stands upon the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations (Meiszner, 2014) and carries a long history of the displacement of Indigenous peoples (Stanley, 2009; Sterritt, 2018). I now live in Ottawa, on the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe nations (City of Ottawa, n.d.).

While Indigenous cultures and histories featured prominently in my early schooling experiences, my recollection is of a heavily romanticized representation. In stark contrast to the ennobled portrayal of Indigenous peoples in schools, the reserve nearest to my childhood home was widely perceived as dangerous, and its members virtually segregated from the broader community. My earliest perceptions of Canada’s First Nations were thus initially shaped by dichotomized narratives that both exalted and marginalized Indigenous peoples.

“Why Am I Doing This?”

I first became conscious of how prevalent anti-Indigenous discrimination and discourses remain in Canada while teaching at an elementary school with a high Indigenous student population. At this school, a colleague refused to serve Indigenous students in the breakfast program, insisting that their families were intentionally exploiting school programming. The same colleague left stacks of lice forms in my mailbox, remarking that “Native kids all have lice” and advising me to tie up my hair. Other staff members were loudly critical of Indigenous

families, particularly regarding high absence rates during seasonal events such as the goose hunt. The unabashed and consistent anti-Indigenous sentiments and discourses among some members of staff prompted my understanding of ongoing, rampant discrimination in Canadian institutions.

While often challenging, teaching at this school afforded me the privilege of collaborating with a First Nations Program Coordinator, who provided academic support to Indigenous students and taught beading, songs, and Medicine Wheel teachings. She further introduced myself and my students to Indigenous dancers, Elders, and activists who generously visited our classrooms. Through these visits, guests wordlessly communicated to students that Indigenous peoples continue to hold a vibrant role in contemporary Canadian society. I am indebted to my colleague for her work in support of our students, and for her guidance as I learned to navigate respectful and meaningful ways of integrating Indigenous perspectives into my pedagogical praxis.

The presence of Indigenous staff for academic and social support is profoundly beneficial to students (Crooks et al., 2015) but an exceptional rarity among mainstream public schools. Thus in response to Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe)'s (2011) question, the reason *why* I am conducting this research is to contribute to a greater understanding of how non-Indigenous teachers can acquire the knowledges and resources I received by collaborating with my colleague.

“Who Am I Doing This For?”

While this research seeks to support pre-service teachers undergoing teacher-training programming, the true purpose is to serve Indigenous youth. Much research and public advocacy has contributed to emphasizing the importance of offering Indigenous youth inclusive curricular content that honours their identity, and supportive relationships within schools (Higgins,

Korteweg & Madden, 2013; Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013; Neeganagwedgin, 2013). While the pre-service teachers who participated in this study, almost all of whom are White non-Indigenous settlers, often express their commitment to supporting Indigenous learners, they recognize the necessity of relevant knowledges and efficacy. This study is therefore in no small part for teacher candidates who wish to participate in reconciliatory pedagogical praxis but express requiring further training.

This chapter serves to contextualize ongoing efforts of Canadian educational institutions to integrate reconciliatory practices into teacher-training, and to situate my own positionality as a non-Indigenous educator and researcher. Previous research has already provided devastating insight into suicide rates among Indigenous youth (Barker et al., 2017; Centre for Suicide Prevention, n.d; Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019), as well as the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018). Education is often identified as a critical tool for the reconciliation process (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018; TRC, 2015a), particularly in terms of improving youth wellness. This research is therefore committed to describing how pre-service teachers respond to course programming designed to prepare them for reconciliatory teaching. In the following chapter, I provide a literature review to draw from prior research concerning the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives within teacher-education.

Chapter 3

Teacher-Education for Decolonization: A Literature Review

While the impacts of discrimination targeting Indigenous students has garnered significant attention from researchers across Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand, little research explores the process of bringing reconciliation into teacher-education programming. In reviewing literature pertaining to this topic three trends emerge, indicating issues that must be addressed. The first concerns profound knowledge deficits preventing educators at both the service and pre-service level from meaningfully integrating Indigenous cultures, knowledges and histories into their teaching praxis (McInnes, 2017; Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Tupper, 2012). The second theme concerns the resistance pre-service teachers demonstrate at being required to engage with Indigenous perspectives (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018). The third and most significant theme in the literature is the impact of teacher-education programming that addresses Indigenous histories and contemporary realities. More specifically, the literature illustrates that some courses pertaining to Indigenous peoples potentially allow pre-service teachers to develop critical knowledges and challenge discriminatory stereotypes (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017).

By exploring how teacher candidates engage with and understand Indigenous perspectives, this thesis serves to examine how teacher-programming can effectively integrate reconciliatory pedagogy into public education. I begin by describing some Indigenous philosophies of pedagogy and epistemology. I then turn to the role of pre-service teachers in bringing decolonizing curriculum into public education. Next, I examine three case studies in which distinct approaches are used to integrate Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming. Finally, I consider the defining challenges facing courses designed to bring reconciliation into teacher-education. Throughout the literature, the

need for effective and meaningful teacher-training is emphasized as critical to interrupting a public education system characterized by the marginalization of Indigenous voices.

Indigenous Knowledges and Pedagogies

Kanu (2011) describes Indigenous teachings as “intrapersonal, subjective, holistic, spiritual and transformative” (p. 105), in contrast to the artificially categorizing structures of mainstream knowledge-systems (Neeganagwedgin, 2013). While the diversity of Indigenous nations precludes a single epistemology, holistic approaches to knowledge are prevalent among distinct Indigenous societies (Blimkie, Vetter & Haig-Brown, 2014). As Archibald (2008) explains, “an Indigenous philosophy of holism refers to the interrelatedness between the intellectual, spiritual (metaphysical values and beliefs and the Creator), emotional, and physical (body and behavior/action) realms to form a whole healthy person” (p. 11). Elder Mary Lee further explains that among the Cree the medicine wheel is a balance of four equal parts to represent “the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental aspects of the self,” while Ojibwe and Potawatomi Elder Lillian Pitawanakwat describes seven teachings within each part of the Medicine Wheel (Monchalin, 2016, p. 34). As Stonechild (2006) argues, the education of youth is traditionally seen among Indigenous societies as the collective responsibility of the entire community, and relies heavily on learning-by-doing, for instance through apprenticeships (Madden, 2015).

For Indigenous knowledges to be taught authentically, the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the creation and development of teaching materials is paramount. Many scholars have further argued that traditional Indigenous teachings should be under the exclusive jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples themselves (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013). Advocating for this notion within a Hawaiian context, Kaoma (2005) argues that:

In the case of Hawaiian studies instruction, this means that in order for Hawaiian/non-Hawaiian team-teaching alliances to be effective, non-Hawaiian classroom teachers will need to take a back seat to Hawaiian elders and cultural

experts, and assume a supportive role that allows Hawaiian experts to take the lead.
(p. 40)

Like Kaoma, Bishop (2003) argues that within the context of New Zealand, pedagogies must be guided by the Indigenous Kaupapa Māori to support the academic success of Māori children.

In Canada, the TRC (2015b) calls upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to “make age-appropriate curriculum on...Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students” (p. 7). Indigenous scholars have further called for a broadening of Western understanding of what entails knowledge to include Indigenous and other non-Euro-Canadian worldviews and epistemologies (Cole & O’Riley, 2017; Madden, 2015).

A critical step in the implementation of the principles put forward by the TRC is therefore the effective training of non-Indigenous teacher candidates. As few pre-service teachers have extensive knowledge of Indigenous cultures and histories prior to embarking upon their teaching careers (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017), teacher-training programming has the potential to play a vital role in bringing decolonization into classrooms. Approaches for integrating Indigenous knowledges into teacher-training include a multitude of distinct strategies, such as: 1) partnerships among teacher candidates and Indigenous Elders (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009), 2) hands-on experimental learning through mentorships and apprenticeships (Hopper et al., 2012) and 3) learning through Indigenous story-telling (Wolf, 2012). An integral component of decolonizing methodologies further includes the transmission of knowledge through alternative mediums, such as the exploration of Anishinabekwe drumming and song (Pedri-Spade, 2016) or Innu poetry (Vaudrin-Charette, 2015). As Monchalin (2016) argues, “seeds of racism are sown very early when the school curriculum is not reflective of the realities and cultures of all students” (p.164). Similarly, Kanu (2011) emphasizes that

exposure to Indigenous knowledges inoculates students from internalizing negative stereotypes about Indigenous peoples.

Teacher Candidates and Reconciliation

Because their future teaching praxis may potentially disrupt long-standing discrimination within mainstream public education, pre-service teachers play a critical role in reconciliation. As Justice Sinclair remarked during the closing of a Truth and Reconciliation event, “the commission is greatly concerned over the fact that universities continue to graduate people into important positions who don’t have an understanding, education and respect of who Aboriginal people are and what they have to contribute in those areas” (quoted in Butler, Ng-A-Fook, Vaudrin-Charette & McFadden, 2015, p. 54). The lack of Indigenous teachers combined with the prejudices of some non-Indigenous educators has created a mainstream public-school system in which Indigenous students are dismissed, stereotyped, and actively stigmatized (Furo, 2017; Ng-A-Fook, 2014).

Indigenous students across Canada consistently describe the need for a teacher “who cares,” “who is interested in us,” and “who understands Aboriginal issues” (Crooks et al., 2015). Similarly, Indigenous youth in Australia, “report feeling that teachers treat them unfairly, do not care about them, do not encourage them and do not understand them” (Burnett, Lampert, & Crilly, 2013, p. 165). While teachers are reluctant to identify instances of racism within their own classrooms, they frequently refer to a deficit framework to describe “learning gaps” (Whitley, 2014) or “education gaps” (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. These perceived learning gaps are blamed on Indigenous students and their families, rather than on discriminatory pedagogy and curriculum (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). Anti-Indigenous racisms are further experienced by Indigenous teachers (St. Denis, 2010).

As in Canada, teachers in the US frequently assume that Native American students are “deficient” or “in need of being “fixed”” (Squires, 2016, p. 20). In Australia, a lack of Indigenous educators and knowledges of Indigenous peoples compound existing racisms within schools (Rogers, 2018), and many teachers consistently “hold stereotypical ideas about Indigenous students, and largely still act in ways that are informed by the deficit model” (Burnett et al., 2013, p. 167). Aveling (2012) further argues that in Australia “the underlying approaches to finding solutions to the problem of underachievement continue to be grounded in deficit thinking that seeks to “fix” students and the communities from which they come” (p. 101). In New Zealand, there is a similar conviction in the inadequacies of Indigenous families and communities. Teachers maintain that “deficiencies, such as poor parental support, low educational aspirations and limited skills and knowledge” limit the progress of Māori students (Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth, Peter & Clapham, 2012, p. 696). In North American, New Zealander, and Australian contexts, reduced expectations perpetuate the stigmatization of Indigenous learners and discourage teachers from investing equal resources among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

To effectively implement the changes to mainstream education called for by the TRC (2015b), teacher candidates require knowledges and skill sets pertinent to teaching Indigenous knowledges (Kanu, 2011). However, educators frequently express concerns that their training inadequately prepares them (Furo, 2017; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). At present, most Indigenous students are forced into the margins of a Eurocentric curriculum, appearing sporadically throughout lesson material in ways that misrepresent and tokenize Indigenous peoples (Butler et al., 2015). While there is a significant body of literature examining the knowledge and skills of educators, little research focuses on the experiences of teacher candidates. Yet for the successful implementation of the Calls to Action put forward by the TRC

(2015b) teachers will require knowledge of Indigenous cultures, peoples, and histories *prior* to embarking upon their teaching practice.

Drawing from the Calls to Action (2015b) compels teacher-education programming to offer teacher candidates strategies for implementing decolonizing curriculum. By “decolonizing curriculum,” I refer to a reconstruction of curriculum to include and engage with Indigenous historic and contemporary perspectives. Critically, this necessitates the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies in mainstream pedagogical praxis, as advocated for by Battiste (1998). It further requires challenging longstanding narratives of Canada as a nation of peacekeepers (Regan, 2010) and Canadian colonial expansion as a tale of enduring pioneer fortitude (Tupper, 2011). For Donald (2009), the decolonization of Canadian curriculum “can only occur when Aboriginal peoples and Canadians face each other across historic divides, deconstruct their shared past, and engage critically with the realization that their present and future is similarly tied together” (p. 5). To this end, Blimkie, Vetter and Haig-Brown (2014) offer the following six principles: (1) “teach in context”, (2) “create space for alternative perspectives,” (3) “use resources responsibly” (for instance, use resources and teaching materials developed by or with Indigenous peoples), (4) “recognize diversity of histories and teachings” to avoid essentializing Indigenous cultures, (5) “understand that ‘not knowing’ is an opportunity for learning” and (6) “move from inclusion to infusion” (p. 58). These strategies apply the principles of the TRC (2015b) to guide pre-service teachers as they plan to include Indigenous knowledges into their future praxis.

Without adequate instruction during their teacher-training on Indigenous cultures, histories, and contemporary perspectives, pre-service teachers will embark upon their own practices much as their predecessors have: perpetuating lowered expectations of Indigenous learners and maintaining glaring knowledge deficits regarding Indigenous peoples. As Aitken and Radford (2018) argue, there exists an “urgency of creating conditions for future teachers to learn to teach for reconciliation” (p. 47). Pratt and

Danyluk (2017) further caution that “without an understanding of how colonialism affected and currently affects Indigenous people, educators will be ill-equipped and quite likely ineffective” (p. 8). In working specifically to bring decolonizing into mainstream curriculum, “we are now caught between the processes of acknowledging truth and re-visioning Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations as reconciliation” (Butler et al., 2015, p. 56). In the following section, I examine three case studies in which pre-service teachers successfully and meaningfully engaged with Indigenous perspectives to bring decolonizing pedagogies into their own teaching and learning.

Case Studies: Bringing Indigenous Pedagogy into Teacher Education Programming

A variety of approaches are used to integrate Indigenous pedagogies into teacher-education programming, ranging from mandatory courses on Indigenous peoples to immersive service-learning placements in Indigenous communities. To examine distinct approaches in detail, I first analyze the impact of a required course on Native American peoples in the US (McInnes, 2017). As my research focuses on how teacher candidates respond to a mandatory course on Indigenous perspectives, McInnes’ study is instrumental in exploring the extent to which student-teachers willingly engage with Indigenous perspectives when such material is compulsory. Next, I describe a study in which Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi (2013) offered teacher candidate workshops in Ontario pertaining to Indigenous perspectives, then gathered data describing how pre-service teachers responded. This study directly supports my research by exploring knowledge-gaps and prejudices among pre-service teachers in Ontario. Finally, I examine a service-learning project offered to pre-service teachers in conjunction with a mandatory course on Indigenous history, education and leadership (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). In considering three distinct approaches to integrating Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming, the efficacy of various models is brought to light.

Working within an American context, McInnes (2017) examines the many successes and challenges of effectively utilizing compulsory teacher-education courses to bring decolonization into education. Like in Canada, teacher candidates in the US often internalize and perpetuate negative stereotypes (Squires, 2016) or hold significant knowledge-deficits regarding Native American peoples (McInnes, 2017).

To measure the impact of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into teacher education programming, McInnes (2017) conducted a survey at the beginning and end of the American Indian Education course offered at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The purpose of McInnes' study was to "show perceived gains in subject matter knowledge, ability to teach American Indian related content, and the dispositional orientations of teacher candidates" (p. 153). This study thus provides a useful example of what Indigenous Perspectives courses set out to achieve. In McInnes' study, an identical survey was sent to three different groups of students over a period of three years. Participating students self-assessed their progress throughout the course using a scale of 1-5 to indicate whether they (1) "strongly disagree", (2) "disagree", (3) "neither agree nor disagree", (4) "agree" or (5) "strongly agree" (p. 154) with ten provided statements.

The first three statements of the study focus on knowledge goals, and are: (1) "I am well informed about American Indian peoples, communities and history", (2) "I am aware of the social conditions that impact many American Indian communities and families", and (3) "I am aware of common American Indian stereotypes (held by myself or others)" (p. 154). The mean score rose among all three knowledge goals for all three groups of survey participants. For instance, both the first and second group of survey responders saw their mean score rise 2.6 points in response to the first statement (p. 155). This is indicative of rising teacher candidate competence and efficacy in teaching Native American history and contemporary perspectives.

While McInnes effectively utilizes a numerical scale to quantify student-teacher gains in knowledge and efficacy, my own research will involve conducting semi-structured interviews, as this creates greater opportunity for research participants to communicate their experiences in detail and provide personal reflections.

As Whitley (2014) argues, a major factor in the exclusion of Indigenous knowledges from mainstream pedagogy is a lack of teacher confidence in their ability to teach meaningful and accurate content. McInnes' study demonstrates how teacher efficacy can be developed through teacher-education programming that effectively integrates Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies into teacher training. In addition to measuring teacher candidate progress in building knowledge of Indigenous peoples, McInnes (2017) provides a model of how courses that allow pre-service teachers to reflect on their own prejudices interrupt the remanufacturing of racist discrimination. For instance, the second and third groups of participating survey responders saw a mean score rise of 2 points in their self-assessed ability to "spot examples of bias and misinformation" (McInnes, 2017, p. 154). The disruption of racist stereotyping among pre-service teachers is a vital step in reducing discrimination targeting Indigenous learners within public education. However, more research is needed to examine to what extent increases in knowledge and efficacy result in long-term changes in pedagogical practices. As Scott (1995) notes, "a great deal of rhetoric and much lip service has been given concerning the need to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms" (p. 69). There is thus a critical need to ensure teacher candidates engage meaningfully with courses pertaining to Indigenous perspectives beyond self-reporting an increased level of knowledge. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature by considering whether and how teacher candidates envision bringing the knowledges they acquired in the Indigenous Perspectives course into their future praxis.

As in the US, teacher-training programs in Canada address significant knowledge deficits among pre-service teachers (Kanu, 2011; Tupper, 2012). In response, the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) invited teacher candidates to participate in the Deepening Knowledge, Enhancing Instruction Project (DKEIP) to gain “an increased awareness of and knowledge about Aboriginal history, culture, and worldview for their future teaching careers” (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013, p. 1). First initiated in 2008, by the 2011-2012 academic year instructors had booked nearly all available presentations with DKEIP for teacher candidates in both the Primary/Junior and secondary cohorts (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013).

Workshops organized by Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi (2013) through the DKEIP addressed five major themes: (1) “who are Aboriginal peoples,” (2) “the historical and intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal peoples through residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and legislation” (for instance the Indian Act), (3) statistics concerning Aboriginal peoples, both provincially and federally, (4) the use of videos concerning Aboriginal peoples and social injustice, and (5) “potential ways to include Aboriginal subjects into the curriculum, including resources that could be used by teachers and/or their students” (p. 6). After each presentation, Nardozi and Mashford-Pringle collected observations, questions, and comments to investigate how teacher candidates responded to workshops that integrated Indigenous perspectives into teacher-training programming. Over the course of two years, 844 evaluations of DKEIP workshops were analyzed after the completion of 25 presentations. This methodology is a useful example of how in my own research, teacher candidates are able to offer greater insights and details when given open-ended opportunities to comment and respond to questions.

This study confirmed that as in the US, teacher candidates in Ontario had very minimal prior knowledge of Indigenous peoples. Throughout their presentations, instructors “witnessed the surprise, shock, and passionate responses of a large number of teacher candidates when they realized the extent to which they had not been taught about Aboriginal peoples, histories, and contemporary cultures in their own education” (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013, p. 9). A significant discrepancy exists between different groups of pre-service teachers: while some groups had up to 70% of participants report that they had received instruction pertaining to Indigenous peoples prior to DKEIP workshops, many groups had as few as 26% of participants report receiving prior instruction (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013).

The study conducted by Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi further examines whether teacher candidates felt comfortable bringing Indigenous perspectives into their own teaching praxis. Within over two years of workshop participants, only 15.5% of teacher candidates considered themselves “very comfortable,” while 24% of candidates reported that they were “comfortable” and 35% felt “somewhat comfortable” (p. 9). Significantly, 15% of teacher candidates reported that they were not comfortable at all bringing Aboriginal content into their teaching practices. The results of this study are directly related to my research as they contextualize the knowledge gaps and lack of efficacy to teach Indigenous content felt by pre-service teachers in Ontario.

While very few participants self-reported strong confidence integrating Indigenous content into their future lesson material, 95.3% of teacher candidates reported that the workshops had inspired them to “learn more about Aboriginal people.” As one participant wrote, “this is a subject one cannot know enough about” (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013, p. 12). Pre-service teachers further emphasized that had these presentations been offered at the beginning of their

program, they could have incorporated new knowledge and skills into their practicum assignments.

While teacher candidates may recognize their own lack of knowledge regarding Indigenous peoples (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013), students enrolled in mandatory courses frequently resist being required to engage with Indigenous perspectives (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). There is thus a need for further exploration of how teacher candidate knowledge deficits and colonial mindsets may be effectively addressed without exacerbating underlying resistance.

As an alternative to compulsory courses or voluntary workshops to improve teacher candidate knowledge and efficacy, Pratt and Danyluk (2017) developed a service-learning opportunity for student-teachers enrolled in the Baccalaureate of Education program at Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. This project was implemented with the intention to “offer the possibility of transformational learning enacted through a critical service-learning program with Aboriginal communities as one route to decolonizing pre-service teacher programming” (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017, p. 11). First initiated in 2015, this program brought pre-service teachers into First Nations schools across Alberta (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). A total of thirteen non-Indigenous teacher candidates participated in the first year of this project, spending a minimum of one hour per week in First Nations classrooms, attending monthly focus groups and submitting weekly reflections of their experiences. This project was offered to students in conjuncture with a mandatory course in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) History, Education and Leadership (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017) at Werklund. Uniquely, this study unites multiple approaches to decolonizing teacher-education, first by building off mandatory teacher-education courses and later by integrating teacher candidates into Indigenous communities. Pratt and Danyluk’s research thus further contextualizes my own research by identifying which trends,

such as knowledge-gaps and pre-service teacher resistance, appear across varied methods of decolonizing teacher-education programming.

The questions for this study focused primarily on the evolution of student-teacher perceptions of Indigenous communities. Participants were asked to reflect on the following three questions: (1) “what activities were you involved in at the school”, (2) “what was your greatest challenge”, and (3) “what was your greatest learning experience?” (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017, p. 13). The study utilized teacher candidate personal reflections and weekly focus groups to explore growing teacher efficacy and knowledge. Pratt and Danyluk (2017) argue that in allowing teacher candidates to develop meaningful relationships among Indigenous learners and communities, service-learning experiences are a potential strategy for reconciliatory pedagogy.

This study found that the length of time teacher candidates spent in an Indigenous community correlated strongly with the patterns revealed in their reflective comments (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). For instance, teacher candidates described initial concerns at being rejected by the community due to their non-Indigenous identities. More specifically, two participants disclosed comments such as “I truly believed I would not be accepted because I am white” and “I believe rapport and trust will be a challenge because I am a non-Aboriginal” (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017, p. 15). Longer periods spent among Indigenous communities lent themselves to an increase in cognitive dissonance, through which students experienced transformative learning that interrupted prior beliefs and assumptions (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). For instance, one participating teacher candidate wrote “how naïve was I to be so impressed that children are taught [in their own language]...when in fact I should have been drawn to the unfortunate circumstances that these children merely receive one period of class per day devoted to their native culture” (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017, p. 18). As Pratt and Danyluk (2017) argue, “a critical

service-learning program, imbued with decolonizing objectives, must challenge pre-service teachers to critically examine their own positioning in relation to the community being served” (p. 9). Service-learning programming is perhaps uniquely equipped to enable pre-service teachers to process the challenge of positioning themselves as settler-educators. However, if participants in service-learning programs fail to engage in critical self-reflection, there remains a risk that service-learning programs will exacerbate rather than disrupt pre-existing negative stereotypes. For example, some service-learning participants in the study conducted by Pratt and Danyluk (2017) commented on high student absence rates, and the presence of both breakfast and lunch programs in schools. Should pre-service teachers participate in service-learning programming but fail to appropriately consider ongoing oppressions affecting Indigenous communities, there remains a significant risk of reaffirming rather than dismantling stereotyping discourses (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017).

The literature demonstrates that teacher-training courses (McInnes, 2017), workshops (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013) and service-learning opportunities (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017) can potentially address knowledge gaps and prejudices preventing future teachers from meaningfully instilling Indigenous perspectives into their praxis. However, there are significant obstacles to facilitating programming that requires teacher candidates to engage with Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences. In the following section, such challenges are described in greater detail.

Challenges of Incorporating Indigenous Perspectives into Teacher-Education

Despite the necessity and benefits of courses pertaining to Indigenous perspectives as a component of teacher-education, they are uniquely challenged by the emotions and limitations of participating students (Deer, 2013; Monchalin, 2016). More specifically, instructors who

integrate Indigenous perspectives into course material are routinely met with students' emotional resistance (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018), deeply ingrained prejudices regarding Indigenous students and families (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017), and lack of prior knowledge (Kanu, 2005; McInnes, 2017; Tupper, 2012). In addition, the shortage of Indigenous staff at the site of my research creates a complex dynamic in which teacher candidates (including those who identify as Indigenous themselves) may be taught First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives by an instructor situated outside of those identities. In light of these challenges, there is an urgent need for meaningful exploration of how pre-service teachers engage with a mandatory course regarding Indigenous perspectives and how the challenges the course faces might be meaningfully addressed.

Research consistently reveals that teacher candidates demonstrate a disturbing reluctance to engaging with Indigenous history and contemporary perspectives (Whitley, 2014). Marom (2018) argues that this is largely a result of covert racism manifested within academia, through which colonial identities are accepted as default. As Higgins, Korteweg, and Madden (2015) argue:

[Settlers'] epistemology, knowledge systems, history, and language, is constructed as the universal norm and projected onto other cultures...the dominated are then constructed as inferior, and often negative, only appearing relevant if they have a (often manufactured) positive relationship to Western culture. (p. 259)

Brown (2014) further stresses that Whiteness defines "what counts as normal by organizing what counts as valid knowledge and experience" (p. 337). Bringing decolonization into teacher-education thus demands mindful "unlearning" to counter-balance pedagogies that hyper-fixate upon the narratives of Euro-Canadian settlers (Blimkie et al., 2014). "Unlearning" is defined as "when the unanticipated, the occluded, the silent and the invisible are made visible, listened to, examined and engaged with on terms defined by those who are not at the center" (Kameniar,

Windsor, & Sifa, 2014, p. 116). The “miseducation” of Canadian teacher candidates, through which they absorb and reinforce Eurocentric epistemology and pedagogy, emphasizes the necessity of deploying education as a tool of reconciliation (Sinclair, 2014).

When engaging with decolonizing pedagogy, pre-service teachers frequently express frustration and self-victimization. For instance, one Canadian teacher candidate wrote:

The message I've been sent for years as a "colonizer" is to shut up and listen, that no matter what I will always be ignorant and guilty in the eyes of Indigenous people. From what I've seen, there is a fundamental frustration in the Indigenous community about the very presence of Europeans in Canada and I don't know what to do with that. (Aitken & Radford, 2018, p. 45)

By describing being perceived as “ignorant and guilty in the eyes of Indigenous peoples” and arguing that there is a “fundamental frustration in the Indigenous community,” this student situates themselves as a victim of prejudice without offering meaningful reflection of their own prejudices towards Indigenous populations. This student’s comments thus provide insight into the emotional resistance experienced by non-Indigenous students engaging with Indigenous perspectives.

In addition to expressions of victimization, students routinely respond to the language surrounding decolonization by distancing themselves from the position of settlers. For instance, students who participated in interviews commented that “I'm just Canadian - I'm not a settler,” “I don't like that word [settler]” and “I'm not here to change or conquer anybody.” (Aitken & Radford, 2018, p. 45). When non-Indigenous teacher candidates perceive themselves as removed from the legacies of colonialism, they (intentionally or otherwise) reinforce Euro-Canadian paradigms by positioning themselves at the center of a discussion regarding Indigenous populations (Kanu, 2005).

A further common reaction from teacher candidates engaging with Indigenous perspectives is self-prescribed ignorance, through which students excuse themselves from the discussion of decolonization by claiming to be inadequately informed on the subject (Blimkie et al., 2014; Tupper, 2011; 2012). For instance, one student participating in a voluntary course regarding Indigenous pedagogy commented “I think that some people are uncomfortable talking about Aboriginal perspectives or incorporating them into the classroom because they feel they aren’t in a position to teach about things they haven’t grown up with” (Deer, 2013, p. 187). Dion (2016) describes this as positioning oneself as a “perfect stranger” to Indigenous peoples, explaining that “to be a perfect stranger to Indigenous people and Indigenous issues is to absolve oneself of responsibility” (p. 470.) For pre-service teachers to excuse themselves from the process of reconciliation remanufactures the established Euro-Canadian status-quo. By denying their settler identities, non-Indigenous teacher candidates deny their role in decolonization and fail to recognize racial power structures and hierarchies embedded in mainstream narratives (Regan, 2010). Overcoming pre-service teachers’ emotional resistance to engaging with Indigenous perspectives is perhaps the first and most significant challenge of integrating reconciliatory pedagogy into teacher-education programming.

An additional challenge in teacher-programming development is a lack of Indigenous faculty members within Canadian universities. Despite the emphasis on diversity and inclusion in university mission statements, covert racism continues to fester within academic institutions (Marom, 2018). For instance, Monchalin (2016) describes student feedback forms accusing her of teaching propaganda after she incorporated Indigenous perspectives into course material on criminology.

In researching how teacher candidates enrolled in the Indigenous Perspectives course engage with Indigenous perspectives, a greater understanding is developed of whether such courses meaningfully interrupt prejudices targeting Indigenous learners. Little research has focused on the tools with which the emotional responses of students “unlearning” (Blimkie et al., 2014) Eurocentric paradigms and pedagogies are navigated and processed. As Donald (2009) argues:

What are required are curricular and pedagogical engagements that traverse the divides of the past and present. Such work must contest this denial of historic, social, and curricular relationality by asserting that the perceived civilizational frontiers are actually permeable and that perspectives on history, memory, and experience are connected. (p. 5)

Without meaningful examination of how student-teacher programming can overcome resistance to engaging with Indigenous perspectives, there remains a risk that Indigenous Perspectives courses will “backfire” by exacerbating resentment and a sense of “otherness” directed at Indigenous peoples. This research therefore serves to provide some insight as to how pre-service teachers may recognize and interrupt their own negative stereotypes of Indigenous learners and families. Finally, it is imperative to consider the impact of having non-Indigenous instructors guide students through a course on Indigenous perspectives. As McInnes (2017) argues, “transformative change has only been possible through honestly confronting, deconstructing, then rebuilding negative elements of history and educational policy and practice into progressive ways forward” (p. 150). The establishment and careful examination of Indigenous Perspectives courses in teacher-education are thus crucial steps in bringing reconciliation into education.

In this chapter, I began by identifying three themes that resonate throughout the literature surrounding the integration of Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming. First, the literature demonstrates that pre-service teachers continue to hold deep knowledge deficits regarding Indigenous histories, cultures and contemporary realities. Secondly, teacher

candidates demonstrate strong resistance to being required to engage with Indigenous perspectives. However, both the knowledge-gaps and resistance of pre-service teachers are dramatically reduced by teacher-training content that addresses Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies. These themes are highly relevant to my own research as they illustrate and contextualize the position from which most pre-service teachers begin their training.

While the diversity and richness of Indigenous nations removes all possibility of adequately describing them here, this chapter does describe the role of holistic pedagogy in traditional Indigenous epistemologies. As the pre-service teachers participating in my research will be engaging, potentially for the first time, with Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies, this literature has been invaluable in providing a starting knowledge of Indigenous epistemology.

This chapter further utilizes three case studies, including a compulsory teacher-training course (McInnes, 2017), voluntary workshops (Marshford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013), and a service-learning program (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017) to examine how Indigenous perspectives can be integrated into teacher-training programs. Throughout these studies, pre-service teachers' knowledge gaps, internalized stereotypes, and reluctance to engage with Indigenous perspectives are evident. Crucially, these studies contextualize my research by illustrating varied approaches to integrating Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming and indicating how pre-service teachers broadly respond.

Finally, I include an examination of the challenges that shape teacher-programming initiatives seeking to decolonize teacher-education. As Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi (2013) argue, "it is critical that teachers and teacher candidates acknowledge their collective responsibility to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students" (p. 6). As teacher candidates are provided with increasing opportunities to engage with Indigenous perspectives, cultures and

histories, there is every possibility of disrupting a Eurocentric paradigm of education that excludes and marginalizes Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 4

Theoretical Framework

In what follows, I introduce the decolonizing theoretical framework that has guided my research. It begins from the premise that public education is dominated by Eurocentric epistemologies and worldviews, and that the infusion of Indigenous Knowledges (IK) is integral to an enriched, ethical system of education and scholarship (Battiste, 1998; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Rodríguez, 2010). I further agree with the assertion that “the need for Indigenous voices is critical, and the inclusion and centering of Indigenous epistemologies in scholarship provides for a richer understanding of Indigenous higher education” (Davidson et al., 2018, p. 9). The application of a decolonizing framework is thus an effective theoretical approach to reconceptualizing epistemology and pedagogy in public education to include Indigenous perspectives (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2009).

I apply a decolonizing framework for two reasons. First, this framework recognizes education as an institution through which colonial structures are validated and remanufactured. Secondly, this research conceptualizes colonization as an ongoing process as well as a historic one. I therefore deploy a decolonizing framework to analyze epistemological and pedagogical approaches, and to advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as a vital facet of reconciliation.

Decolonizing in Theory

A decolonizing theoretical framework seeks to reclaim Indigenous sovereignty and establish IK within mainstream academe, challenging the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies and pedagogies. As Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2009) attest, IK “reconceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of Indigenous peoples and underscores the

importance of their own philosophies, heritages, and educational processes” (p. 7). Dei (2016) further advocates for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives to decolonize academia, framing decolonization as a “knowledge consciousness about identity, sense of place, location, the ways we produce and legitimize knowledge and social existence, as well the climates, environments and social organizational aspects of education as broadly defined” (p. 28). The decolonizing of education thus demands the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, and validates the legitimacy of Indigenous approaches to knowledge and learning.

While IK is not merely a reactionary response to current models of knowledge acquisition and transmission, it resists the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2009). As Rodríguez (2010) argues, Eurocentric approaches to knowledge are created and remanufactured within a world-system characterized by inequality, thus prioritizing some experiences while excluding or appropriating others on the basis of race, gender, or socio-economic status. For instance, Rodríguez (2010) notes the exclusion of Indigenous languages from academia, as compared to the dominance of prestigious English-language academic journals based in the US or the UK. This argument resonates with the work of Battiste (1998; 2009) on the urgency of utilizing Indigenous languages to transmit worldviews, philosophies, and knowledges.

Within Eurocentric approaches to epistemology, scholars are encouraged to imagine they understand phenomena objectively using a “binary, yes/no method of determining truth,” which excludes a wealth of data (Davidson et al., 2018, p. 18). This approach is indicative of what Battiste (1986) describes as “cognitive imperialism,” which celebrates a single approach to knowledge at the exclusion of all others. As Battiste (1998) explains, “it has been the means by which the rich diversity of peoples have been denied inclusion in public education while only a

privileged group have defined themselves as inclusive, normative, and ideal” (p. 20). A decolonizing theoretical framework not only resists this approach to knowledge and understanding, but provides an alternative world-view modeled upon the experiences, languages, and knowledges of Indigenous peoples.

While advocating for a reallocation of authority is a critical facet of decolonization, Laenui (2000) cautions against merely superimposing marginalized peoples into the roles previously occupied by colonizing forces, arguing that “true decolonization...includes the reevaluation of the political, social, economic, and judicial structures themselves and the development, if appropriate, of new structures that can hold and house the values and aspirations of the colonized people” (p. 155). Similarly, Battiste (1998) stresses that “a post-colonial framework cannot be constructed without Indigenous people’s renewing and reconstructing the principles underlying their own world view, environment, languages, and how these construct our humanity” (p. 24). The inclusion of Indigenous languages, epistemologies, and worldviews are the cornerstones of a decolonizing framework, and rely on being constructed *by* rather than *for* Indigenous peoples. To this end, Battiste (1998) cautions against non-Indigenous scholars seeking to represent Indigenous peoples, advocating instead for self-determination and sovereignty over Indigenous languages and knowledges. In the following section, I transition from theoretical approaches to decolonization to considering how a decolonizing theory may manifest in practice.

Decolonizing In Practice

Decolonization is a multi-faceted process. To conceptualize the various phases, Laenui (2000) provides five interweaving, overlapping steps: 1) the “rediscovery” and “recovery” of Indigenous epistemologies, world-views, and traditions, (2) “mourning,” in which the emotional

consequences of colonial harms are recognized, (3) “dreaming,” which entails the reimagining of existing structures and institutions and is highlighted as the most critical phase by Laenui, (4) “commitment” by a population, and (5) “action” based on the consensus established by the commitment phase (p. 152).

Decolonizing pedagogy depends upon revitalizing what “counts” as academia to include the wealth of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Indigenous scholars have long advocated for visibility within academia (Davidson et al., 2018), yet as Battiste (1998) argues, provincial curriculum continually ignores Indigenous languages and knowledges, denying their belonging within education systems. To resolve this exclusion, Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2009) call upon Indigenous scholars to

affirm and activate holistic paradigms of Indigenous knowledge to reveal the wealth and richness of Indigenous languages, world views, teachings, and experiences, all of which have been systematically excluded from history, from contemporary educational institutions, and from Eurocentric knowledge (EK) systems. (p. 5)

Dei (2016) further highlights the value of non-traditional academic sources, such as Elders and Indigenous Healers, to further develop pedagogies and methodologies that honour Indigenous knowledges. For Dei (2016), the process of decolonizing education “teaches and engages students in the discourses of colonialism, Indigeneity, anti-racism, social oppression, ableism, heteronormativity and patriarchy” (p. 37). Through the “decolonizing” of education, Eurocentric approaches are unsettled to provide a richer, more multifaceted approach to knowledge acquisition and transmission.

The application of a decolonizing theoretical framework is crucial to the purposes of this study for two reasons. First, educational institutions reinforce and remanufacture colonial approaches to knowledge and learning. As Marom (2018) argues, “while the Canadian education system declares itself a promoter of multiculturalism and inclusivity, critics argue that within it

are embedded subtle forms of racism, colonialism, and White supremacy” (p. 2). Consequently, a decolonizing theoretical framework is an ideal approach with which to confront anti-Indigenous discriminations and exclusions within educational systems. Secondly, this research is guided by the premise that colonization continues to shape educational institutions’ epistemologies and pedagogies. Because this research is contextualized by colonial practices that continually remanufacture ongoing inequities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017; Šlezić, 2017; The House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2017), this project necessitates the acknowledgement of colonialism as both a historic and contemporary reality.

A decolonizing framework further grounds this research by focusing upon the value the inclusion of Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary perspectives brings to the experiences of teacher candidates during their programming. As a result, the questions designed for the focus group and individual interviews ask candidates to revisit what knowledges and perceptions they had of Indigenous peoples throughout their prior schooling experiences. The questions further invite teacher candidates to consider how IK they acquired throughout their teacher-training can be integrated into their professional praxis, thus contributing to the future inclusion of Indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies within mainstream schools. A decolonizing theoretical framework further guided the process of designing a thematic analysis by highlighting the Eurocentric paradigm from which knowledge and learning are predominantly approached.

Much research has examined the exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous perspectives within academia (Dei, 2016; Marom, 2018; Rodríguez, 2010). In utilizing a decolonizing theoretical framework, this research advocates for the infusion of Indigenous

epistemologies and world-views in educational institutions as a critical facet of decolonizing education (Battiste, 1998; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2009; Davidson et al., 2018). The application of a decolonizing framework has been instrumental in developing this research. Significantly, this theoretical approach operates from the premise that colonization is an ongoing process that validates and remanufactures a Eurocentric approach to knowledge and learning. This research therefore utilizes a decolonizing theoretical framework to challenge Eurocentric dominance over epistemologies, pedagogies, and worldviews. In the following section, I transition from describing the decolonizing theoretical framework used in this study to outlining the methodology and research methods used for data acquisition and analysis.

Chapter 5

Methodology

In this chapter, I distinguish between methodology and methods to describe how the data in this study was approached, gathered, and interpreted. As Ibrahim (2014b) argues, the methodology of a study is the lens through which data can be approached and understood, while the methods in a study refer to the tools with which data is collected and analyzed. For the purposes of this research the methodology applied is a case study, which will be explored in greater detail within this chapter. The methods used in this study are semi-structured, open-ended interviews, which were transcribed and organized into themes. Both the methodology and methods utilized for this study have effectively contributed to producing a thematic analysis.

I begin by drawing from the works of Stake (2010) and Yin (2014) to describe characteristics of qualitative research and case studies, respectively. I then outline the ethical considerations for undertaking this project, acknowledging the importance of respecting the dignity and well-being of research participants (Pearson, Albon, & Hubball, 2015). Next, I describe the process of recruiting research participants. Some brief contextualizing information is also provided to situate the pre-service teachers who participated in this research. Finally, an in-depth description is applied to the methods used to interpret, code, and organize research data into a thematic analysis.

Case Study Methodology

For the purposes of this research, a qualitative approach is critical to conducting an in-depth analysis of how teacher candidates engage with Indigenous peoples, reconciliation, and the role of their future teaching praxis in the reconciliation process. Stake (2010) identifies the following four characteristics of qualitative study: 1) it is interpretive, recognizing “the meanings

of human affairs” from various perspectives, 2) it is experiential yet empirical, acknowledging reality as a human construct, 3) it is situational, and thus campaigns against generalizations, and 4) it is personalistic, placing value upon empathy and the diversity of human experience (p. 15). The flexibility available to qualitative research further supports the exploration of pre-service teachers’ experience with meaningful depth.

While qualitative in nature, case studies are a particularly effective means of exploring “how” questions focusing on contemporary events without requiring the researcher to control for behavioral occurrences, as in a laboratory setting (Yin, 2014.) A qualitative case study further allows for the exploration of a phenomenon within a specific context through multiple facets (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This research was therefore designed as a case study to address the “how” research question in the greatest possible depth without seeking to influence the experiences of teacher candidates within the Indigenous Perspectives course. While many qualitative studies adopt a mixed-methods approach or use multiple strategies for data acquisition, this study seeks to represent teacher candidates’ reflections and engagement with Indigenous perspectives, and is not intended to analyze or assess the Indigenous Perspectives course itself. Consequently, there is no analysis of the course from in-class observations, nor the course syllabus.

By selecting a case study methodology, this research was able to identify and analyze themes consistent throughout the experiences of pre-service teachers. Because participants had varying degrees of prior knowledge and personal experiences regarding Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary contexts, the prevalence of these themes is indicative of their broader presence. This is not intended to generalize the perceptions of pre-service teachers, but rather to shed light upon a phenomenon by recognizing common themes across individual experiences. It

is my sincere hope that such research contributes to a greater understanding of how teacher-education may best meet the Calls to Action put forward by the TRC (2015b).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were treated with the utmost seriousness, as I agree strongly with the assertion that “if the case study includes data collection through interviews or other methods involving people, it is essential that participants are treated with respect, dignity, and care throughout” (Pearson, et al., 2015, p. 3). To certify that all ethical standards are met, a Certificate of Ethics Approval was acquired prior to any data collection (see *Appendix D*). The ethics file for this research was closed at the end of January 2020, by which time all data was collected.

An area of particular concern for this research project was the protection of research-participants’ privacy, as well as the anonymity of the university where this research was conducted. Before beginning either the focus group or individual interviews, all participants were given a consent form (*Appendix C*). This was read with the researcher to ensure clarity and understanding. Participants were then invited to reread the consent form individually before indicating in writing whether they wished to use a pseudonym. In reading the consent forms, participants were made aware that all interviews would be recorded and stored on a password-protected personal device, and that a copy of the data collected would be stored on Dr. Awad Ibrahim’s password-protected computer. Critically, I explained to participants both verbally and on their consent form that they were free to end the interview at any time without facing repercussions. Finally, participants were made aware that all electronic and material data would be destroyed in April of 2024.

Study Methods: Site, Participants, and Interview Structure

This research was conducted at a large, research-intensive Ontario university. To protect the anonymity of the university, no identifying details are provided. All research participants completed the same course as a mandatory component of their B.Ed program. However, participants were drawn from a variety of cohorts, which divide teacher candidates based on which grades they are preparing to teach. For instance, some research participants were in the Primary/Junior division, which certifies them to teach kindergarten-Grade 6, while others were in the Junior/Intermediate or Intermediate/Senior cohorts. Consequently, research participants had different instructors despite being enrolled in the same course within the same university's B.Ed program.

To begin the process of recruiting research participants, I visited a class enrolled in the Indigenous Perspectives course. All students in this class were offered a letter of invitation to participate in this study. My visit occurred after the acquisition of a Certificate of Ethics Approval, as well as written permission from the instructor communicated over email. Prior to allowing me to enter the class, the instructor discussed my visit with her students to obtain their consent. My visit occurred on the final day of their course.

The strategy adopted for participant recruitment to this study is purposeful sampling, in which “researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). The pre-service teachers whose class I visited were relevant to my research in being a) teacher candidates b) within the context of Ontario and c) engaging with Indigenous perspectives as a component of their teacher-education programming.

In total, eight pre-service teachers were recruited for this study. I initially sought to recruit eight to ten participants in order to include a variety of student teachers' perspectives while remaining mindful of the scope of this research. As in many qualitative studies, the inclusion of too many participants can result in overwhelming amounts of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008) or diminish the focus given to the insight of each participant (Creswell, 2012). Of the participants recruited, one self-identifies as being of Indigenous ancestry. Notably, all participants who spoke to their racialization identified as White. Six research participants were recruited from the cohort I visited on their last day of the Indigenous Perspectives class. A seventh research participant was a pre-service teacher I met at a professional workshop pertaining to Indigenous peoples. Finally, a participant I knew from a professional context was recruited shortly after they completed the Indigenous Perspectives course.

Participant Profile

To protect the privacy of research participants who wished to remain anonymous, no indication is given of whether a name used in this study is a pseudonym. While the names of research participants and some contextualizing information is offered below, content and length varies greatly according to what information each research participant chose to share.

Melissa: Melissa has over ten years of experience working in classrooms as a support-staff member. She reports seeing various teachers incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching, but expresses wishing to see it done more meaningfully.

Joël: Joël is Francophone and from Winnipeg. He describes himself as being of Indigenous ancestry. He intends to teach French, and strives to be a positive First Nations role-model to youth.

Lisa: Lisa is Canadian, and opted not to share personal background information.

Sheyenne: Sheyenne has focused extensively on global studies and global perspectives, and hopes to teach overseas. She intends to utilize knowledges acquired from her B.Ed programing internationally.

Erich: Erich grew up in Barry, Ontario, and moved in 1984 to attend university. He studied commerce and engineering, and worked in high-tech for thirty years before enrolling in his B.Ed program.

Jessica: Jessica is from Cornwall, Ontario, and was in the first year of her teacher-training program at the time of this study. She was enrolled in the Junior/Intermediate division, and hopes to teach English language arts and visual arts at the high school level.

Olivia: Olivia grew up in Mississauga, Ontario.

Molly: Molly was born and raised in Ottawa, and was in the second year of her teacher-education program at the time of this study. Prior to embarking upon a B.Ed, she held an undergraduate degree in child studies, as well as a minor in sociology.

Interview Structure

For the purposes of this study, open-ended, semi-structured interviews were designed to provide the greatest opportunity to examine teacher candidate experiences in depth. All interviews were guided by the same questions, which are available in *Appendix B*. These questions were designed to ask participants about their prior knowledge or experiences engaging with Indigenous perspectives, their interpretations of reconciliation, and their considerations regarding integrating their own understanding of reconciliation into their future praxis.

Due to the conversational nature of semi-structured interviews, a variation in which questions are explored and to what extent occurred organically. Interviews took place on the campus of the university at which this study was conducted, over Skype, and on one occasion at

the school where the research participant worked. The duration varied in length from 50 to 75 minutes. In total, just under 5.5 hours of data were collected in March and April of 2019.

The focus group interview took place on campus at the university where this research was based. The purpose of conducting a focus group was to elicit detailed information within a setting designed to allow participants to respond to facts, opinions, and ideas that may not have arisen in an individual interview. A further advantage of focus groups is that they are ideal for drawing information from groups that share similar traits and cooperate effectively (Creswell, 2012). Liamputtong (2011) further argues that focus groups allow researchers to examine both the views individuals hold regarding a specific topic, and how the topic is discussed. As a result, focus groups are an optimal approach “for examining the stories, experiences, points of view, beliefs, needs and concerns of individuals” (Liamputting, 2011, p. 6). However, a potential challenge to eliciting information through a focus group interview is that participants may choose to avoid sharing ideas or expressing opinions that trigger dissonance or exclusions within the group. Social dynamics among group members can further influence which participants speak at greater length while minimizing the contributions of other members. To account for these possibilities, the invitation to participate in the study (*Appendix A*) explains that all focus group members are invited to partake in a follow-up individual interview. This provides an opportunity for research participants to express ideas or opinions they wish to communicate without necessitating that they do so before a group.

While I had originally planned for all research participants to partake in focus group discussions followed by individual interviews, for logistical reasons four participants were only able to meet for a private interview. Furthermore, none of the four teacher candidates who participated in the focus group interview chose to pursue a follow-up individual interview. I

therefore conducted one focus group interview composed of four research participants, followed by individual interviews with four different participants.

I am greatly indebted to the teacher candidates who offered their invaluable insights to this research.

Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study, a thematic analysis was utilized to assess reoccurring experiences, interpretations, and reflections among research participants. Gibson and Brown (2011) define a thematic analysis as “the process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set” (p. 127). A “theme” itself is compellingly defined by DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) as “an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a reoccurring experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole” (p. 362). Applying a thematic analysis to interpret and summarize data requires a highly organized approach (King, 2004) that has been instrumental in designing a structured report for this study.

To establish trustworthiness in this research, I rely upon the phases of thematic analysis established by Moules, Norris, Nowell, and White (2017), who emphasize the importance of familiarization with data, generating codes, searching for and reviewing themes, and defining/naming themes prior to producing a final report. I further ensure that my interpretations of data are reinforced by verbatim quotes to support analysis validity, as “quotes lay bare the emergent themes for all to see. They are the foundation upon which good qualitative data analysis is based” (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2014, p. 18). As much as possible, I have supported my analysis of data with direct quotes from multiple research participants to indicate the prevalence of reoccurring discourses and perceptions.

To begin the process of data analysis, all interviews were transcribed by myself using focused transcription, through which details of speech are included to represent both what research participants said and how they expressed their meaning (Gibson & Brown, 2011). These transcripts used a legend to account for pauses or when participants stumbled on their words, for instance by repeating the same filler word two or three times. Following convention, I use ellipses to indicate when sections of a quote have been removed for clarity. For instance, ellipses are used to connect two phrases while removing intervening filler words (generally “um” or “like”). Typically, I quote research participants verbatim to strengthen the validity of the study (Guest et al., 2014). Some filler words such as “like” are therefore sometimes present in quotes. A further convention I apply to the use of quotes, but not the original transcript, is the use of square brackets to resolve grammatical errors by including a word that was not said by the research participant. For instance, when a participant said, “I don’t know what word we’re supposed to” and trailed off, I changed the quote to “I don’t know what word we’re supposed to [use].” I further apply square brackets to include wordless sounds such as laughter, in order to authentically represent the tone of a participant’s comment.

After every five to ten minutes of transcribing audio, I stopped to re-listen to audio recordings of interviews while following along on my own transcript. The times of each “break” in the audio to re-listen for editing purposes are indicated in my transcripts. This allowed for small corrections whenever necessary. Prior to beginning coding, I read through the entire data set as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) to develop ideas and identify patterns through familiarization with the data.

By transcribing my own interviews, I had a preliminary categorization of which themes I wished to analyze by the time transcripts were complete, and thus proceeded to coding data. The

data was interpreted and organized using empirical coding, through which codes arise through data exploration (Gibson & Brown, 2011).

As Savage (2000) asserts, coding entails a process of reflection and interaction with data. I revisited each transcript one by one, and used a colour-coding system to identify data that contributed to and reinforced dominant themes. Initially, quotes pertaining to racialized settler identities were coded in blue, while quotes concerning the potential of teacher-education programming to facilitating reconciliation were changed to red. Research participants' insights regarding whether/how they anticipated incorporating Indigenous content into their future teaching praxis were coded in green. However, once quotes were coded and organized into separate documents according to theme, they were often changed back to black text or re-coded in colour to clarify which research participant had made which comment. This makes it difficult to re-trace the colour-coding process of data organization. If I were to recreate this study, I would maintain the same colour-coding within each theme and rely on initialing all comments to identify which teacher candidate made which statement.

Upon the completion of data interpretation, colour-coding, and organization, I revisited transcripts and re-listened to audio data of research participants' interviews. The purpose of this additional step was to ensure that no data was lifted out of context in such a way as to change its meaning or affect my interpretation. All data collected from interviews that appear in the findings of this study have therefore been checked for the accuracy of transcriptions and corresponding validity of data analysis.

The process of coding, interpreting, and sorting data into a thematic analysis is highly-structured (King, 2004) and depends upon transparency for each step of the process (Moules et al., 2017). This chapter is therefore dedicated to the transparency of the project by outlining the

process of designing a case study (methodology) and acquiring data using semi-structured, open-ended interviews (methods). While no ethical concerns were anticipated within this study, ethical considerations are taken into account, particularly in terms of protecting the privacy of research participants. For this reason, the name and identifying details of the institution where research participants completed their B.Ed program are withheld.

Research Methodology		
Question 1: How do teacher candidates engage with, interpret, and conceptualize Indigenous perspectives?		
Question 2: How/do teacher candidates intend to implement Indigenous perspectives into their own future teaching praxis?		
<p style="text-align: center;">Decolonizing Theoretical Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes colonization as a historic and ongoing reality • Challenges Eurocentric dominance over epistemologies and pedagogies in educational institutions 	<p style="text-align: center;">Methodology & Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study methodology • Methods: focus group and individual interviews • Interviews are transcribed 	<p style="text-align: center;">Data Collection & Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts are reviewed and colour-coded into themes • Themes are reorganized into a comprehensive thematic analysis

Chapter 6

Research Findings and Analysis

In response to the TRC's (2015b) calls upon federal, provincial and territorial governments to integrate Indigenous perspectives into teacher-education programming, this chapter examines the experiences of teacher candidates who have engaged with these Calls to Action in practice. Throughout both focus group and individual interviews, three common themes have consistently appeared; a) a racialized conceptualization of the Indigenous/settler dichotomy, b) the potential of teacher-education programming to resolve knowledge gaps and derogatory stereotyping, and c) the significant apprehensions teacher candidates have with regards to integrating Indigenous perspectives into their own future praxis.

This chapter first describes the racialization of settler identities. Significantly, the common conceptualization of settlers as “White” or “White people” ignores People of Colour (POC) settled in Canada, as well as their right to inclusion in the reconciliation process.

The second theme in this chapter examines the potential of teacher-education programming to address learning gaps among teacher candidates and challenge harmful stereotypes imbedded within their schema. Critically, teacher candidates share near-identical recollections of Indigenous peoples being conspicuously absent from mainstream curriculum, and portrayed by derogatory stereotypes outside of schools.

The third theme within this research concerns the apprehensions revealed by teacher candidates with regards to integrating Indigenous perspectives into their future teaching praxis. Primarily, teacher candidates expressed concerns that they would “do it wrong,” “make a mistake”, and that they “don't know enough.” These fears speak to pre-service teachers' dedication to mindful and accurate representation of Indigenous peoples within their teaching

praxis. However, these concerns are cited as the cause of most research participants' unwillingness to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their future praxis. For the Calls to Action recommended by the TRC (2015b) to be honoured, there is thus a critical need to consider how teacher candidate concerns can be mitigated. This study advocates for teacher-education programs to a) continue to facilitate relationships between pre-service teachers and local Indigenous communities, and b) absolve imperfection by addressing the impossibility of teaching with a complete understanding of all Indigenous histories, knowledges, and experiences.

As Price (2013) argues, new generations are willing agents for change, and carry the potential to move forward a global process of decolonization. Education is a potent catalyst for social progress, and thus while Canada's educational institutions have long contributed to the oppression of Canada's Indigenous peoples (Lee-Morgan & Pihama, 2019; Miller, 2018; TRC, 2015a), they are uniquely situated to further progress Canada's reconciliation process.

Theme I

The Racialization of Settler Identities

This theme serves to describe how research participants communicated a highly racialized perception of settler identities. I define "race" as a social construct used to divide peoples based on cultural or physical characteristics, such as skin tone. I further apply the term "racialization" to describe "the process of social construction of race" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2005, p. 11). For Isoke (2015), racialization is "an ongoing process of marking, categorizing, and reproducing human difference through the uneven distribution of life chances

within specified geographic space-time continuums” (p. 1). Isoke (2015) further emphasizes that race and racialization are social fabrications rather than biological realities, arguing that:

Within European societies and geographies that have withstood generations of colonial invasion, enslavement, and diverse modes of racial apartheid, the reproduction of difference is realized through the maintenance of fairly rigid social, economic, and political hierarchies based on skin color, phenotype, culture, and the invention and enforcement of legal fictions that reify human difference. (p. 1)

Both the social invention of race and the resulting processes of racialization are heavily intertwined within structures of power and violence (Fassin, 2011). In both historic and contemporary contexts, racialization plays a critical role in the conceptualization and control of Indigenous identities. As Sterritt (2012) argues, “by defining Indigenous people’s identity in racial terms (who was and who was not an “Indian” as stipulated by an Indian “status” card) colonizers believed that “Indians” could be assimilated and controlled” (p. 8.) Throughout focus groups and individual interviews, Indigenous identities are presumed to be non-White, a perception implied by the use of the term “White” to denote “non-Indigenous” or “settler.” The racialization of non-Indigenous identities is thus identified and challenged in this chapter of the thesis.

I begin this chapter by noting that many participants used the term “White” to convey a settler identity, and express their belief that non-White Canadians did not “count” as settlers in the same way. I then describe research participants’ concerns that their Whiteness acts as a barrier to meaningfully transmitting Indigenous knowledges and perspectives to their future students. Finally, I describe measures research participants believed would act as guiding principles while integrating Indigenous perspectives into curriculum. More specifically, participants advocated for active listening as a means to honour Indigenous voices, engaging in actionism, and maintaining a respectful and appropriate approach to integrating Indigenous cultures into classrooms.

This section further acknowledges that the perception of settlers invariably being racialized as White excludes non-White citizens and residents of Canada from the reconciliation process. The use of the term “White” to convey a non-Indigenous or settler identity is present throughout multiple interviews, thus indicating the prevalence of racialization in positioning Indigenous/settler identities.

Settler Identities as Exclusively White

Throughout both the focus group and individual interviews, research participants revealed an association between settler identities and an assumption of Whiteness. More specifically, participants applied the term “White” to describe non-Indigenous or settler Canadian identities. For example, Erich commented “I’m White, so I naturally think in terms of White versus Indigenous...and when I’m writing more formally and stuff I tend to use ‘settler’ as the term, because I think it’s less confrontational than colonizers.” Erich perceives the term “colonizer” as accusatory, explaining that:

I don’t want to use the term colonizer because that’s become a very loaded um, often aggressively used term. It’s almost becoming a slur, in a way. So, yeah, settler then is kind of the whitewashed term, so maybe that’s not the best term either, but if you’re trying to get people to move forward in their thinking, and be open-minded, starting off with an aggressive term doesn’t help you any.

For Erich, the term “colonizer” implies active and intentional participation in the colonization process. As he argues:

The only way I’m running into [the term “colonizer”] is when they’re using it in a negative sense. ‘The colonizers came, they took our land, they killed our people, they tried to eradicate our culture, bang bang’ all the horrible things that have been done. Not arguing that those things aren’t done, not arguing that they weren’t part of colonization. But because it’s part of that and it’s part of that discussion, it takes on-to me anyway-that very negative accusatory tune. I think accusatory maybe is the word I gravitate towards most. You colonized us here. And so when I think ‘did I colonize anybody?’ I sure didn’t do it intentionally. I didn’t make any-I haven’t made any laws yet. I didn’t take anybody’s land. I didn’t do it-so saying that I’m a colonizer to me is putting something on my shoulders that I didn’t do.

Erich further asks: “if you moved here from India um but are living fully entrenched in the western world [for] ten years well, are you a settler? Well no, and you’re not western, so I don’t know what term we’re supposed to [use].” By arguing that a South Asian individual settled in Canada is *not* a settler, Erich suggests that settler and colonial identities are tied to Whiteness. He consistently uses the term “White” to describe a non-Indigenous Canadian identity, suggesting that the term “White” does not evoke the negative assumptions he perceives in the terms “colonizer” or “settler.” While he explains that he does use “settler” when writing formally, he continues to use “White” throughout his interview, thus indicating a preference for this term.

The participants in the focus group portion of this study apply the term “White” more consistently than “colonizer” or “settler” to describe the identity of an individual settled in Canada and of European descent. However, unlike Erich, Melissa perceives the term “White” as indicative of culpability. She expresses a belief that “there’s something about being White that makes it-us-the royal us-the worst perpetrators in respect to us being the majority and the dominant culture.” Later in the focus group discussion, Sheyenne supports Melissa’s positioning of White Canadians as the dominant group responsible for colonization within a Canadian context, explaining that: “because I’m White I feel like I like hold more like responsibility for it [colonialism], and I automatically just assume responsibility from my ancestors, but it might not necessarily be the case.” Sheyenne further explains:

My grandma came to Canada in like the 60s, and then my father came to Canada when he was five, so my family is like not really like native to Canada, like it’s still fairly recent, but then like I still associate myself as like a white settler. Technically like my Grandma came from Ireland so she is like a European white settler.

Sheyenne expresses the need to differentiate between White settlers and POC who have settled in Canada, but do not occupy the same racially privileged spaces. She argues that:

...obviously people of colour who had been on like in Canada for a long time have struggles as well, but they also have been around in the time-and they've faced their own struggles too-but they've been around in the time that Indigenous people were being taken advantage of. So it could-like the people who are in power [were] the White people generally, but [POC] also have been on the land and using the land of the Indigenous people...

She further explains "It's really hard to define, because it's generally-it's generally like White people are the problem [laughter] which sounds bad, I don't know how to word it...". Here Joël interjects to add "White attitudes are the problem."

The focus group's discussion on Whiteness lends itself quickly to a brief consideration of White privilege, and the role of White privilege in protecting those racialized as White from being forced to confront historic and ongoing colonialism. As Lisa explains:

We're not, like we're walking around saying we're nice while still partaking in actions like, basically covering up a genocide that like was us. And having to like admit that is hard, coming to really like reflect on it and like what I have in my life and where that came from, um it's hard. It's really hard to really see that and acknowledge your privilege and acknowledge you know, the whole like colour-blindness thing too. Like, you think like 'oh I'm-I'm not racist cause I'm colour-blind' and then you're like-that's a privilege. Being colour-blind is a privilege, and it's just-it's just been hard acknowledging all of that...

Joël added that:

It's difficult to reconcile the fact that our lives are built on these fraudulent foundations... We're squatting on land that doesn't belong to us. Like this-we're in a skyscraper right now that was built on a trading post that has been used by people from different nations for thousands of years. And there's still-their bones are still in the ground under our feet right now. And nobody acknowledges that.

For both Erich and research participants in the focus group component of this study, White Canadians embody both the legacy of Canada's colonial history and the process of ongoing settlement over Indigenous territories. However, while Erich perceives the term "White" as less accusatory than "colonizer," Melissa, Sheyenne, and Lisa express the belief that White individuals settled in Canada are the chief beneficiaries of Canada's colonial history. In the

following section, research participants' perceptions of Whiteness and settler identities are examined in the context of transmitting Indigenous teachings and knowledges within mainstream schools.

Whiteness as a Barrier to Meaningfully Teaching Indigenous Knowledges

The equating of Whiteness to settler identities evoked questions for research participants regarding whether Indigenous knowledges could be accurately and respectfully conveyed by a White instructor. In the focus group, in which participants explained they had a White instructor for the Indigenous Perspectives course, participants unanimously agreed that their instructor had been informative, kind, encouraging, and engaging. However, they noted that her Whiteness played a role in how they perceived her ability to knowledgeably convey Indigenous perspectives. As Lisa explains, "I feel like we don't have the full knowledge and it would be beneficial to have actual Indigenous instructors teaching us these things. Of course, it'd be bias because everyone has different backgrounds, too, but it would be more beneficial I think." Sheyenne further clarifies that their instructor has:

been welcomed into the [Indigenous] community and personally identifies, but because she has white skin her experience is just different in life right, and her raising would have been different. So, I mean you might get more from someone who's Indigenous.

For Melissa, having an instructor racialized as White provoked reflection on perceptions of Whiteness and identity. She argues:

I did reflect on how I felt...I asked Lisa like 'have you like noticed that our prof is White?' Like how does everyone feel about that? I was too afraid to ask or like to even comment on that because I didn't want to be offensive cause she identified as belonging to the Indigenous community.

Despite her initial ambivalence, Melissa found that the instructor's White racialization provided a positive role-model for how White Canadians might act as allies to Indigenous communities. She expresses this by saying:

[The instructor] being White and belonging to the community felt actually kind of a nice barrier, cause she had done a lot of- she's representing a lot of the difficult things you have to do to belong and be an ally. And she also recognized out in the open in class that she was not herself Indigenous-looking or of like biological heritage.

Lisa expands on this idea by suggesting that having a White instructor encouraged her to believe she could effectively teach Indigenous knowledges despite identifying as White. As she explains:

It [having a White instructor] was beneficial to see in the sense that it makes it easier for you to see like, okay so this is what I could be able to get to, like this is how invested I could become, this is the knowledge I could have and this is how like me, even as a White person, can still be such a good teacher for other people and share so much, whereas if it was an Indigenous prof I might still be sitting there going 'this is wonderful, but with my face what can I do?'

While for both Melissa and Lisa their instructor's Whiteness role-modeled engagement with Indigenous perspectives and peoples without necessitating Indigenous heritage, Sheyenne noted that race can be a critical factor in who is perceived as eligible to represent a racialized group. She does this by commenting that "skin colour definitely plays a big role, cause I'm visibly white and I think if I told a group of like Black people that I was Black I probably wouldn't be as welcomed [as] if my skin colour was darker." While Sheyenne uses Black identities rather than Indigenous identities as her example, her concern that her Whiteness may prevent her from respectfully representing the experiences of marginalized groups resonates among other research participants. For instance, Lisa comments that:

It shouldn't matter, but the reality is that people are treated different so like if you had to like bear that weight and be treated a certain way your whole life and then somebody else who hasn't speaks for you, you might feel like they haven't had that weight so how can they really know what it feels like to be me.

In her interview, Jessica comments that "I think it's just really hard as like a cis [gender] White person to really get, get those messages across." She expands by explaining:

I don't want to do it a disservice and talk about it the wrong way, and then also if I'm teaching students it's not just about me, I'm also teaching young minds, I don't want to tell them the wrong thing. I wanna make sure that they're learning the right history and that they're learning it properly, and I wanna make sure that they're seeing it through the eyes of an Indigenous person.

Like Jessica, Molly expresses concern that as a White, non-Indigenous instructor, her identity may prevent her from accurately and respectfully conveying Indigenous knowledges.

She states:

I want to teach accurately, and I want all the information that I do have to be accurate and to be not gathered by another White person, like um but not necessarily finding the resources available. I think a lot of times you hear that, the phrase 'nothing about us without us', and I think to a lot of teachers, and myself included, that can be really intimidating, because if you're thinking 'nothing about us without us,' I can't do anything that is about or within Indigenous education unless an Indigenous person is there to teach it themselves, which ideally would be best, but that's not necessarily realistic in every circumstance.

While Molly does not explicitly equate Whiteness with a settler or colonial identity, she does share the concerns of Lisa and Jessica regarding whether her racialization as White will prevent her from being an appropriate candidate to teach Indigenous knowledges to her students.

Molly further describes her concern that she will inadvertently overstep a critical boundary, explaining:

Knowing...what's appropriate for me to teach, and going beyond that line is very grey and blurry and I think it also depends on the person you ask. You could ask you know...a Cree member if it's OK and they say yes, and you ask a Métis member and they say no. So I think that's what a lot of people are struggling with right now. I know a lot of my classmates are struggling with 'what's okay?' And they almost want like a list of things [that are] okay and a list of things that's not and that's never gonna happen.

Despite concerns of misrepresenting Indigenous knowledges or peoples, research participants consistently express their belief that White educators bear a responsibility to actively participate in bringing reconciliation into their teaching praxis. While reflecting upon how White instructors could impart Indigenous knowledges with integrity, participants described strategies

that they felt confident could act as guiding principles. These strategies, which include seeking input from Indigenous peoples, actively listening to Indigenous voices, and engaging in actionism, are considered in greater detail in the following section.

Teaching Indigenous Knowledges as a White Instructor

To address how White teachers may impart Indigenous knowledges to students as accurately and respectfully as possible, Erich emphasizes the importance of seeking input from Indigenous colleagues and friends. As he explains:

...if I have some concepts or concerns over whether what I'm saying is appropriate, or whether my thinking is really right, um it feels like I've got somebody who I could ask to say 'am I Mr. White Man here or am I on the right track?'

Erich's trepidation regarding being perceived as 'Mr. White Man' speaks to both his concern that he will inadvertently misrepresent Indigenous peoples, and exemplifies his choice to apply the term "White" to encompass a non-Indigenous, settler Canadian identity.

For Melissa, a vital component of empowering Indigenous voices as a non-Indigenous instructor necessitates a critical approach to who designs curriculum pertaining to Indigenous peoples. She describes having "had open professional discussions about, you know, the fact that this entire department is White and we're teaching this, and we're teaching it to people who are new to Canada." Sheyenne further describes the importance of listening to Indigenous peoples before taking action, arguing that "it's not really our place to just like make action if like it's not right for the people that you're doing the actions 'for', in quotations." She also emphasizes the importance of "just listening and learning more, cause you can't really just take action without knowing." Like Sheyenne, Melissa stresses the importance of listening to Indigenous peoples to determine how their knowledges, cultures, and histories should be incorporated into mainstream education. She argues that:

I think reconciliation means that we-the royal we-are going to be uncomfortable with the changes that have to be made. And we're the people or whatever generation that stuff actually starts happening, um are taking a hit for stuff that was done by people hundreds of years ago, so yeah reconciliation means being uncomfortable and listening.

Melissa also notes the role of listening in her own experience learning about Indigenous perspectives, explaining how for her and her classmates "the first thing [we] did was listen. We listened to Indigenous stories, we listened to our professor, we listened to first-hand accounts, we listened about the history."

In addition to the role of active listening, Erich highlights the potential of White teachers to involve classes in "actionism". In differentiating between activism and actionism, Erich explains:

Activism is basically you're perpetually in protest against something. You're protesting, you're active against something, so there's inherently an enemy. And change comes about when the enemy changes their behavior. Stop oppression, changes of laws, that kind of thing. Whereas actionism was more about what can you do now to solve a real problem now. And so I really liked that resonance of you know, it's a personal responsibility.

Erich further emphasizes that:

I don't want to say there's no place for activism because there absolutely is, you gotta change laws and all those kinds of things. Those are the big-picture things that have to get done and it takes activists to make that happen and draw attention to those issues, but that actionism level is something that anybody and everybody can do, so actionism can be as simple as me making a point of bringing more Indigenous culture into my class. It's not mandated that I specifically-like I said it's not specifically in the curriculum I don't think, but there are ways that I can do it that...make it [a] much more meaningful part of the curriculum. And so...that's you know, me as the White man who can do that.

In Molly's interview, she empathizes with teachers who are concerned that their White identities act as an obstacle to respectfully and effectively conveying Indigenous perspectives, explaining that:

I think a lot of people are trying to walk that line and not step over it, yet still, you know, educate and teach to the best of our ability and our knowledge because our knowledge is limited and I think that that's really a conflict right now.

While research participants express feelings of concern regarding what material is appropriate for them to teach, they consistently emphasize the importance of listening to Indigenous peoples to determine how to best serve their future students. For Melissa in particular, listening is heavily emphasized as the starting point from which her own understanding of Indigenous perspectives began to meaningfully develop. Erich describes a more active approach, suggesting that whether or not the curriculum mandates actionism as a way to advocate for Indigenous peoples, he can choose to make Indigenous culture a meaningful presence within his teaching praxis. For Molly, the recognition of boundaries is paramount to respectfully conveying knowledges despite limited understanding. However, participants are acutely aware of their racialization as White and the complex socio-political dynamics of Whiteness with relation to representing Indigenous perspectives. In the following section, I advocate for a reconceptualization of settler identities that moves beyond perceptions of settlers as exclusively White.

Challenging the Racialization of Settler Identities

The consistency with which teacher candidates conceptualize Indigeneity as existing in opposition to Whiteness is indicative of the role racialization plays in positioning Indigenous/settler narratives. As Monchalin (2016) argues, “a misconception exists that every single Indigenous person must have dark hair, either brown or black; brown eyes with a certain shape; and, in some cases, high cheekbones, among other features” (p. 12). Conversely, for the duration of the focus group discussion, “White people”, “settlers” and “colonizers” are used to refer to a socially and politically dominant White majority, suggesting that White Canadians are the exclusive perpetrators and beneficiaries of colonization. The purpose of this section is to

challenge the notion that Whiteness is a qualifying factor of a settler identity, thus excluding the many non-White settlers in Canada from the reconciliation process.

In both the focus group and individual interviews, teacher candidates use the term “White” to encompass settler identities. However, POC are positioned with greater ambiguity. This is indicated in Erich’s comment that “if you moved here from India but are living fully entrenched in the western world [for] ten years well, are you a settler? Well no, and you’re not western, so I don’t know what term we’re supposed to [use].” The ambiguity with which the roles of non-Indigenous, non-White peoples in Canada are perceived was also addressed in Sheyenne’s comment that:

...obviously people of colour who had been on like in Canada for a long time have struggles as well, but they also have been around in the time-and they’ve faced their own struggles too-but they’ve been around in the time that Indigenous people were being taken advantage of.

The use of the term “White” is perhaps applied by teacher candidates to acknowledge Canada’s historical ties to Europe, while simultaneously recognizing the racial privilege afforded to White peoples in Canadian society. The dominance of the White majority in Canada is clearly recognized by the teacher candidates who participated in this study, as Melissa reveals in her comment that “there’s something about being White that makes it-us-the royal us-the worst perpetrators in respect to us being the majority and the dominant culture.” Sheyenne’s comment that “because I’m White I feel like I like hold more like responsibility for it [colonialism], and I automatically just assume responsibility from my ancestors” further illustrates a perceived correlation between Whiteness and accountability for ongoing colonial social structures and institutions.

In both historic and contemporary contexts, Canada’s grand narrative is one of White hegemony and Eurocentrism. As Edgar and Sedgwick (2007) indicate, a grand narrative “seeks

to provide a definite account of reality” (p. 151), which in the context of Canada’s institutions applies Whiteness as the default standard by which all identities are measured (Price, 2013). For Canadian educational institutions in particular, White dominance is remanufactured through a predominantly White student body self-perceived as the legitimate inhabitants of “white spaces” such as universities (Razack, 2002, p. 119). University hiring practices further hinder anti-racism pedagogies by failing to include underrepresented groups such as Indigenous women and women of colour (Dua & Lawrence, 2000). It is indicative of research participants’ conscientiousness of White dominance within Canadian institutions and their own privilege that they repeatedly emphasize the role of Whiteness in Canada’s ongoing history of colonization.

Although Whiteness is irrevocably tied to Canada’s colonial history, White Canadians do not hold exclusive jurisdiction over Canada’s future, nor are they the only demographic to have settled on unceded, unsurrendered Indigenous territories. The 2016 Census found that 7, 674, 580, or 22%, of Canada’s population identified as a visible minority, defined by *the Employment Equity Act* as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” (Statistics Canada, 2019). The presence of non-White Canadians and non-White newcomers to Canada presents a new facet to settler identities: those who are neither Indigenous, nor “White”/colonizers as conceptualized by many research participants. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, “settlers are diverse, not just of white European descent, and include people of colour, even from other colonial contexts” (p. 7). The marginalization of non-White settlers within Canada further complicates dynamics surrounding Indigenous/settler identities.

The conceptualization of settler identities as being invariably tied to Whiteness is significant because it excludes POC from the reconciliation process. Newhouse (2016) describes four components to this process: 1) “closing the gap” between the living conditions of

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, 2) improved relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, 3) a renewed “nation-to-nation relationship” between Canada as a political entity and Canada’s Indigenous peoples, particularly with regards to sovereignty over lands and resources, and 4) a “critical conversation about Canada” (p. 8). These broad aspects demand the participation of Canadian society at large, and cannot meaningfully occur if over a fifth of Canada’s population is excluded from efforts to foster positive nation-to-nation relations. As Gwawaenuk Elder Chief Dr. Robert Joseph argues, “our future, and the well-being of all our children rests with the kind of relationships we build today” (Reconciliation Canada, n.d.). The Final Report of the TRC (2015a) further states:

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians from all walks of life spoke to us about the importance of reaching out to one another in ways that create hope for a better future. Whether one is First Nations, Inuit, Métis, a descendant of European settlers, a member of a minority group that suffered historical discrimination in Canada, or a new Canadian, we all inherit both the benefits and obligations of Canada. (p. 12)

For a meaningful and effective approach to reconciliation to be adopted by Canadian society at large, the inclusion of non-White settlers in Canada is imperative. A critical component of the reconceptualization of Indigenous/settler identities is thus the rejection of the notion that settler identities are grounded in assumptions of Whiteness, a category which if left unproblematized can present itself as the yardstick by which all is measured and evaluated. The positioning of Indigenous identity as existing in opposition to White settler identity effectively acknowledges the profoundly dominant political position occupied by White Canadians (Isaac & Vickers, 2012), as well as Canada’s history of European imperialism (TRC, 2015a). However, settler identities must be reimagined to include POC in order to recognize their place in Canada’s social fabric, as well as the necessity of their inclusion in the reconciliation process.

In this section, I have examined how research participants situated settler identities, particularly in terms of associating Whiteness with a settler identity and questioning whether a teacher racialized as White can effectively engage students in material pertaining to Indigenous peoples. While research participants did not necessarily apply the same connotations to terms such as “settler” or “colonizer,” participants consistently used the term “White” to describe non-Indigenous Canadians. Participants further recognized the dominant position Whiteness occupies in contemporary Canadian society, and expressed how their Whiteness can create a sense of elevated responsibility towards reconciliation. However, teacher candidates suggested that by listening to the voices of Indigenous peoples, participating in actionism, and maintaining a respectful approach, their identities as White educators do not necessarily prevent them from meaningfully transmitting Indigenous knowledges. This section further calls for the reconceptualization of settler identities to reject the notion that being a settler necessitates a particular racialization. In the following section, I move beyond the conceptualization of settler identities to describe the efficacy of teacher-education programming in addressing knowledge gaps and stereotypical discourses deeply entrenched within pre-service teachers’ schema.

Theme II

Shifting Perspectives: Exploring the Potential of Reconciliatory Teacher-Education

The research participants in this study are among the first cohorts to receive a mandatory course pertaining to Indigenous perspectives as part of their university’s teacher-education programming. Their input is therefore invaluable to evaluating the potential of a relatively new course to address knowledge gaps and facilitate growth. In this section, teacher candidates describe having little knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, and marginalization prior to

beginning their teacher-training. Where participants did self-report having prior knowledge, it was typically acquired outside of mainstream curriculum. In addition, participants described being routinely exposed to stereotypes that demean and marginalize Indigenous peoples. Discourses of dysfunctionality and addiction were common, as was the narrative that Indigenous peoples were dependent upon social support. Significantly, the same stereotypes are described by research participants despite variances in age and having each lived in different cities across Ontario and Manitoba. Finally, teacher candidates express sincere appreciation for the course on Indigenous perspectives, describing a heightened awareness of the continued legacy of colonialism in Canada.

Early Exposure to Indigenous Perspectives (Or Lack Thereof)

When reflecting on their own experiences in elementary and secondary school, teacher candidates report receiving little education with regards to Indigenous peoples. As Joël explains, “most of the knowledge that I had [about Indigenous peoples] I had to dig up myself. Um, and nobody specifically set out to teach me this information.” He later adds “I went to libraries, I looked it up online, I went to bookstores, I went to museums...” Lisa describes being taught “very little,” saying “we didn’t really like do much when I was growing up.” Similarly, Melissa reflected “I had very limited knowledge and I just know...we did settlers and they like briefly went over fur trade and stuff and that was it.” However, Melissa did acquire knowledge of Indigenous histories and cultures during her undergraduate program, and therefore adds “I did my bachelor degree in history and Canadian studies, so I had some pretty solid background knowledge before coming in [the Indigenous Perspectives course], but I did not acquire any of it from high school.”

The absence of Indigenous perspectives from mainstream curriculum misrepresents Indigenous peoples as remnants from a long-forgotten past. This is evidenced by Lisa's experience, in which she explains "from what I get from like my parents or what was around me, like I was under the impression that this stuff was ancient history, not like so still happening." For Lisa, the erasure of contemporary political Indigenous peoples from school curriculum suggested that the marginalization and colonial oppression of Indigenous peoples was either long-past or non-existent. As she explains:

...the depth of what happened was nowhere clear to me. And then things just like that they got like tax breaks, or um help with like getting into education, like it sounded like it was a good thing for them to get to be Indigenous, whereas like when you look at everything you're like whoa, no, absolutely not. Like the advantages aren't set there, but I was made to believe that they were.

Lisa's observation serves to highlight two significant consequences of the exclusion of Indigenous perspectives from mainstream curriculum: a) the absence of Indigenous peoples in a contemporary political context suggests that they have ceased to exist as distinct or significant groups, and b) the lack of recognition provided to the history and socio-political marginalization of Indigenous peoples enables stereotypes to thrive unabated.

For Erich, Indigenous peoples were included in his secondary education experience only in relation to the historical perspectives of early European settlers. When reflecting on his primary school education, Erich comments that "the only thing I remember-I mean you learned about that there were Indigenous people here when settlers came." He adds that during secondary school:

I remember reading a story probably about Grade 7 or 8 about a kid going to residential school, but...other than that my only take-away from the time was I remember thinking 'it doesn't really sound like something I'd like to do.' It didn't-just something didn't seem right, but like I said there was no real details or anything of it so at school time-frame I didn't feel like I would have had much knowledge.

Despite having received very minimal education regarding Indigenous peoples prior to his teacher-training programming, Erich did recall one experience in which he visited an Indigenous reserve and historic site. He explains that:

We visited a reserve-my Grade 6 teacher was a-had been-had taught on a First Nations reserve at one time, so for a class trip we actually did a trip to Peterborough and we went to the petroglyphs and we stopped in at a reservation. So we did some, he, you know, maybe introduced us a little bit to the culture. I think he taught us you know, a few words in Ojibwe, and things like that so, [we] got a little bit of exposure at that time, which was outside the norm for the time, and certainly away from any of the-you know we weren't talking [about] any of the stereotypes of Indigenous culture. We were just talking about 'these are people, they're in Canada, and they're part of our world out there.'

The experience was a particularly significant one for Erich, who frames it as a rare opportunity for engagement with Indigenous language, history, and culture.

Like Erich, Jessica found that Indigenous peoples were largely removed from her schooling experiences prior to beginning the B.Ed program. She describes how:

Cornwall's right next to Akwesasne, which is a reserve, and it's really bizarre because like prior to this like even though I grew up right next to it and there was lots of Indigenous people in Cornwall who traveled to Cornwall for groceries and other things, overall like we never really talked about it. Like my family never talked about it, and in school it was always like I don't quite remember-like my high school experience like if they did talk about it obviously it did not leave a mark on me in any way.

Despite the absence of meaningful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in school curricula, Jessica describes once visiting Akwesasne at the invitation of a friend, which allowed her to bridge the gap between herself and the neighbouring Mohawk community. She asserts

You actually have to cross the border to-to go across. There's a card and we [Jessica and a friend from Akwesasne] just went across and she just showed me like different houses and like the places where her family lived and she showed me like where she worked, and we just drove around and then she brought me to her house. And she's an artist, so like her whole room was just covered in like different paintings and...her paintings are very heavily involved in her culture, so it was really interesting to see all of that as well. But overall it was just like showing me what like she-where she grew up and what it meant to her.

Like many research participants, Jessica notes the absence of Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives from her own school programming. However, her recollection of visiting a reserve and engaging with her friend's art is evidence of her willingness to cross both national and cultural borders.

Throughout Molly's schooling experience, Indigenous perspectives were approached at the discretion of her teachers. As she explains, "I was lucky enough that in high school I did have a history teacher that was very interested in Indigenous studies, so we did talk about a lot of it, but it was never thoroughly taught in school." While she reported learning little about Indigenous peoples through school curriculum, her personal relationships and experiences outside of school have enabled her to feel closely connected to Indigenous communities. Molly emphasizes

My family is very aware and interested in Indigenous culture in Canada. We have very close family friends that are currently living and teaching up north. That's something that I want to do in the future, and my sister has gone up north and done agriculture research in northern Nunavut. Both my parents have been up to Nunavut to see friends of ours that are up there, and it's definitely something that we've all engaged with and are interested in and I think it's definitely something that I've always looked at. Like even in my undergrad looking at one of my thesis prep courses was looking at implementing, as part of the Truth and Reconciliation policies, implementing something at the post-secondary level, um so requiring students to take a half-credit in Indigenous studies regardless of their program.

In addition to having close family and friends who have worked in Indigenous communities in Nunavut, Molly participated in a school exchange-program through which she and several classmates visited a First Nations community in Saskatchewan. She describes how

It was about I think it was like an hour and a half north of Saskatoon or something like that...it was one of the best experiences I've ever had. Like to this day. And it was a week, but just to go for the week, and these people you know invite us into their homes and want to teach us and it not be...I don't know, it wasn't like we were going in as like observers and like as settlers, but they wanted to show us like this is how we live, this is how we do things.

Molly describes being particularly struck by the disparity between the resources available to her while attending high school, and those in the First Nations community she visited. She expresses that

...to see the difference in these two public schools, two public high schools just like blew my mind. And I was like that's not okay. It's not okay that kids just because they're not inside a city are not getting the same things, not getting the same education.

In particular, Molly recalls noticing the facilities in the high school on the reserve, and states

I remember going into their library...and just their bookshelves just being empty. And the books that they did have were either like super out of date or like severely like damaged, and it just was like this isn't what a library looks like. And I think it was in Grade 10 and it was just like 'this isn't what a library looks like'. Well it's what a library looks like here. And going into their school gymnasium, and half of the lightbulbs in the gym not working. And it just being like 'how is that okay?'

Molly summarizes the experience as “amazing, just like the welcomeness of everything,” and describes the measures she later learned the community had taken to ensure the comfort of herself and her classmates during their stay. For instance, Molly explains that

...that always stuck with me...the amount of people that couldn't house us in their homes, like they just didn't have the space for it, so it was actually like ten of us like students from Ottawa staying in like one woman's house because she had the space for it. Um, and then you find out later like her kids actually went to stay at like family members' or cousins' houses so that we could all stay there. They just made us feel comfortable.

While research participants reported feeling Indigenous perspectives were largely neglected in their schooling prior to beginning their B.Ed program, they were conscientious of communicating experiences outside of school that contributed to their knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences. For Joël, this involved taking the initiative to seek out knowledge pertaining to Indigenous peoples independently. For Jessica and Molly, personal experiences visiting Indigenous communities were instrumental in compensating for the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from school curricula.

Reoccurring Stereotypes and Discourses

Despite having been born in various cities across Canada, research participants report being surrounded by identical discourses that routinely stereotype Indigenous peoples. As Joël comments:

I saw stereotypes every day, cause I grew up in Winnipeg and uh, it was they were non-persons. They were not people that were reflected as being people we'd want to associate with. Even though I'm of Indigenous heritage, it's definitely something that we would actually in high school we'd joke about... There were jokes about you know alcoholism and there were jokes about poverty, and those things are clearly detrimental.

Joël describes being deeply affected by these stereotypes, explaining that these “helped foster my own perceptions, skewed my vision of the world.”

The most prominent stereotype research participants described was that of Indigenous peoples being associated with substance abuse. Reflecting on stereotypes from the 1970s and 1980s, Erich—who was raised in Barry, Ontario—comments that “I hate to say it but at the time the ‘drunken Indian’ was a classic stereotype of the time.” Jessica, a younger teacher candidate from Cornwall, makes a similar observation, remarking that:

I've worked a lot of customer service jobs where you hear people talk, and people would just say that they're druggies, like 'oh like always drugs' ...like before marijuana was legalized obviously they said that they smoked a lot of drugs.

Similarly, Olivia recalls negative stereotypes depicting Indigenous peoples as “always drunk.” For both Joël and Olivia, these stereotypes were evoked when they found themselves confronted with experiences that mirror discriminatory narratives. For instance, Joël comments that “the stereotypes are actually reinforced if you would drive around Winnipeg. You would see and if you have that in your mind you would see those stereotypes come to life.” Olivia recalls being reminded of the same stereotype of Indigenous peoples as being alcoholic in Ottawa. She explains

And I know like, the first day I came to Ottawa, like that was kind of my experience, like being on public transportation and having like an Indigenous woman just, like, fall asleep on my shoulder. But I think it was from drinking, which is sad, and that kind of just made the whole like, stereotype even stronger.

Olivia further describes an experience in which she was cautioned about Indigenous peoples using public transport in Alberta, saying

I remember even going out to Calgary and my friend would be like ‘oh, watch out for like all the Native people on the bus line’ because they would just hang out on there and drink. So, that’s kind of like, I guess my first interaction actually seeing like Indigenous peoples was out in Calgary. Like [people] kind of moving away from them, like they wouldn’t like sit in the same like car as them and stuff, yeah.

When asked whether passengers on the bus would actively leave their seat to avoid sitting next to someone who appeared Indigenous, Olivia said “I didn’t notice that, no. But you would just kind of like see like what car they were in, and then you would just walk to the other one.”

The prevalence of the narrative representing Indigenous peoples as addicts is indicated by the reoccurring stereotypes observed by Joël, Erich, Jessica, and Olivia, particularly as they had each recognized these discourses in various cities. The longevity of the stereotype of Indigenous peoples as alcoholic is further highlighted in Erich’s comment regarding the “drunk Indian” stereotype from the 1970s and 1980s, which was apparent decades later to Joël, Jessica, and Olivia.

In addition to the stereotype of substance abuse, Jessica remarks that Indigenous peoples were widely perceived as dangerous. Jessica explains that during her Indigenous Perspectives course she reflected closely on stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as “violent”, and recalls that “there was things [sic] about like abusive relationships.” While other research participants did not cite violence or aggression as being a common stereotype they recalled in discourses surrounding Indigenous peoples, the implication of violence resides within narratives of substance abuse.

A final stereotype that appeared across multiple interviews was that of Indigenous peoples as dependent upon the government. Erich comments that in Barry, “there was an impression that Indigenous families were dysfunctional and that drunkenness was sort of the standard, and that nobody did any work and they sat on reserves and did nothing.” Olivia recalls an identical narrative, describing hearing that Indigenous peoples were “lazy and like got money from the government so they just didn’t want to find jobs.” For Joël, the stereotype of Indigenous peoples being dependent on social support is particularly prevalent. He argues that regularly seeing Indigenous individuals appear financially disadvantaged can be perceived as evidence of an underlying truth within a demeaning stereotype. As he explains, “if you work in the service industry or if you work in a delivery service, you will see First Nations people every day and if you’re-because there’s so many of them [that] are poor, those stereotypes are reinforced by that.” The repercussions of stereotyping are deeply harmful and persistent, as Joël emphasizes by explaining:

Those stereotypes are very real, and people specifically do go out of their way to avoid certain parts of the city, they go out of their way to ignore people, they put people in a box, and uh stereotypes all [are] very simple like two-dimensional characterizations.

He adds that “I’m trying very hard to break out of it... it’s a continuous process, cause uh it’s ingrained so deep.”

Disrupting Narratives and Instigating Change

Research participants gave overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding how the Indigenous Perspectives course allowed them to better understand and appreciate the histories and knowledges of Indigenous peoples in Canada. For Melissa, Sheyenne, and Erich, the course inspired greater recognition and a heightened awareness of how Canada’s colonial legacy continues to affect Indigenous peoples. As Melissa explains, “I’d always felt a certain amount of

empathy for the Indigenous community, because of colonization, and but coming into the end of this course I just feel heartbroken...”. Sheyenne later adds “I think mostly the program is like making us more aware, like self-aware and like of-like aware of our communities. And we’re constantly just thinking about it.” She expands upon this idea to reflect

I’m probably more aware like I’m constantly thinking about how different things that are said or actions taken um have like colonial undertones to them. And I’m also just like more aware like when I hear some of my family making ignorant statements then I like know I need to take a stance, and like shut that down, give them more education. Like this is why what you’re saying or doing is wrong, and I think I’m just more aware of like doing that now. Just to like, share what I know and what I’ve learned.

Like Sheyenne, Erich found that since taking the course he was more attuned and reflective of how Indigenous peoples are treated in Canada more broadly. He also reports listening to radio programs such as *Unreserved* on the CBC, a program hosted by Rosanna Deerchild that acts as “the true voice of Indigenous Canada” (CBC Radio One, 2018, n.p.). Erich describes the lingering impact of the Indigenous Perspectives course on him by explaining

...having done the course, I feel like ‘wow it’s giving me a lot [sic] better position to actually talk about [Indigenous perspectives].’ I feel like I’ve got some sense of the issues and a better understanding of sort of Indigenous peoples’ perspectives on things.

Having acquired a greater understanding of Indigenous histories and contemporary political perspectives, teacher candidates express the urgency of ensuring more Canadians are sufficiently educated about Canada’s colonial past and ongoing marginalization of Indigenous peoples. As Joël explains

I think it’s important, and I think kids should know and I think kids are really good at asking questions and wanting to know about where things come from, and why things are here, and how there are different ways to do things.

Similarly, Jessica emphasizes that for her, “the fact that like that’s something that happened in Canadian history that is... even affecting them [Indigenous peoples] today and yet so many people don’t know about it, I think that’s a huge issue.” For Joël, the most significant challenge

with regards to integrating Indigenous histories, cultures, and knowledges into mainstream education is selecting which topics to pursue in depth, as a complete understanding is unachievable. He expresses this concern by arguing

I think I'll struggle with just how much information you can give to them, because there's so much and if you're-even an introductory course can only skim the surface of thousands of years of history, of thousands of different reserves and different regions and different nations. So you're never going to cover all of it in, in like a year.

Molly furthers this argument by advocating for the incorporation of the TRC into post-secondary level curriculum, claiming:

I think, you know, doing that as part of the Truth and Reconciliation on our age-group level and like the post-secondary level would just be really good. I'm not saying it has to last forever, but just so that like every generation is kind of getting some kind of information...because that's gonna take years.

Research participants further emphasize the course's role in including non-Indigenous Canadians in the reconciliation process. As Molly argues, "I'm really glad that the Indigenous course is mandatory. It should be." Similarly, Olivia stresses

I feel like this is like the best course I took in my entire teaching Bachelor of Ed. And maybe it was because I just had such low expectations for it, but I feel like I've completely grown and developed a whole new perspective of it, and I understand like my role in changing stereotypes. Because even in like the Calls to Action like there's a lot about education and we're the ones who have to change that, and like normalize the culture and have students understand that all the things that happened and why these stereotypes came about and how it's unfair and the true history of Canada.

Research participants' comments are indicative of the potential of courses pertaining to Indigenous peoples to address knowledge gaps that exclude Indigenous perspectives from mainstream curriculum while enabling stereotypes to thrive in mandated silence. In allowing teacher candidates to address their own pre-existing knowledges (or lack thereof) and stereotypes or discourses associated with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous Perspectives courses are a critical

tool with which to empower teachers to incorporate Indigenous knowledges into their own teaching praxis.

This section serves to highlight the potential and efficacy of courses pertaining to Indigenous peoples by reflecting on the limited prior knowledge teacher candidates held regarding Indigenous cultures, histories, and contemporary perspectives. For all participants, minimal knowledge of Indigenous peoples was provided throughout their primary and secondary schooling experiences. As a result, teacher candidates were largely dependent upon personal connections outside of schools to meaningfully engage with Indigenous perspectives. For both Molly and Jessica, this was made possible through familial and personal friendships connecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. For Erich, his earliest memory of meaningfully engaging with Indigenous history was visiting a reservation and learning a few Ojibwe terms from his Grade 6 teacher, who had previously worked on a reserve. For Joël, knowledge about Indigenous peoples had to be sought independently, while Melissa was able to study Indigenous historical perspectives at the undergraduate level.

While teacher candidates reported receiving disturbingly little information with respect to Indigenous peoples as part of their primary and secondary education, they were routinely exposed to negative discourses and stereotypes that transcended their age and geographic differences. More specifically, teacher candidates acknowledged noticing that Indigenous Canadians were widely perceived as addicts, dependent upon social services, and peoples to be avoided in public spaces such as buses.

Despite little education of Indigenous knowledges in conjunction with exposure to demeaning discourses surrounding Indigenous peoples, teacher candidates expressed appreciation for the Indigenous Perspectives course and their conviction that such programs

should be more widely available. The potential of education as a catalyst for social change is evidenced by the willingness and dedication of future educators to redefine how Indigenous peoples are acknowledged and represented in mainstream education.

Theme III

“I Don’t Want to Overstep”: Engaging With Teacher candidate Apprehensions

Despite expressing that Indigenous perspectives are essential to bringing reconciliation into mainstream education, teacher candidates described a deep ambiguity regarding how they would integrate Indigenous perspectives into their praxis themselves. Participants emphasize three fears in particular: 1) that they will fail to adequately support Indigenous learners, either through a lack of support, meaningful curriculum, or social dynamics in classrooms, 2) that they will face repercussions from parents or administration for teaching Indigenous perspectives, and 3) that they will inadvertently teach false or incomplete information. Teacher candidates further argue that the lack of tangible learning goals and curricular expectations regarding Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives makes it extremely difficult to gauge what lesson content is considered appropriate, and how it can be effectively implemented into classrooms. As a result of these concerns, teacher candidates convey a deep ambivalence regarding how (if at all) they will integrate lesson material pertaining to Indigenous peoples into their future praxis.

To begin exploring teacher candidate concerns in greater detail, I first convey the experiences of Melissa and Lisa, who share feelings of disappointment and a sense of failure at being unable to provide Indigenous former students with the curricular and social support they required. I then move into teacher candidate concerns regarding backlash or causing offence as a result of integrating Indigenous peoples into their lesson material. Finally, I reaffirm the role of

knowledge and training teacher candidates report requiring to respectfully and appropriately integrate Indigenous perspectives into their praxis.

Past Experiences and Future Risks

For Melissa, her past experiences working with Indigenous students resulted in an acute sense of failure. She expresses that “I worked with Indigenous students in the past and I have every single time felt like I failed each one.” She expands upon this by explaining,

I can make a rapport with those students, but I haven't been able to really give them what they need because I didn't know and it wasn't really being addressed, they were kind of being streamed into our system, and every single Indigenous student that I've dealt with has dropped out.

When reflecting on how and why she believed she had “failed” Melissa described a discrepancy between what her students required and what she felt prepared to provide, saying “I failed them in my ignorance of you know, not knowing what they actually needed.” Melissa later notes “it never felt right to make those students write an essay or make them fit into general programming in this end of the world ever, and so I just felt like I was giving them stuff they had to do when it didn't really serve them.” For Melissa, an evident discrepancy exists between what students streamed into mainstream schooling received and what they required to succeed at school.

While Melissa describes curricular content that fails to serve Indigenous learners, Lisa emphasizes additional factors that contribute to student success, such as safety and belonging.

Lisa notes:

I had a student in my class during practicum, and we were just learning about like working with Indigenous students, but he was experiencing like bullying and there was a lot of problems and his mother ended up pulling him out of school. Like he just started in public school in Grade 6, and he's in Grade 7. He got pulled back out to go to reserve schools because it wasn't the right fit for him...he also wasn't at school a lot because of the bullying and everything, so like it's really unfortunate because it was like my time to actually try to like make a difference and like give him the education he needed, but then he ended up not being in the system, so I had to come to terms with that.

Lisa reiterates her disappointment that her student left public school, saying “I actually had a good relationship with that student and it’s unfortunate, definitely.” Of the eight teacher candidates who participated in this study, only Melissa and Lisa described past experiences working with Indigenous learners. While both report having had a positive personal relationship with their students, they are conscientious of factors beyond themselves that shape the schooling experiences of Indigenous youth.

In addition to perceptions of being unable to adequately support students, research participants expressed fear of repercussions as a result of integrating Indigenous perspectives into their teaching praxis. In describing the politicization of education, Lisa states: “I’m an activist inadvertently just by teaching what’s right.” Melissa adds, “you’re always taking a risk, saying stuff that is, you know, of your own opinion, or-like not your own opinion but like of what we’ve been taught.” For Melissa, a topic of particular concern is whether to apply the term “genocide” to describe the experience of Indigenous peoples under colonization. She argues that “I think in particular the word ‘genocide’ and you know that kind of stuff and that Canada has a colonized-like all of those-like that actual theory can definitely get you called down.” Melissa further mentions the heightened vulnerability of new teachers seeking to include highly politicized content into their praxis, noting “you get one kid who’s angry and tells their parents, end up dealing with the principal and the principal deals with someone else... I mean as a-coming in as new teachers, are we necessarily gonna rock the boat?” Joël further emphasizes the vulnerability of Indigenous students during lessons pertaining to their own history, noting that potentially divisive topics require framing that unites rather than isolates Indigenous learners from their peers. As he argues,

Well if there’s like one Indigenous kid in the class, I don’t want them to feel singled out. As being, you know, the Indigenous kid, you’re special, like-I mean that will come up.

And I want everyone to know that we're all in this together. And uh I'd-I'd like for that one child or however many to feel empowered, rather than embarrassed.

Like Lisa, Joël expresses an acute awareness of social dynamics in classrooms and how they can be potentially harmful to students.

The most broad and prevalent fear expressed by research participants is the risk of unwittingly committing an error. As Lisa explains "I'd just be worried about like making a mistake, um would be the biggest things [sic]", and stresses that:

I would definitely [be] like fact-checking, source-checking, making sure that what I'm saying is right...Just being very careful about what I choose to share, um and in terms of just making sure that I'm giving correct information, and making it clear that I'm not speaking for anyone or trying to um you know, take aspects of their culture or take their culture out of context.

Like Lisa, Olivia expresses concern that she will inadvertently cause offence, explaining "you're always nervous that you're going to say something wrong or do something wrong." She further describes feeling anxious about appearing ignorant if she speaks about Indigenous histories, cultures and political perspectives at all, claiming:

I feel like I would be too nervous to talk about it in public too, because there would be other people who know more about it and would, I don't know if they would call me out on saying it wrong or I would just, like, feel dumb, talking about it and not really knowing, or having enough knowledge about it to speak about it.

Olivia's concern with appearing ignorant, saying something wrong or feeling "dumb" is reflective of many teacher candidates' concern that they will improperly represent Indigenous perspectives in their teaching praxis.

For Molly, an experience in her first year of the B.Ed program exemplified the potential backlash should a boundary be inadvertently overstepped. As Molly explains,

...myself and my group members I was with tried to...incorporate Indigenous education into our lesson in first year, and our prof basically just like shit on it and said it was a terrible idea and that it was really offensive. And I remember being like 'I didn't know,'

like nobody told us that. Like when we came to you with ideas like you'd think maybe you'd tell us beforehand.

Molly recalls being “really, really upset” by the experience. Because the lesson she and her teammates designed pertained to Indigenous peoples of northern Canada, she sent the lesson plan to a friend who lived and worked in an Inuit community. Molly recounts that

...she didn't think it was offensive, she was like ‘that sounds like a great lesson, I don't-I don't know what your prof's deal was’. So she then, I sent it to her and she showed it to a colleague who was-who is Inuit and she was like ‘I love this,’ like she wants to use it in her class. So I was like, that was stark to me, to have a White person-elderly at that-telling me ‘no that's not okay, you're not doing this right’, but then to have someone who was Indigenous and in the education community, telling me ‘that's amazing, that's-that's how you should be incorporating into your class, into your language class.’

The experience of having a lesson avidly rejected by a White instructor in the Faculty of Education but told “that's amazing” and “that's how you should be incorporating into your class” by an Indigenous educator made Molly acutely aware of the lack of clear boundaries establishing how to appropriately integrate Indigenous peoples into curriculum. As Molly expresses, “I'm glad I wasn't being offensive but then I'm getting a completely different perspective from an educator who's teaching educators and it was like that's-that is a problem.” Molly further argues “that's a discrepancy, when the educators themselves don't necessarily-the educators teaching the educators don't know what is and what isn't allowed, I guess.” In the following section, research participants describe the broadness of the curriculum and lack of specific directions in how Indigenous knowledges may be respectfully and appropriately conveyed to students.

Curricular Gaps: Considering How and Where to Integrate Indigenous Perspectives

For many teacher candidates, the lack of specific learning goals in mainstream curriculum is a critical obstacle to integrating Indigenous perspectives with integrity and accuracy. In Olivia's words, “if there were guidelines set out, and I could like connect ‘OK this is my lesson or this is what I'm gonna talk about or this is what I want to do’ and how does it

line-up with the guidelines that would definitely make me feel a little more confident.” Erich reinforces Olivia’s position by arguing,

I mean one of the things I was trying to do was when I was going through the curriculum, I was actually looking for ‘what are the specific Indigenous learning-specific things that are in the curriculums?’[sic], and it was-while the curriculum often uses Indigenous issues as talking points or questions, they’re not specific requirements of the curriculum. Like it doesn’t say you know ‘children graduating or children completing this unit must be able to name, you know, ten Indigenous groups in Canada.’ It doesn’t seem to have those specifics.

For Erich, the lack of curricular guidelines concerning Indigenous histories stands in stark contrast to the specificity of learning goals in subjects such as mathematics. As he explains,

When I did math-the math curriculum, you have to learn this, and you know these are the specific expectations, and you can take those specific expectations...I understand intellectually what there needs to be learned, but I don’t feel that in the history curriculum that it’s that clear. I didn’t feel like ‘well here’s, here’s what it is for Indigenous culture, issues that the kids are supposed to be learning, therefore I can extrapolate to say ‘okay, well if they’re supposed to be learning about this, then it’s this kind of activity that I can tie into it.’ So just an example well, they’re supposed to be learning about trapping techniques that Indigenous cultures used, so that’s a requirement. Well okay, then I can think ‘okay, well what can I build a lesson plan around to talk about trapping techniques.’ There doesn’t seem to be that connectivity specific to Indigenous cultures.

Beyond the necessity for tangible learning goals in curriculum, teacher candidates argue that even if reconciliation were integrated into mainstream curriculum, this is meaningful only if educators are given the resources to teach Indigenous perspectives appropriately. As Molly argues:

I think if we are being encouraged as educators to teach this to future generations, it needs to be more available than it currently is, because as much as you can put it in Truth and Reconciliation and say ‘it’s in education we’re gonna do it, it’s in our curriculum we’re gonna do it’, that’s awesome, but if you want us to do it respectfully and you want us to do it properly, and er appropriately, then we need to be given the resources to do so.

The same argument appears across multiple interviews, during which teacher candidates express that they would be reluctant to teach lesson material pertaining to Indigenous peoples because they feel unsure of how or where to begin. As Jessica reflects,

[It's] mostly cause I wouldn't know where to start. I wouldn't know what to say and I wouldn't-like-I would want to make sure that I'm doing it right and I feel like right now I don't know enough to know that I would be doing it right.

Erich takes a similar position, saying,

I just feel like I sort of have a surface knowledge of a lot of things, but I don't have much depth in any particular area. Um, so you know for instance if you asked me who are all the First Nations in Canada, I don't have a clue. I can name a handful of them, but I-I don't even know how many there are to name. And then you know there are, there are, you know they talk about, you know, the sort of, you hear terms like Haudenosaunee, but then it seems like there are multiple First Nations peoples who are under that title. And that's why-you know, I have no idea-and you talk about the Salish people on the West Coast but I think the Salish is actually again an umbrella term that includes multiple groups. So, even things like that, what's the proper terminology to use? You know, what is Haudenosaunee versus Cree? I can't-are they, like hierarchically I don't understand that kind of stuff.

Erich later adds, "I'm going to pull back to levels where I feel confident in my knowledge...I've got an inch of depth on everything but not a lot anywhere." As a result of being unsatisfied with his current level of knowledge regarding Canada's Indigenous peoples, Erich comments that "I'm not feeling very confident about bringing the Indigenous perspective throughout that whole curriculum, in history specifically, and I'm very low in confidence in bringing Indigenous issues, culture, anywhere else in the curriculum." However, he does note the potential to draw Indigenous perspectives into the language arts, visual art, and music components of the curriculum. Erich remarks that in language arts,

I worked on one Indigenous novel in my Indigenous course, I did two in my Junior class that I worked [with]-one was a short novel and one was more of a -a picture book for lower, um lower Junior grades. So I- there's definitely a place where I feel like I can step in and feel confident that I can pull Indigenous culture into that part of the curriculum...Um-other curriculum areas-I guess arts, there's a lot of opportunity there. I mean, in in the case of my practicum he doesn't like-[my] AT [Associate Teacher] doesn't teach music, and he doesn't teach drama, and he doesn't teach art. So that takes away three areas where I think it'd be fairly easy to bring in Indigenous culture. Um, so if I had those I mean, I'm into music so I could see bringing Indigenous music into the program. Art-I'm terrible at art, I have no abilities in art, so that's something where I think I would have [to be] really really stretching for other peoples' resources to introduce it. But conceptually, I mean um art is broad, and when you look at Indigenous

art, whether it's just even just doing an introduction to Indigenous art would be-there's so much to draw from. I think you can again skip the surface of a lot of things without having to go very deep on anything, I think I could probably do that.

Having reflected upon their own knowledges pertaining to Indigenous peoples, teacher candidates often express a hesitancy to pursue integrating Indigenous perspectives into their praxis themselves. When asked whether she would be comfortable teaching history from an Indigenous paradigm Jessica states,

I would say no, only because the two classes that I had have not really talked about the history that much, they've just mostly talked about residential schools and more recent developments and the idea of reconciliation, but we didn't actually have like history lessons where it's like 'this is what happened, this is how it happened,' so for me to teach that I would definitely have to teach myself about it, so I think I could feel comfortable if I spent like several months learning it or I took a course on it, but at this point in time I'm gonna say like a hard no.

Conversely, Molly felt comfortable teaching history from a factual standpoint, but not providing a personal perspective. As she explains,

I feel comfortable talking about the history of it, because I've learned the history and I think history can be very factual. Um, you know talking about...prior to colonialism ...looking at a map of where different Indigenous Canadians were across Canada, and then you know talking about 'this is what happened when, you know, the British came,' 'this is what-this is what happened, this is what happened to the population, this is what happened' factual aspects of it I can do. I can't do perspectives. I don't have a perspective on that, I wasn't here, nor am I equipped to talk about that because it's not something I think I can speak to, but I think at that point, then obviously depending on age group, but being able to bring in voices of Indigenous peoples in regards to residential schools and talking about the history from an Indigenous perspective. So I think looking at the fact-base of it all, and doing that, um I'm comfortable with, but then when it comes to perspectives and voices obviously I can't do that.

Unlike Erich, Molly expresses a reluctance to leading a lesson that borrows from Indigenous art. She argues that "I think a lot of the time that's appropriation, it's not being done respectfully, and it's just being done because it looks nice or whatever." She later reiterates "I think it's hard to gauge what is and what isn't okay." Molly further considers whether it would be appropriate to show students Indigenous artifacts if they were gifted to her family by the Indigenous peoples

who traditionally use them. For instance, Molly's family was gifted an *ulu*, which Molly describes as "a semi-circle blade, it's used to like skin animals." However, Molly is cognizant that the blade is not a part of her culture, and stresses

We have them and we were gifted-or our parents were gifted them-from community members up north but, you know, I don't know what is and isn't appropriate for me to then take to my class and talk about in a way that's recognizing that this isn't my culture.

Molly concludes by saying "It's hard and I think it's a very thin grey blurry line."

For both Molly and Olivia, it is critical not to allow a reluctance to teach Indigenous perspectives to result in exclusion. As Molly argues,

I think for so long we've looked at er history one way...we've looked at it from one perspective, which is the settler perspective, and we never stopped and looked at someone else's perspective. And so I think now a lot of people are wanting-myself included-and I know other members in my class wanting to teach a different perspective but not necessarily knowing how. And to do that authentically and to do that respectfully, and to not appropriate, and I think that that's-that's a big roadblock for a lot of [people]...but I think you know just having the conversation and be open to continuing to try and not just give up because you don't know what to do.

Olivia further stresses that,

We have to learn and talk about it some way so if we're all gonna shy away from it because we're not fully comfortable or we're scared that we're gonna say something wrong...that's the bad approach and that's kind of what's happening everywhere. Like, people are kind of nervous to say something wrong, that they're just not talking about it at all, [but]... like having a conversation is better, and it's OK.

Perhaps the most significant fear expressed by research participants is the possibility that efforts to support the dignity and success of Indigenous students will ultimately fail to establish meaningful change. For Melissa, the lack of adequate support in mainstream public school signifies that strategies designed to support Indigenous learners are not meaningfully implemented. In Melissa's words, "we had this beautiful push to support you know, all students going into general programming that can and making those changes but there's no-you know, not enough support staff, not enough trained teachers to deal with that stuff." Melissa further

emphasizes “we have the philosophy and the ideals down, but we don’t have the ability to serve.” Lisa here adds in assent “it’s not working, yeah.” Melissa further questions whether non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada will participate in reconciliation should it require changes to their own lives. As she explains,

I think a lot of us want this stuff, the friendship, the exchange of dominance I guess, and things like that but if it actually came down to like us changing our lives, I don’t know. I don’t know if people really would be in for it.

In response, Joël commented “people fear change, that’s really what it is. People fear the new and unknown.” However, Melissa focuses more on tangible privileges non-Indigenous Canadians would relinquish for reconciliation to become possible. She argues,

The changes that would actually have to happen for reconciliation to move forward would be a lot more of us dealing like us-again the royal one-um dealing with maybe not being hired as often, you know, higher taxes to deal with [to] actually put these government processes through, actual shifts in mindset *en masse*.

Uniquely among research candidates, Melissa considers instances in which she too would be unwilling to participate, saying “...if I had to, I don’t know say, give up land-I mean I know that’s an extreme but make actual changes in my life-I don’t know. I mean giving up my home is something I wouldn’t want to do.”

When reflecting on Canada’s reconciliation process, Jessica describes a sense of frustration and helplessness. Using historic colonial oppression to contextualize the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in a contemporary Canadian context, Jessica claims “it’s really hard that when things are in the past and you know you can’t change them. I think it’s just so frustrating, like that you have no power over that past and that past is permanent.” She later expands by saying “...like reconciliation for example: like how do we move forward...? Like, how can this get better?” Jessica concludes by arguing, “I can make individual efforts but I feel like at the end of the day unless the government does something about it like you’re really kind

of powerless.” Like Melissa, Jessica is skeptical of the extent to which reconciliation can be achieved.

It is clear from the discussion above that, while research participants consistently emphasize their belief that Indigenous perspectives should be integrated throughout the curriculum, considerations of how they would do so themselves evoke serious concerns. For Melissa and Lisa, a sense of having “failed” Indigenous students in the past is an acute reminder of how curricular content and social dynamics shape schooling experiences beyond the control of teachers. Teacher candidates further reiterated concerns of “doing it wrong,” causing offence, or facing repercussions as a result of having integrated Indigenous perspectives into their teaching. For Molly, this concern is neatly illustrated in an experience in which a Faculty of Education instructor found a lesson Molly had planned deeply offensive, yet the same lesson received praise from an Inuit educator.

Furthermore, teacher candidates shared significant concern regarding the lack of clear direction in curriculum establishing when and how Indigenous perspectives can be meaningfully implemented. The lack of explicit curricular learning goals and guidance compounded teacher candidates’ fears that they are insufficiently knowledgeable to teach lesson material pertaining to Indigenous peoples. As a result, teacher candidates demonstrate a deep ambiguity regarding whether they will integrate Indigenous perspectives into their future pedagogical praxis.

Human Connections and the Absolving of Imperfection

Research participants were highly vocal regarding their appreciation for the Indigenous Perspectives course, and their conviction that such courses should be compulsory. As discussed in the previous section, the course has proven highly effective in addressing knowledge gaps, challenging stereotypes, and offering student-teachers the opportunity to reconceptualize

Canada's history. While discussing the Indigenous Perspectives course, Olivia states "I feel like this is like the best course I took in my entire teaching Bachelor of Ed," while Sheyenne adds "I'm probably more aware, like I'm constantly thinking about how different things that are said or actions taken have like colonial undertones to them." Studies such as those conducted at the University of Calgary (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013) and the University of Minnesota Duluth (McInnes, 2017) have further demonstrated the capacity of teacher-education courses pertaining to Indigenous peoples to reduce knowledge gaps and challenge prevalent discourses.

Despite the perceived successes of the Indigenous Perspectives course, the implementation of pedagogy including Indigenous peoples is recognized by teacher candidates as being professionally high-risk. Melissa describes this particularly succinctly, commenting that "you're always taking a risk" and "you get one kid who's angry and tells their parents, end up dealing with the principal and the principal deals with someone else...I mean as a-coming in as new teachers, are we necessarily gonna rock the boat?" Lisa further stresses that as an act of self-protection,

I would definitely [be] like fact-checking, source-checking, making sure that what I'm saying is right...Just being very careful about what I choose to share, um and in terms of just making sure that I'm giving correct information, and making it clear that I'm not speaking for anyone or trying to um you know, take aspects of their culture or take their culture out of context.

The concerns teacher candidates express with regards to teaching Indigenous perspectives is two-fold: first, that they may inadvertently contribute to the exclusion or misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in public education, and secondly that by addressing Canada's colonial history and ongoing injustices at all, they risk repercussions from school administration or parents.

In Erich's interview, he evokes the clarity and specificity of the mathematics curriculum in particular to demonstrate the lack of guidelines with which to develop lesson content pertaining to Indigenous peoples. As he argues,

When I did math-the math curriculum, you have to learn this, and you know these are the specific expectations, and you can take those specific expectations and you can see that maps learning these parts of the math curriculum...I understand intellectually what there needs to be learned, but I don't feel that in the history curriculum that it's that clear.

Erich later adds that:

I mean one of the things I was trying to do was when I was going through the curriculum, I was actually looking for 'what are the specific Indigenous learning-specific things that are in the curriculums?'[sic], and it was-while the curriculum often uses Indigenous issues as talking points or questions, they're not specific requirements of the curriculum.

For Molly in particular, her experience being told a planned unit was excellent by Indigenous educators but deemed inappropriate and offensive by a teacher-education instructor neatly highlights her concern that there is a lack of established guidelines and resources with which to teach Indigenous knowledges. As she expresses in her interview:

I'm getting a completely different perspective from an educator who's teaching educators and it was like that's-that is a problem...that's a discrepancy, when the educators themselves don't necessarily-the educators teaching the educators don't know what is and what isn't allowed, I guess.

Like Erich and Molly, Olivia argues that the lack of guidelines worsens the risk of teaching inappropriately, explaining:

... if there were guidelines set out, and I could like connect 'OK this is my lesson or this is what I'm gonna talk about or this is what I want to do' and how does it line-up with the guidelines that would definitely make me feel a little more confident.

The obligation to enforce specific learning goals and lesson material neither is nor should be the jurisdiction of individual teacher-education programs. However, the TRC's (2015b) call for teacher-education programming to "educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" (p. 7) is meaningful only if teachers are

provided with the resources to do so. The trepidation expressed by teacher candidates effectively communicates their concern that they lack the boundaries and clear learning goals required to ensure their teaching is respectful and accurate. I argue that teacher-education programming can meaningfully address the concerns outlined above in two ways: 1) by establishing connections between teacher candidates and Indigenous community members, and 2) by absolving imperfection.

Much research has been applied to the colonization of Indigenous education, from the abuses within Indian residential schools (Barnes, Josefowitz, & Cole, 2006; TRC, 2015a; *Where Are the Children*, n.d) to the omission of Indigenous histories and cultures from mainstream education programming (Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Tupper, 2011). The concerns teacher candidates express regarding “making a mistake,” “doing it wrong,” and “not knowing enough” are indicative of research participants’ preoccupation with ensuring they do not perpetuate misinformation or stereotypes.

In order to integrate Indigenous histories, knowledges, and contemporary experiences to mainstream curriculum without remanufacturing colonial dominance over Indigenous narratives, learning resources and materials must be created by those they are intended to represent. This will necessitate teacher-education programs establishing local connections with Indigenous organizations and educators, which in turn contributes to avoiding the essentialization of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis nationalities.

While Indigenous peoples are entitled to ownership of the teaching materials that represent them, it is critical to be cognizant of the fact that such materials will be received largely by non-Indigenous educators. Among the participants in this study, Molly in particular expresses a desire for “approved” teaching materials she feels permitted to use, as she expresses by saying

“I want to teach accurately, and I want all the information that I do have to be accurate and to be not gathered by another White person, but [I’m] not necessarily finding the resources available.”

She further adds:

Knowing...what’s appropriate for me to teach, and going beyond that line is very grey and blurry and I think it also depends on the person you ask. You could ask you know...a Cree member if it’s OK and they say yes, and you ask a Métis member and they say no. So I think that’s what a lot of people are struggling with right now. I know a lot of my classmates are struggling with ‘what’s okay?’

Molly’s expressed concern regarding what’s “ok” and “appropriate” for her to teach is reflective of Erich’s interview, in which he describes feeling reassured by having an Indigenous acquaintance he could ask “am I Mr. White Man here or am I on the right track?” Molly and Erich thus communicate the need for resources to be deemed “appropriate,” “okay” and “right” by Indigenous peoples themselves, rather than non-Indigenous educators.

This section is not intended to imply that the Indigenous Perspectives course does not already provide teacher candidates with ample resources created by Indigenous peoples for educational purposes. Rather, it notes that some teacher candidates appear to seek reassurance that their approach and teaching material is appropriate and respectful to the Indigenous peoples it pertains to. As it is not possible to gain universal approval of any given teaching resource, collaboration with Indigenous community members is invaluable to both establishing the propriety of teaching resources, and creating human connections that contribute to the development of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships Newhouse (2016) recognizes as imperative to the reconciliation process.

As Bell (2011) argues, the inclusion of Indigenous educators or community members allows teacher candidates to prepare to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching praxis while establishing relationships that promote understanding and respect (cited in Butler, et

al., 2015). Hands-on mentorship and apprenticeship programs are further highlighted as a means of bringing Indigenous knowledges to teacher-education programming (Hopper et al., 2012).

Much dialogue has been dedicated to whether Indigenous peoples should be required to shoulder the burden of educating others on Indigenous knowledges (Morcom & Freeman, 2019), experiences (Sterritt, 2018), and languages (McIvor, 2013). However, Indigenous academics have long advocated for the inclusion of their epistemologies, knowledges, and methodologies (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2009; Davidson et al., 2018). Indigenous peoples rightfully hold jurisdiction over how their knowledges are transmitted. They are further deserving of self-representation. To enforce otherwise is to remanufacture colonial perspectives that speak *for* rather than *with* Indigenous peoples.

Elders are instrumental in offering Indigenous knowledges (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003), and providing teacher candidates with the opportunity to establish personal connections that guide future approaches to teaching and learning. Within classrooms, the inclusion of Indigenous guests who communicate their experiences as activists, athletes, dancers, Elders, healers, and Indian residential school survivors allows teachers to reposition themselves not as representatives but as allies of Indigenous peoples. Critically, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in mainstream classrooms further communicates to teacher candidates that Indigenous peoples are a component of Canada's present, rather than scattered remnants of a conquered past.

In addition to facilitating connections between Indigenous peoples and teacher candidates, teacher-education programs are in a unique position to address fears of failure among pre-service teachers. A reoccurring theme throughout this research is teacher candidates' concerns of teaching misinformation, or approaching content pertaining to Indigenous peoples inappropriately. This concern regarding teaching Indigenous topics "right" is the greatest

deterrent research participants described when speaking to whether they were willing to integrate Indigenous knowledges, cultures, histories, and contemporary experiences into their future teaching praxis. For instance, Jessica explains: “I wouldn’t know what to say and I wouldn’t-like-I would want to make sure that I’m doing it right and I feel like right now I don’t know enough to know that I would be doing it right.” Similarly, Erich confesses “I’m not feeling very confident about bringing the Indigenous perspective throughout that whole curriculum, in history specifically, and I’m very low in confidence in bringing Indigenous issues, culture, anywhere else in the curriculum.” During the focus group, Melissa recalls past experiences in which attempts to empower Indigenous students had “failed,” stating “I failed them in my ignorance of you know, not knowing what they actually needed.” The fear of failing to appropriately convey information pertaining to Indigenous peoples, failing to approach highly politicized topics such as colonization appropriately, and failing to offer Indigenous students the support they require is evidence of research-participants’ commitment to teaching with integrity. However, it simultaneously acts as a barrier to research participants’ future students receiving content pertaining to Indigenous peoples at all. This lack of self-efficacy may act as justification for the avoidance of Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies, thus remanufacturing a status quo that excludes Indigenous perspectives and histories.

Many scholars have observed a tendency among teacher candidates to position themselves as too far removed from Indigenous perspectives to appropriately include them in their teaching praxis. As Regan (2010) argues, the myth of Canada as a nation of peacekeepers is obliterated when confronted by Canada’s history of genocide, racism, marginalization of Indigenous peoples, and theft of land and resources. As a result, “we comfort ourselves with the peacemaker myth, which precludes us from examining our own legacy as colonizers’ (Regan,

2010, p. 106). Tupper (2014) further recognizes ignorance as a masquerade of innocence, arguing that curricular exclusions contribute to “unknowing” by concealing realities that threaten the façade of White normativity and virtue. Deliberate ignorance as a denial of culpability in colonialism is further observed by Dion (2009), who argues that “Canadians ‘refuse to know’ that the racism that fuelled colonization sprang from a system that benefits all non-Aboriginal people, not just the European settlers of long ago” (p. 56). The refusal to acknowledge Indigenous perspectives further contributes to the narrative of irrevocable separation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Donald, 2009).

That research participants in this study do cite a lack of sufficient knowledge as a significant barrier to integrating Indigenous perspectives into their future pedagogical praxis must not be misconstrued as evidence of refusal to engage in reconciliatory work. During the focus group portion of this study, both Joël and Melissa described initiatives they had taken to inform themselves of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives prior to taking the Indigenous Perspectives course as part of their B.Ed. Joël explains when describing his prior knowledge of Indigenous peoples, “Most of the knowledge that I had I had to dig up myself. Um, and nobody specifically set out to teach me this information...I went to libraries, I looked it up online, I went to bookstores, I went to museums...”. Melissa had chosen to study history and Canadian studies prior to beginning the B.Ed program, which allowed her to enter the Indigenous Perspectives course with a solid understanding of Canada’s colonial past. Both Molly and Jessica shared personal experiences visiting a reserve, indicating their willingness to foster relationships and understanding that overcome artificial separations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Erich further mentions that he now consumes Indigenous media, such as the CBC show *Unreserved* (CBC Radio One, 2018). Sheyenne’s comment that “I’m constantly thinking

about how different things that are said or actions taken um have like colonial undertones to them” further indicates that research participants demonstrate initiative and ongoing engagement with Indigenous perspectives. To dismiss their concerns as strategic avoidance and the maintenance of innocence through ignorance overlooks the initiatives they have already undertaken to engage with Indigenous perspectives.

The reconciliation process depends upon broad participation, and thus necessarily includes imperfectly executed lessons delivered by teachers who lack a complete understanding of the topics being approached. Molly expresses this notion in her argument that:

I think if you’re doing it with the best intentions and you’re, you know, trying to make it appropriate and as respectful as possible, if it backfires, take ownership of that and say like yeah I probably shouldn’t have done it that way, next time I will attempt to do things differently and these are the steps that I’d make, and yeah people are gonna make mistakes.

Olivia offers a similar acknowledgement, stating “people are kind of nervous to say something wrong, that they’re just not talking about it at all, [but]... like having a conversation is better, and it’s OK.” While teacher-education programming acts as a critical space in which to address teacher candidate apprehensions, it further provides the opportunity to acknowledge that a complete, universally-approved, and irrefutable understanding of Indigenous peoples is impossible.

In considering the facets of reconciliation as outlined by Newhouse (2016), the purpose of addressing the reconciliation process within mainstream schools is to contribute to justice-oriented education, through which “students can envision themselves as in the middle of the transition. They are not just voyeurs, not just recipients of curriculum, but active learners using skills gained through curriculum for social change as well as individual progress” (Davies, 2017, p. 348). Insofar as school-age students are concerned, it is immaterial whether educators omit particular subjects from their teachings out of indifference or fears of imperfectly imparting

knowledge: in both cases, students are robbed of the opportunity to engage with and contribute to understandings of justice.

This chapter has served to describe the racialization of settler identities as conceptualized by research participants, the efficacy of teacher-education programming in resolving knowledge gaps and confronting stereotypes, and concerns teacher candidates express regarding integrating Indigenous perspectives into their own future praxis. While applying the term “White” to encompass settler identities, research participants effectively acknowledge Canada’s history of European imperialism and ongoing racial privilege afforded to White groups. However, I challenge this racialized perception of settler identities by arguing that many settlers to Canada are non-White. The reconceptualization of settler identities requires rejecting the notion that identity is manifested in physical appearance, and the recognition of POC as settlers in order to validate their inclusion in the reconciliation process.

This chapter further examines the potential and successes of the Indigenous Perspectives course with regards to addressing knowledge gaps and discriminatory discourses. In particular, this chapter analyzes how while all research participants are familiar with anti-Indigenous discourses such as stereotypes associating Indigenous peoples with substance abuse, none reported Indigenous histories and perspectives being meaningfully integrated throughout their schooling experiences prior to university. Teacher candidates thus described relying on individual research or personal relationships to engage with Indigenous art, culture, and contemporary experiences. As has been documented elsewhere (McInnes, 2017; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017) teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to meaningfully reflect on Indigenous histories and contemporary experiences when offered the knowledges and space to do so. This

research thus adds to a growing body of literature offering reason to be optimistic for the implementation of the TRC's Calls to Action (2015b).

To address the concerns teacher candidates expressed regarding teaching with accuracy and integrity, this chapter argues in favor of teacher-education programming efforts to promote relationships between Indigenous peoples and pre-service teachers. I further argue that while grounded in principles of integrity and accountability, teacher candidates' concern regarding teaching "right" has resulted in their expressed instinct to avoid teaching materials pertaining to Indigenous peoples at all. As a result, the absolution of imperfect teaching is required to ensure students are afforded the opportunity to engage with reconciliation in mainstream schools.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This study concerns the role of education in Canada's reconciliation process, focusing specifically on utilizing teacher-education to disrupt the marginalization of Indigenous peoples. Despite the commitments of political leaders to promote nation-to-nation healing, anti-Indigenous racisms continue to fester within educational institutions (CTF, 2015; Marom 2018). Furthermore, significant disparities continue to shape the schooling experiences of Indigenous youth attending schools on reserves (Chief's Assembly on Education, 2012). Where Indigenous learners attend school off-reserve, they are frequently perceived within a deficit framework (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017), and find their histories and cultures relegated to the margins of school curriculum (Neeganagwedgin, 2013).

To address inequity within Canada's educational institutions, the TRC (2015b) calls for teacher candidates to be prepared to bring Indigenous perspectives into their future praxis. In response, teacher-education programs across Ontario have designed courses intended to provide pre-service teachers with some understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives (Ng-A-Fook et al., 2018). However, little research provides an in-depth analysis of teacher candidate engagement and responses to such courses. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

This research was guided by the question "How do teacher candidates engage with, interpret, and conceptualize Indigenous perspectives?" This project further asked "how/do teacher candidates intend to implement Indigenous perspectives into their own future teaching praxis?" The objectives of this study were thus to 1) investigate teacher candidate responses to Indigenous histories, cultures and contemporary experiences, and 2) analyze to what extent

teacher candidates envision including Indigenous perspectives within their future pedagogical praxis.

To address these questions I completed a comprehensive review of the literature, which consistently revealed patterns of marginalization and exclusions targeting Indigenous students. For instance, Indigenous learners are frequently perceived through a deficit framework by educators in Canada (Whitley, 2014), the US (Squires, 2016), Australia, (Aveling, 2012) and New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2012). The literature further emphasized disturbing knowledge deficits (Neeganagwedgin, 2013) and emotional resistance to engaging with Indigenous perspectives (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018) among teacher candidates. However, Indigenous Perspectives courses demonstrate great efficacy in developing teacher candidates' critical knowledges and challenging negative perceptions of Indigenous peoples and communities (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013; McInnes, 2017; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017).

To illustrate this, I draw from three case studies. First, McInnes (2017) designed an Indigenous Perspectives course in the US, and used surveys as a method with which to track teacher candidate growth in areas such as recognizing stereotypes and knowledge of Indigenous "peoples, communities and histories" (p. 154). Working within a Canadian context, Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi (2013) delivered DKEIP workshops in Ontario to teacher candidates and administered surveys to examine participants' responses. Finally, Pratt and Danyluk (2017) designed a service-learning program that brought pre-services teachers to Indigenous communities across Alberta. In all three case studies, teacher candidates demonstrated greater knowledge concerning Indigenous peoples and more effectively recognized discourses that stereotype and oppress Indigenous peoples. These case studies thus effectively illustrate the efficacy and value of including Indigenous perspectives within teacher-education programming.

To contribute to the literature, this study utilized a case study research design conducted at an Ontario university. It is thus highly qualitative in nature, and seeks to offer an in-depth analysis of teacher candidate experiences engaging with an Indigenous Perspectives course. To that end, eight pre-service teachers who had completed a compulsory course on Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary perspectives participated in semi-structured, open-ended interviews. For four of the eight pre-service teachers, these interviews occurred as part of a focus group. All interviews were transcribed, colour-coded into themes, and reorganized to produce a thematic analysis. In approaching the data drawn from interviews, this study applies a decolonizing framework to recognize both Canada's historic and ongoing colonization. This theoretical lens emphasizes the urgent need for Indigenous perspectives to unsettle Eurocentric dominance over epistemological and pedagogical practices (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2009; Davidson et al., 2018; Rodríguez, 2010).

Three themes were ultimately identified in the data collected from focus group and individual interviews. First, a highly racialized conceptualization of settler identities appeared throughout the focus group and individual interviews, as participants consistently used the term "White" to refer to non-Indigenous peoples settled in Canada. While research participants are highly cognizant of White privilege and the role of racism in the ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples, the conceptualization of settlers as necessarily White excludes POC settled in Canada from their rightful space within Canada's reconciliation process. A reimagining of who is a "settler" is thus critical to Canada's reconciliation process, which builds upon inclusive and mutually respectful relationships between Canada's Indigenous and settler populations (Anderson, 2016; Dion, 2016; TRC, 2015a).

The second theme of this research concerns the potential of reconciliatory teacher-education by providing a case study within a Canadian context in which a teacher-education program successfully addresses knowledge gaps and confronts derogatory stereotypes. Participants consistently expressed the importance of integrating Indigenous perspectives into mainstream pedagogy, in an uplifting contrast to research indicating a lack of teacher candidate understanding as to why Indigenous perspectives are relevant to teacher-training programming (Scott, 2013).

Finally, this research investigates significant apprehensions among teacher candidates regarding integrating their understanding of reconciliation into their teaching praxis. These are primarily fears of professional repercussions, “not knowing enough,” and “making a mistake.” These concerns are further compounded by a lack of specific teaching resources and learning goals teacher candidates are confident it is appropriate for them to use.

Recommendations for Facilitating Reconciliatory Pedagogy

This study offers two recommendations for programs seeking to facilitate reconciliatory pedagogy as part of teacher-education programming. First, teacher training programs are uniquely positioned to foster relationships between pre-service teachers and Indigenous community members. Such connections between Indigenous peoples and future teachers promote mutual understanding and respect (Butler et al., 2015). In addition, Indigenous guests to teacher-education programs are uniquely qualified to discuss teaching resources that pertain to them, as well as to share and guide teacher candidates through teaching resources they may bring to their future praxis. The facilitation of connections between Indigenous peoples and teacher candidates further impresses upon those with minimal prior contact with Indigenous communities that FNIM peoples continue to be a vibrant part of Canadian society.

A further recommendation concerning the role of teacher-education programming in reconciliation is the absolution of imperfection. Teacher candidates participating in this study express serious concerns of “doing it wrong,” “not knowing enough”, and saying the “wrong” things. Melissa and Lisa further describe past experiences in which they felt they had “failed” their Indigenous students by being unable to fully address their needs. As Melissa explains, “I worked with Indigenous students in the past and I have every single time felt like I failed each one.” A critical step in fostering resilience and self-efficacy among teacher candidates is the recognition that an imperfect understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives is inevitable.

While feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and shame can act as powerful deterrents from engaging in reconciliation, B.Ed programing offers a unique opportunity to guide teacher candidates *through* shame and towards respectful empathy and care for Indigenous peoples (Koelwyn, 2018). Whether teachers do not bring Indigenous perspectives into their practice because they are paralyzed by fears of doing so incorrectly or because they don’t consider Indigenous perspectives critical to their teaching, both impart the message to students that Indigenous peoples are insignificant and irrelevant. This research thus urges teacher-education programs to facilitate relationships and absolve imperfect teaching to ensure future educators feel equipped to include reconciliatory pedagogy in their future praxis.

Because the Indigenous Perspectives course at the university where this research is conducted occurs over a single semester, little time is offered to accommodate both the suggestions outlined above in addition to closer examination of teaching resources. A potential solution is to expand teacher-education programming concerning FNIM experiences into two terms. Because the Indigenous Perspectives course in its current form already demonstrates the

capacity to effectively address knowledge gaps and confront degrading stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, it remains ideal as a foundational course. In particular, it is a critical point at which to address racialized assumptions of settler identities, recognizing that non-White settlers to Canada are a significant component of Canada's social fabric and are deserving of a role in the reconciliation process. However, the implementation of a second term of the same course would allow teacher candidates the opportunity to engage in-depth with specific teaching resources, such as those provided by Project of Heart (Project of Heart, n.d.) A second term could further allow teacher candidates to partake in social activism designed to include school-age classes, such as Have a Heart Day (Child and Family Caring Society, n.d.-a).

By providing an additional term to consider teaching resources in depth, the Indigenous Perspectives course could potentially address the uncertainties and concerns teacher candidates in this study express regarding “not knowing where to start” or “not knowing what to do.” Provided one or both of these Indigenous Perspectives courses occur prior to practicum assignments, teacher candidates are further afforded the opportunity to practice including their understanding of Indigenous perspectives into their pedagogical praxis. Guided by the Calls to Action of the TRC (2015b), these recommendations seek to contribute to efforts to bring reconciliation into teacher-education programming.

Limitations of the Study

A significant limitation of this research design is that in interviewing pre-service teachers on a volunteer basis, some selection bias occurs organically as only those intrigued by the topic of this study will be compelled to participate. The teacher candidates who participated in this study frequently expressed that a greater understanding of Indigenous perspectives was an integral component of teacher-education, and often argued that such courses should be more

broadly available. This was an encouraging surprise to me, as I had anticipated meeting with similar teacher candidate resistance and frustrations that have consistently occurred elsewhere (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018; Strong-Wilson, 2007). However, this may be a result of the voluntary approach taken to participant recruitment, which offers those who did not wish to engage with Indigenous perspectives the opportunity to abstain.

A further limitation of the study concerns social dynamics within the focus group. Because the anonymity of focus group members cannot be protected within an in-person group interview, members may have felt pressured to reaffirm the opinions and ideas expressed by other focus group participants. To address this limitation, an invitation to participate in a private follow-up interview was extended to all focus group members.

A third limitation of this research is that the nature of the project may have brought with it assumptions regarding my own epistemological and pedagogical views. Specifically, towards the end of her interview Jessica commented that

I'd love to hear your thoughts on it too, like one time, like I know that this is not about you but it'd be cool to talk to you about it as well. Cause I'm sure you also have your own ideas and how you feel, or else you wouldn't be doing this project right.

While she does not articulate specific assumptions, Jessica's comments are indicative of a perception that someone apathetic to Indigenous peoples or perspectives would not choose to embark on a thesis pertaining to them. However, the same assumption can be made for the many research projects in which teacher candidates expressed negative perceptions of an Indigenous Perspectives course and resisted being required to participate. While I am confident that the views expressed by research participants in this study are authentic, the selection bias present in much qualitative research also applies here.

Implications for Further Research

Because this study is designed to examine how teacher candidates engage with and respond to Indigenous perspectives, an assessment or analysis of the Indigenous Perspectives course teacher candidates completed is not itself relevant to this project. I therefore did not conduct alternative methods of data collection such as observations of the Indigenous Perspectives class in session, nor did I analyze the Indigenous Perspectives course syllabus. Instead, I rely on direct quotes to draw data for my thematic analysis as a technique for ensuring the validity of the study, as recommended by Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2014). Further research concerning the content and structure of Indigenous Perspectives courses is therefore needed to inform policy regarding how Indigenous perspectives can best be integrated throughout teacher-education programming.

In conducting future research, the application of triangulation will be a critical strategy for confirming the consistency of themes such as those within this study. Methods of data collection such as surveys administered to a sizeable sample of pre-service teachers who have completed an Indigenous Perspectives course in conjunction with interviews are recommended tools for future research. A long-range study to determine whether/how teacher candidates *do* incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching praxis is also critical, as this study concerns intent and teacher candidate apprehensions prior to embarking upon their careers as educators. As Ontario universities continue to develop resources to support the implementation of the TRC Calls to Action (2015b), a longitudinal study is ideal for determining to what extent these resources are utilized in practice.

Concluding Thoughts

The efficacy of teacher-education programming concerning bringing reconciliatory pedagogy into mainstream education is reflected by the engagement and dedication of the pre-

service teachers who participated in this project. I am deeply indebted to research participants for their insights and honesty in describing their concerns regarding the transition from engaging with Indigenous perspectives in epistemological theory to pedagogical praxis.

It is my hope that this research will contribute to a broader understanding of how future educators, the majority of whom are not of Indigenous heritage, may act upon the TRC Calls to Action (2015b) with the support of their teacher-education programming. While education has long been used for the marginalization and control of Indigenous peoples, it is now critically positioned to be repurposed as a tool of reconciliation and healing.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Study

Invitation to Participate in a Study

Dear Teacher Candidate,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project taking place during the Winter Term of 2019 at [institution name removed to protect privacy]. The purpose of this study is to explore how pre-service teachers engage with Indigenous perspectives, and whether/how teacher candidates envision integrating Indigenous perspectives into their future teaching praxis. More specifically, I wish to explore how student-teachers respond to the course [course code removed to protect privacy].

I would be truly grateful if you would be willing to participate in this study. Your participation would involve being part of a focus group discussion requiring approximately sixty to ninety minutes. This discussion will include up to five teacher candidates. In addition, you are invited to participate in an individual interview at a time and place of your convenience. This interview will take approximately sixty minutes. Participation in both focus groups and individual interviews will be determined on a “first come first served” basis.

Please be assured that participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. This study is conducted independently from the [course code removed to protect privacy] course and cannot affect your grades or standing within the course. As compensation for your time, you will receive a \$25 gift card for either Starbucks or Chapters, according to your preference. This gift-card is yours to keep and cannot be revoked should you wish to end your participation in the study.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please be aware that the deadline to confirm your participation in this study is March 20th, 2019

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

The same questions will be asked to research participants in both focus groups and individual interviews to allow interview participants to expand upon ideas they did not wish to pursue in a group setting

Interviews will be approximately thirty to forty-five minutes in length

1. What knowledge of Indigenous histories and cultures did you have prior to starting your B.Ed program?

NB. I will ensure participants speak to their 'level of comfort' with Indigenous knowledge as it pertains to their teaching

2. What stereotypes or perceptions of Indigenous peoples had you been generally aware of before beginning your teacher-training?
3. How did you respond to being required by the teacher education program to engage with Indigenous perspectives?
4. How do you believe your classmates responded?
5. In what ways do you believe your perceptions of Indigenous peoples have changed?
6. What experiences have been particularly enlightening or important to you while engaging with Indigenous perspectives?
7. To what extent do you feel prepared to teach a lesson on Indigenous history and contemporary perspectives?
8. In what ways would you feel comfortable integrating Indigenous perspectives into your future classrooms?

NB. At this point in the interview, I want to make sure that interviewees speak about their level of comfort engaging with Indigenous knowledge and perspective in their current and future teaching.

9. How do you believe that Indigenous knowledges, cultures and histories should be integrated into mainstream schools?
10. What does reconciliation mean to you?

11. How do you believe reconciliation should be brought into schools?
12. Do you feel adequately prepared to bring your definition of reconciliation into your future teaching praxis?
13. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix C: Consent Form



Université d'Ottawa
Faculté d'éducation

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Education

145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
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University of Ottawa

Project Title: Integrating Indigenous Perspectives: A Case Study of a Teacher Education Program

Name of researcher and contact information

Ms. Hannah Plamenig
MA(Ed) candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

Researcher supervised by

Dr. Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D.
Professor
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa
Email: aibrahim@uottawa.ca
Office: LMX 420

Invitation to Participate: I have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by Ms. Hannah Plamenig under the supervision of Professor Ibrahim as part of Ms. Hannah Plamenig's MA.Ed program at the University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore how pre-service teachers engage with Indigenous perspectives and whether/how they envision integrating Indigenous perspectives into their future teaching praxis.

Participation: My participation will consist of being part of a focus group discussion with a group of up to five teacher candidates. The time needed for this is approximately 60-90 minutes. This will take place at a time and location convenient to me. Ms. Hannah Plamenig will audio-record this focus group discussion. I may also participate in an individual interview, which will take approximately 60 minutes and be audio-recorded by Ms. Hannah Plamenig.

Benefits and Contribution: By discussing my understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures and knowledges, and whether I feel comfortable bringing this knowledge into my future teaching practice, I am contributing to a greater understanding of the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in schools and the role of teacher-education programming.

Assessment of risks: My participation in this study entails no foreseeable risks. However, the researcher assures me that they will make every effort to minimize any discomfort I may experience. I may choose to exit a focus group discussion at any time. If I participate in an individual interview, I may stop the interview at any time and any recordings of our conversation will be deleted.

Privacy of participants: I accept that because of the group nature of focus groups, anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for the focus group portion of the study.

In terms of individual interviews, I have received verbal confirmation from Ms. Hannah Plamenig that I may choose to give my name or remain anonymous. If I choose to be anonymous, careful measures will be taken to protect my identity.

- I wish to be named in the final publication of this study
- I wish to be anonymous

Confidentiality and conservation of data: The data will be kept for five years following the conclusion of this project's data collection on April 30th, 2019. I have been assured that any audio recording will be kept in a secure manner on the researcher's password-protected personal device. Upon completion of the project, recordings of my interview will be stored on Professor Ibrahim's password-protected computer. In April 2024, all material data will be shredded, and electronic data will be erased.

Compensation: For my participation in this study, I will receive a \$25 gift card for Chapters or Starbucks. It is my choice which I accept. The gift card will be given to me at the beginning of my participation in the study. Should I choose to end my participation in the study, the gift card will not be revoked.

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 from individual interviews until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____ [Name of participant], agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Ms. Hannah Plamenig at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Professor Ibrahim.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher Ms. Hannah Plamenig or Professor Ibrahim.

If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's name _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's name _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Certificate of Ethics Approval

19/02/2019

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-02-19-2881
Titre du projet / Project Title	Integrating Indigenous Perspectives: A Case Study of a Teacher Education Program
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de maîtrise / Master's thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	19/02/2019
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	18/02/2020

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role
Hannah PLAMENIG	Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Awad IBRAHIM	Faculté d'éducation / Faculty of Education	Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

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