Decolonizing the Classroom Curriculum:
Indigenous Knowledges, Colonizing Logics, and Ethical Spaces

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Abstract

The current moment of education in Canada is increasingly asking educators to take up the mandate and responsibility to integrate Indigenous perspectives into curricula and teaching practice. Many teachers who do so come from a historical context of settler colonialism that has largely ignored or tried to use education to assimilate Indigenous peoples. This project asks how teachers are (or are not) integrating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom curriculum. It asks if and how Eurocentric and colonial perspectives are being disrupted or reproduced in classroom dialogue, and how learning spaces can be guided by an ethics of relationality and co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing. Finally, it seeks promising pedagogical practices through which curriculum can be a bridge for building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in what is now Canada.

This project is a critical ethnography of five high school English classrooms in which teachers were attempting to integrate Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. Over the course of a semester classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups gathered the stories, experiences and perceptions of five high school English teachers, their students, and several Indigenous educators and community members. The stories and experiences gathered describe a decolonizing praxis, which pedagogically situates Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews in parallel and in relation, each co-existing in its own right without one dominating the other. The teacher and students who took up this decolonizing praxis centered an Indigenous lens in their reading of texts, and saw questions of ethics, responsibility, and reciprocity as key to changing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Despite this promising pedagogical approach, I identify knowledge of treaties and the significance of land to Indigenous peoples as a significant gap in knowledge for students (and some teachers), which allows many colonial misunderstandings to persist.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Where This Project has Come From, and Where it Goes

In the spring of 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) published its findings about the history and legacy of Indian residential schools in Canada. The TRC was formed in 2008 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, and mandated to gather and document the truth about the impact and abuses of the residential school system towards Indigenous peoples. The TRC spent the next years gathering statements from approximately six thousand out of over eighty thousand residential school survivors (TRC, 2015a). The work of the TRC impacted people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in many different ways. Its mandate was significant in that it was tasked with uncovering a largely obscured truth about Canada's recent history: that ongoing and concerted efforts were made to assimilate generations of Indigenous children through schooling, separate families and communities through schooling, and teach all children that Indigenous peoples were inferior. The TRC struck a chord with many educators and reinforced what Indigenous educators had been saying for decades: to move forward, this history must be acknowledged in the school curriculum, and schooling itself must change from a colonizing enterprise, to one that honours Indigenous students' cultures, histories, and experiences of schooling (Battiste, 2012, 1995; Kirkness, 1999). More educators began to hear these words and listen.

In the spring of 2015, as the TRC was nearing the end of its activities, it published an executive summary of findings. Only days before this report was released, I left the high schools that had served as the primary sites for this project and travelled back to Ottawa. Though my departure marked the end of one phase in this project, it did not mark the end for the teacher and student contributors (participants) whom I had come to know. They did not miss a step in their own journey towards reconciliation. Some of the students had scheduled an interview with a local residential school survivor, and it just so happened this interview was taking place the day after the TRC report was released. By listening to a residential school survivor the students not only wanted to understand the history of residential schools, they also wanted to understand the importance or reconciliation and how they could respectfully take part.

The TRC's executive summary was just shy of 400 pages. To prepare for their interview the group of sixteen year olds took it upon themselves to stay up late (on a school night!) and familiarize themselves with the contents of the report. For them, taking the time to prepare was a show of respect as much as it was gaining familiarity. Their teacher, who later recounted this story to me, was struck by their thoughtfulness and sense of responsibility. What stood out to me was the students' ethics of relationship building that put the survivor's comfort and wishes first. The students had reached out to this person and were taking steps to make sure they had the background knowledge to create a genuine dynamic during the interview. They respected the wishes of the residential school survivor: for all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to learn the history and carry forward reconciliation in the way that is right for them. Moreover, the students' actions showed a willingness to do the difficult work of reconciliation. They made themselves *aware* of what was at the time the most comprehensive compilation of truth and information about residential schools. They *acknowledged* the experiences of the residential schools survivor as well as their own responsibility. They *atoned* by putting aside the comfort of not knowing (and they willingly gave up a good night's sleep). Finally, they took *action* by reaching out to a residential school survivor, hoping to share what they learned with peers and teachers, whom they felt would benefit from hearing the story of a residential school survivor.

Hearing this story gives me optimism. If every student who learns about the history and legacy of Indian residential schools is moved to act with such a sense of respect and responsibility, what kind of changes will we see in schools and in Canadian society over the course of a generation, or two, or seven? Those of us living in what is now Canada are in a moment with potential for educational transformation: a moment when the quietly omitted histories and experiences of Indigenous peoples and colonization are gaining visibility both in and outside of educational institutions; a moment when curricula from all subject areas is simultaneously falling under scrutiny for its Eurocentric orientation, and being reconsidered for its relevance to Indigenous peoples, ways of knowing, and contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities; a moment when provincial Ministries of education are mandating the teaching of the treaty relationship, the history and legacy of residential schools; and a moment when individual classroom teachers, like the ones who contributed to this project, are adding Indigenous authors to their course reading lists. At all levels, educators are awakening to the need for schooling and curricula to meaningfully integrate Indigenous perspectives. The question on

the minds of many teachers and teacher candidates I have taught and worked with is: how? How can I integrate Indigenous perspectives into my classroom curriculum *respectfully*? I understand the importance of learning this history, but without having learned it myself, how do I go about teaching it?

Being honest, these are questions I have asked myself. They are questions this project seeks to answer. This introductory chapter will explain why these questions are important, where I am coming from as a non-Indigenous educator and researcher, and how the remaining chapters of this dissertation go about answering those questions.

Challenge and Aims

An important challenge for educators today in what is now known as Canada is disrupting and decentering the colonizing logics and Eurocentric discourses that organize schooling and curricula (Battiste, 2012; Battiste, Bell, Findlay, Findlay & Henderson, 2005, Donald, Glanfield, & Sternberg, 2011). In education, diverse Indigenous histories and knowledge systems have been homogenized (Ermine, 1995), the contributions of Indigenous peoples downplayed or omitted, and representations *of* Indigenous peoples *by* Indigenous peoples more sparse than plentiful. The homogenization and omissions have been purposeful in Canada's long history of educating Indigenous children through residential schools and apart from their families and communities all for the ends of assimilation and the erasure of Indigenous cultures. Curricula have thus privileged ways of knowing brought to North America by colonizers and upheld these as superior to Indigenous ways of knowing. Privileged ways of knowing include Eurocentric notions of knowledge (Battiste, 2011), science (Cajete, 2000; Ng-A-Fook, 2013), and culture (Donald et al, 2011). As Sandy Grande explains (2011), "[t]he curriculum is, by definition, a Western (linear, temporal, hierarchical) construct that can and should be continually reimagined to better serve democratic imperatives" (p. 42). As such, there is increasing attention to the way integrating Indigenous perspectives into the school curriculum can contribute to the larger project of decolonizing in Canada (Neeganagwedgin, 2013), and can work towards more culturally relevant and equitable educational experiences and outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Kanu, 2011).

For Indigenous learners, some benefits of integrating Indigenous perspectives include closing the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students remains urgently important (Kanu, 2011; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009; Silver, Mallett, Greene, & Simard, 2002), promoting economic benefits and self-esteem, (Kanu, 2011), and disrupting what Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste (2011, 2000) calls 'cognitive imperialism.' Cognitive imperialism can be understood as an underlying colonial ideology in the organization of formal schooling and school curricula that ignores or positions as inferior Indigenous histories, values, and ways of knowing, doing, and being (Cajete, 2010). For Indigenous students, the psychological effects of cognitive imperialism have been shame in one's identity and culture. These effects were (and continue to be) reinforced by educational experiences and student-teacher interactions (Hare & Pidgeon, 2015; TRC, 2015). As such, cognitive imperialism becomes a colonizing form of Eurocentric knowledge production, but one that does not represent all European knowledges[1]. However, integrating Indigenous perspectives is not a matter of adding content. Rather, it involves curricula and pedagogy that explore both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of understanding the world. These different ways of understanding the world are incommensurable in many ways, but are not irreconcilable binary opposites (Battiste, 2002; Cannon, 2012), nor are Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples irreconcilably different (Donald et al, 2012). Instead, integrating Indigenous perspectives builds upon ways that Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews are complimentary, works to deepen understanding of the tensions and conflicts that have and continue to shape the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and reframe the ways these ways of knowing are understood in relation to one another.

Within these broader historical, social, cultural, political, and educational contexts, this project seeks to address the challenge of integrating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom curriculum. Specifically, this project asks:

1. How are (or are not) Indigenous perspectives integrated into the classroom curriculum? a) What resources, strategies and pedagogical rational do teachers draw on? b) Do resources and teaching strategies reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics (i.e. through dominant

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[1] In this thesis when I use the term Eurocentric I refer to ways of thinking that are part of a dominant (hegemonic) Western worldview that has been privileged over Indigenous worldviews throughout the process of colonization in North America. My use of the term does not assume all that is Eurocentric or Western is necessarily colonizing.

historical narratives or Eurocentric curricular discourses)? c) Does classroom dialogue reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics? d) What narratives and normative assumptions do students and teachers draw upon when integrating Indigenous perspectives and how does this impact engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing? e) How do students and teachers perceive of the learning experience with integrating Indigenous perspectives?

2. How can learning spaces can be guided by an ethics of relationality and co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing? a) Which (if any) pedagogical approaches allowed Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews to co-exist, and what did these approaches look like? (i.e. temporal and spatial considerations)? b) How can learning spaces be safe? c) How is the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples framed? d) How do teachers and students understand their role and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation?

The questions above are asked in the context of public schools where a majority of students identify in various ways as non-Indigenous. I am mindful that the way Indigenous perspectives are integrated in these public schools may differ significantly from schools that are located in Indigenous communities and using curricula that is locally and culturally specific. The project is designed as a critical ethnography and looks at how five high school English teachers are integrating Indigenous perspectives into their classroom curriculum. It notes the resources teachers are using, how their use of these resources encourages teachers and students to engage with Indigenous perspectives, and how students and teachers feel about their learning and make sense of their learning experiences. Stories, experiences and perspectives are gathered from a semester of classroom observations, teacher interviews, focus groups with students, conversations with First Nation community members, and my own journal reflections. At the heart of this inquiry, I ask the critical question: are Indigenous perspectives being integrated in ways that disrupt and decentre colonizing Eurocentric curricular discourses? If so, how? If not, why not?

In asking these questions I am mindful there are significant challenges to integrating Indigenous perspectives, particularly in classrooms that are made up of predominantly non-Indigenous teachers and students. It is well documented that many non-Indigenous teachers struggle with teaching Indigenous perspectives and for a number of reasons from lack of

administrative or colleague support (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010), to lack of knowledge (Tupper, 2011), personal bias and negative attitudes towards Indigenous peoples (St. Denis, 2010; Strong-Wilson 2007), lack of understanding how Indigenous histories and worldviews are relevant to education (Scott, 2013), inadequate professional development, and inadequate access to resources (Dion, Johnston & Rice, 2010; St. Denis, 2010). The literature outlining these challenges also reiterates, on a more hopeful note, that teachers continue to seek support in the form of teaching strategies, and quality resources. This project seeks to acknowledge those challenges, and while remaining critical, look toward solutions in the form of promising practices. To be clear, I am not looking for prescriptive solutions. Rather, I seek pedagogical approaches that do a number of things: identify and disrupt colonizing logics embedded in schooling and curricula, centre Indigenous perspectives in learning, and actively work to build a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples based on an ethics of respect and non-domination. To my mind, such pedagogies are praxis oriented: grounded in reflective awareness of the ways in which curricula is created and experienced through one's worldview, and action-oriented toward projects of reconciliation and decolonizing.

The challenge of integrating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom curriculum is not only a challenge of how; it is also a question of with whom? For me, this is a question of relationships. Conceptualizing ethical relationships and outlining how this might look in a classroom learning space is an important layer in this project. I pose the question at the outset of my theoretical framework: how can curriculum be a bridge for building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples? This question is pressing in a moment when educators are awakening to the need take the place of Indigenous worldviews seriously in schooling. To give a preliminary answer, it means re-evaluating the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems and approaching these relationships with an ethics of respect and non-domination at the forefront (Donald, 2009; Ermine, 2007). One reason this project happens in public schools is to explore classrooms as spaces of possibility where a new kind of relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can be built. Classrooms are spaces in which for many reasons, non-Indigenous peoples ought to listen to Indigenous peoples, whether that involve closing the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, disrupting Eurocentrism and Indigenous exclusion from

curricular materials, or engaging in projects of reconciliation. However, this relationship must be guided by a rigorous ethics that genuinely strives for co-existence between worldviews.

So far, I have outlined the challenge motivating this project, and some of the key questions and goals that guide it. To summarize, this project is a critical ethnography of several high school classrooms that asks how teachers integrate Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. The project seeks to understand the ways in which Eurocentric and colonial perspectives are being disrupted or reproduced in classroom dialogue, and how learning spaces can be more ethical for the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing. The next section expands on the historical and contemporary context from which this project is coming and situates the researcher within it.

Why This Project, At This Time?

Much has transpired since the colonial relationship began between Indigenous peoples of North America and Europeans over 500 years ago. This colonial relationship has often been characterized by an unequal sharing of power and respect for sovereignty. Accounts of the early colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are unsettled about whether cordial relations ever existed. The Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) tells us a conciliatory state is one that "many Aboriginal people assert never has existed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" (2015a, p. 6). Are we re-building or building anew? Thomas King (2012) shows that neither position is necessarily wrong: "Explorers who traded with Indians in the early years tended to report on Indian-White relationships in generally positive terms. Colonists, who settled with the intention of staying, had to live with Indians and were more disposed to dwell on what they saw as the darker side of Native character" (p. 30). By the seventeenth century, King continues, the relationship between colonists and Indigenous peoples was like "an itch that both parties scratched" (p. 26) rather frequently. An itch to be scratched puts mildly the disposition that led the Dominion of Canada and later Government of Canada to impose policies of forced relocation and assimilation on Indigenous peoples (see Daschuk, 2015; Manuel, 2015; Milloy, 1999; TRC, 2015a).

The broader historical context surrounding the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in what is now Canada gives a historical dimension to this thesis. This thesis seeks to understand classroom learning contexts and attitudes of teachers and learners whom are

today influenced by a long history of colonizing education policy and curricula. As such there are strong links between history and current curricula and pedagogy. I refer to key policies that impacted education for Indigenous students and the broader societal contexts in which they emerged. My intent in doing so is to remain conscious of the way the past and its intergenerational impacts continue to shape the present project and education today.

Omitting and misrepresenting Indigenous peoples and their contributions to a shared history betrays the racism and cultural misunderstanding that produced a type of national curriculum in Canada (Montgomery, 2005). This curriculum, based on a colonizing Eurocentrism in its both content and pedagogical approaches has educated the majority of Canadians (See for example, Ontario Normal School Manuals: Science of Education, Ministry of Education, 1915). These official curriculum manuals and materials (i.e. textbooks) were implemented alongside the government imperative to educate Indigenous children by means of civilizing and assimilating, thus creating a link between the legacy of colonial history and classroom learning. In recent decades, the legacy of education for assimilation has been acknowledged for its negative impact on the present day educational achievement of Indigenous students, which includes lower than average graduation rates and an achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; Dion, 2014, 2015, 2016).

In the context of education, the burden of this history is not just an Indigenous peoples' problem, it is a Canadian problem (Sinclair, 2015). Likewise, so is the ongoing work of decolonizing, in which there are many roles and contexts. Using the *ing* suffix to refer to decoloniz*ing,* coloniz*ing,* and know*ing* is a conscious choice I have made in this thesis. When in verb form, these words "indicat[e] fluidity, movement, and progressive action" (Styres, 2017) rather than a thing or idea, which is conveyed when words are shifted to noun form, e.g., knowledge. In this thesis I understand the work of decolonizing to be ongoing and actively oriented against colonialism, or in other words, anti-colonial struggle and resistance. I use the term decolonizing to specify the ongoing struggle against colonialism in a Canadian context. For example, Leanne Simpson (2011) explains that for Indigenous peoples, families, and communities whose traditional lands now make up Canada, the work of decolonizing means rebuilding and resurgence must happen from the inside, using Indigenous processes, knowledges, and traditions, and "without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory,

or the opinions of Canadians" (p. 17). In the same vein, Tuck & Yang (2012) elaborate that decolonizing happens "here" by repatriating Indigenous lands and sovereignty. While the work of decolonizing "here" is connected to anti-colonial and decolonial struggles "elsewhere," it is not equivocal (p. 31). Simpson (2011) and Tuck and Yang (2012) respectfully remind non-Indigenous peoples that they have their own roles to play in the ongoing work of decolonizing.

Non-Indigenous peoples must come to understand the shared aspects of decolonizing, (rather than unilateral leadership) and the responsibility to listen and learn. Here, an element of decolonizing is a re-educating project that would change the way governments and citizens engage with Indigenous peoples. A re-educating project starts with the need to acknowledge shared histories, reframe dominant histories that have erased Indigenous peoples and allowed settler Canadians to avoid confronting their complicity. Dwayne Donald (2012) says "any meaningful deliberations on the future of Indigenous-Canadian relations must work backward, beginning with a thoughtful accounting of the present state of affairs and revealing the very deep linkages to the past" (p. 40). With acknowledgement comes moving to action which, in the context of this thesis means understanding how non-Indigenous educators and learners are working to disrupt Eurocentric curricula, confront historical injustice and build ethical relationships. In education, as in broader the political and social sphere, projects of decolonizing must happen on Indigenous terms, rather than on settler colonial terms. Glen Coulthard (2014) makes this point about the current politics of recognition, which he argues, reproduces (violent) colonial and patriarchal power configurations by accommodating Indigenous demands on the settler state's terms. Echoing his contention, Paulette Regan (2011) notes there can be no genuine reconciliation, no movement to an ethical relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler Canadians without first exposing (and acknowledging) how "colonial violence is woven into the fabric of Canadian history in an unbroken thread from past to present" (p. 6).

It has been 9 years since the Government of Canada apologized for Indian residential schools and the failure of education for many generations of Indigenous children, families, and communities. It has been little more than one year since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada gave governments, institutions, and citizens a mandate, in the form of Calls to Action, to reconcile, and take action to make change. In summary, I argue that because of the shared aspects of decolonizing, Indigenous perspectives are relevant to all students, whether their ancestors have lived on their traditional lands since time immemorial, or whether they are

new to Canada.

Reconciliation and Relationships

I am writing at a time when conversations about reconciliation are beginning to happen in educational institutions at all levels, and between educational institutions and local Indigenous communities (see especially Dion, 2014, 2015, 2016). Reconciliation brings with it difficult historical knowledge that threatens the material and emotional attachments of the settler society (Boler, 1999) and can lead to superficial engagements that subvert the aims of decolonizing because these engagements are (unwittingly) premised on the continuation of White settler privilege and the logics of colonialism (Coulthard, 2014; Haig-Brown, 2010; Morgansen, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). In a similar way, Leanne Simpson (2014) is skeptical about reconciliation:

> being promoted by the federal government as a "new" way for Canada to relate to Indigenous Peoples…when the majority of Canadians do not understand the historic or contemporary injustice of dispossession and occupation, particularly when the state has expressed its unwillingness to make any adjustments to the unjust relationship. (p. 21)

Simpson likens this to reconciling in a physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally abusive relationship and asks what the collective implications are for reconciliation if the abuse continues yet the general perception is that a wrong has been righted. However, engagement with the process of reconciliation has the potential to be a pedagogically transformative experience that involves "radically re-evaluating [one's] worldviews" (Boler & Zemblayas, 2003, p. 107) and "(re) constructing one's own beliefs, values, and assumptions" (p. 110). If we think of the journey towards reconciliation as having many paths, it is a pedagogy that Tidridge (2015) muses, "may not be fully realized but I have learned that's not necessarily the point" (p. 26). In other words, reconciliation does not have a prescribed formula or fixed end point because the roles and responsibilities each person has may be different. For non-Indigenous peoples, building new relationship with Indigenous peoples is a responsibility that requires learning and listening. The TRC (2015a) explains reconciliation is "about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people, going forward" (p. 6).

In this sense, to use Hattam's (2012) words, reconciliation is "a re-imagining of community" and relationships that "involves an exploration of the relation between memory and

identity and, more specifically, memory and national identity" (p. xv). Exploring the historical and present relationship, Hattam continues, also makes reconciliation a "pedagogical intervention that aims to heal the effects of traumatic events" (p. xv), which in this case focuses on the complicated legacy of colonialism in Canada. As such I suggest reconciliation must be "grounded in cultural generation and political resurgence" (TRC, 2015a, p. 22) of Indigenous languages, oral traditions, and systems of governance, and it must engage Canada in decolonizing pedagogical projects that will see government and citizens to engage justly with Indigenous peoples. Here, the roles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples will bring different dimensions to reconciliation. At the same time these roles are relational as they both grapple with the intergenerational impacts of colonial history and seek a new relationship going forward.

Cognizant that reconciliation is in many ways about building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, I asked myself at every stage in this project, and as I wrote up every chapter: how can I, as a non-Indigenous person do such doctoral research in an ethically relational way? I began to engage *ethical relationality* from the contention that everybody – every *being* - on the land we now call Canada is part of the colonial relationship. As a non-Indigenous person who identifies as a settler Canadian (whose ancestors chose to come to Canada for the purpose of buying land, and staying here to make a life), it was important for me to design a project through which I could problematize my settler's positionality without centering a non-Indigenous settler perspective that would usurp the stories and contributions of First Nation educators and community members. My reasoning is this: it is time to listen to Indigenous peoples in order to (re)learn and (re)member the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and (re)learn what it means to work with First Nation communities, in many cases, on land that was never ceded.

Why this Researcher: A Personal Dimension

In preparing for this project, I asked myself four identity questions posed by Korteweg, Fiddler, Bissel, Primavesi, Clark and Moon (2013) and adapted from an Anishinaabe worldview. The questions, representing four directions ask: Where am I from? Where have I been? Where am I now? Where am I going? Reflecting on these questions prompted me to delve deeper into the story behind my researcher self, and I offer some answers here so readers may know

something about me, and how my positionality and experiences inevitably come to bear on the interpretations I make in this project.

Where am I from? When I contemplate this question, I am moved to think of the *place* where I am from. I am from a little patch of land in Southern Ontario that was part of Treaty #7 of 1796 with the Chippewa nation, which includes what is more commonly known as Sombra township. Both of my parents' families emigrated from Europe and settled there in the 1940s and 1950s. Growing up I had no idea how the land came to be divided up for agricultural use, although agriculture was how I thought of the land's primary purpose. Immensely flat stretches of field were interspersed by sections of deciduous bush. Being from this place shaped my worldview in the sense that I saw the land from a landowning perspective: as the wholesome part of commercial agriculture. It was only after I left this place and moved to the city that I realized how unusual it is to walk on concrete day in and day out, and how I longed to touch and smell grass, leaves, soil, and moss. The place I am from also taught me other things: I learned to see racism between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in my hometown as personality differences; I learned land claims were something of a silent threat in many places of Southern Ontario; I learned there were invisible social lines between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at school.

Where have I been? I have been in Ottawa for the past decade, perhaps a permanent visitor on this Algonquin land. My comfortable middle class status has made it possible for me to be educated in large academic institutions. Through this education I have been taught to lose touch with the place where I am from, and then to re-find it again but differently than before through learning about Indigenous worldviews. Education has drawn attention to my privilege, sometimes uncomfortably, without disrupting it too significantly. For example, through education I have learned the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. I have been able to learn *about* rather than *through* many difficult aspects of Canadian history and education that shape this relationship. This distance is a privilege, and one that tells me I must seek other forms of engagement with Indigenous peoples and worldviews if I am to play a role in building a new relationship.

Where am I now? Now seeing myself a settler Canadian whose ancestors have arrived only recently (within the last century), I undertake this project out of a commitment to a

decolonizing praxis in education, and a strong desire to put into practice pedagogies that will contribute to a more respectful and ethical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and worldviews. There are many Indigenous ways of knowing that are not for me (or other settler Canadians). These are for Indigenous families and communities, and I as an outsider part of an ethical relationship means respect these limits. Similarly, in schools, there are Indigenous perspectives that schools cannot or should not teach for a number of reasons (e.g. appropriation, institutional constraints, etc.), but there are many things schools should teach (e.g. the history of colonial legislation and policies including residential schools, the importance of reconciliation to Indigenous peoples, for all peoples living in what is now Canada, etc.).With this in mind, my focus throughout this project has been to better understand the roles and responsibilities of non-Indigenous peoples in the process of reconciliation, and to find a way to share what I learn with other educators.

Where am I going? As indicated, I hope this project will help educators to better understand the roles and responsibilities of non-Indigenous peoples in the process of reconciliation, and to see how these responsibilities are relevant in their professional practice and in life. I wish to share something practical that will help educators approach Indigenous perspectives and imagine what this could look like in their classroom and with the collaboration of local Indigenous communities. I hope this project will engage educators in grappling with some important differences between critical approaches and decolonizing approaches in the classroom, seeing the value in each, while respecting the various challenges and limitations. Finally, I wish to continue the learning journey this project started long after it is over.

Notes on Terminology

It is my preference to identify people by the name they prefer to use when identifying themselves. When referring to Indigenous peoples, this means naming the nation or community where they are a member. When participant anonymity is compromised by information this specific, I use the term First Nation because that is also how several contributors to this project identified themselves. I use the term Indigenous more broadly, to refer to the First Peoples who lived in North America before the arrival of Europeans, for example when talking about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. I also use the term

Indigenous to specify the knowledge systems held by First Peoples that are distinct from non-Indigenous knowledge systems, such as those European colonizers would have brought with them to what is now Canada. The only time I use terms such as Aboriginal and Native American is when citing the work of other authors or quoting contributors to this project.

Overview of Chapters

In what follows, Chapter Two outlines the historical context of Indigenous education in Canada. It conceptualizes some of the purposes and methods of education from Indigenous perspectives and juxtaposes these with the purposes and methods of the formal education system as it developed in Canada. The historical overview traces Indigenous education policy over the decades, drawing out the common thread of assimilation, which continues well into the twentieth century. With this history in mind, I then turn to recent literature on integrating Indigenous perspectives into education to understand the current climate toward Indigenous worldviews in the classroom and the approaches taken up by educators. The literature includes studies that focus on classroom pedagogy in secondary schools, teacher and teacher candidate perceptions and attitudes toward integrating Indigenous perspectives, integration at the level of teacher education, and pedagogical approaches.

Chapter Three outlines a theoretical framework for the project by asking the questions: how can curriculum be a bridge for building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples? To answer that question, I develop a conceptualization of curriculum as broad, epistemologically open, and grounded in relationships between and among teachers, learners, their communities and their worlds. Next, I critically unpack ways colonial logics (explained by Donald (2009) as ways of narrating and understanding) shape curricula and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in what is now known as Canada. Finally, I turn to the question of ethics, and suggest that a relational ethics of non-domination is needed to change the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and to have learning spaces that are guided by an ethics of relationality and co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. The framework in this chapter is not only intended to provide an ethical approach to curriculum, but also an ethics to live by.

Chapter Four considers methodology. Building on the theorization of relational ethics in Chapter Three, a significant goal of this chapter is to put forth a pathway for building ethical relationships. As such, the very notion of *research* is framed as relationship, and the means and aims in developing this relationship based on reciprocity, as opposed to the collection of 'data' for academic audiences and purposes. In this chapter I also explain the design of this project as a critical ethnography and details the methods used, the ways I interpreted and analyzed stories, experiences and perspectives shared by contributors, the schools visited, and I introduce the contributors (teachers, students, and First Nation educators and community members) who participated in this study.

Chapter Five analyses and interprets the stories, conversations and observations gathered from and with contributors from the broader vantage point of worldview. Drawing on classroom observations, interviews and focus group, this chapter shows worldview as a lens through which curricula is understood and implemented, through which teachers teach, and through which both teachers and students 'read' texts (an idea I will explore later in the thesis). I describe my visits to each classroom, focusing on how worldview was expressed through classroom dialogue, and identifying moments when colonizing logics were disrupted and/or re-inscribed. Within these visits to the various classrooms, one teacher's class makes a valuable study and her contributions will be shown in depth in this and in subsequent chapters. She implemented what she called a decolonizing pedagogy based on the ethical co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. She consciously situated these worldviews in parallel so students could understand the assumptions, beliefs, and patterns of organizing social relations (i.e. hierarchy) of each in its own right. At no time were the worldviews portrayed as existing in isolation from one another or in competition for legitimacy. In past and present Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews were seen to impact one another, clash, and exist in relation. This teacher's decolonizing approach is explained in detail, and compared with the approaches of the other (four) teachers who taught critically, but not from an Indigenous worldview. The comparison follows several common topics of conversation that transpired in the different classrooms.

Chapter Six focuses on classroom pedagogy. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part explains teacher perceptions of what it means to integrate Indigenous perspectives, including the pedagogical strategies and resources they used to do so. These strategies and resources are talked about in relation to a broader theme of dis/comfort. Here the relationships

between the teachers and the material, and between the teachers, students and First Nation community members were constantly characterized by feelings of discomfort. These feelings were mediated with words, actions, and gestures that brought comfort. Thus, the analysis creates a picture of what I call a pedagogy of dis/comfort. This section also connects pedagogical approaches to the atmosphere in classrooms, and spends time explaining how contributors navigated tension and the unexpected. The second part of this chapter outlines a pedagogical praxis for reconciliation. Focusing on students, part two follows the journey of students as they moved through awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action. This section details how students took part in the process of reconciliation, the pedagogical approaches that guided them, and the sense of responsibility they developed from their experiences.

Chapter Seven discusses seven main lessons learned, or findings, based on what is presented in Chapters Five and Six. Each lesson learned is related to relevant discussion from existing literature in Chapter Two and from the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Three. Importantly, this chapter explains the difference between the critical pedagogical approaches and the decolonizing praxis taken up by teacher contributors. Together these seven lessons learned address the project's guiding questions and point towards areas of future research. Throughout the discussion ethical implications are in engaged in two ways: how these implications play out in the classroom learning spaces, and in the broader relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Chapter Eight concludes this dissertation and further synthesizes the lessons learned from Chapter Seven, paying special attention to the differences this project has illustrated among critical approaches to integrating Indigenous perspectives and a decolonizing praxis. It contends that taking seriously the responsibility of all peoples to support and participate in the process of reconciliation means moving beyond a critical stance to one that is decolonizing. Finally, I leave educators with some practical suggestions for making their classrooms more ethical learning spaces for the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Histories of Indigenous Education and Integrating Indigenous Worldviews

All young people need to know who they are and from where they come. Aboriginal children and youth, searching for their own identities and places of belonging, need to know and take pride in their Indigenous roots… They also need to know why things are the way they are today. That requires an understanding of the history of colonization, including the residential school system and how it has affected their families, communities, their people, and themselves.

Of equal importance, non-Aboriginal children and youth need to comprehend how their own identities and family histories have been shaped by a version of Canadian history that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples' history and experience. They need to know how notions of European superiority and Aboriginal inferiority have tainted mainstream society's ideas about, and attitudes towards, Aboriginal peoples in ways that have been profoundly disrespectful and damaging… This knowledge and understanding will lay the groundwork for establishing mutually respectful relationships.

-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a, p. 239.

To move forward, we have to understand where we have come from, and at what cost. That is one message I take from the quote that opens this chapter. There is no doubt this thesis aims to look forward, and to move forward decolonizing pedagogical praxes in the classroom. However, it can only do so genuinely if it grounds those ambitions in the historical context of Indigenous education in what is now Canada. The colonial history of Indigenous education is described by Eber Hampton (1995) as "the education of Indians by non-Indians using non-Indian methods" (p. 6). As such, Indigenous education is part of the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, marked by colonialism, assimilation, and at times, cooperation (Battiste, 1995). In the late 1800s, the decades following confederation, it became common sense that the state would ensure a basic level of education for all children, and it went without saying that Indigenous children needed an education, too (Barman, Hébert & McCaskill, 1987). The problem was how to educate Indigenous children who needed to be brought from one worldview to another. As Marie Battiste explains (1995), schooling became a matter of re-shaping (colonizing) rather than educating Indigenous children's minds. Past and present are not separate time periods in Indigenous education, and it is important to understand how certain

issues and assumptions underlying the education of Indigenous children have persisted and changed. Therefore, I offer some historical background in this chapter. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather, to respond to the task set out for educators in the opening quote of this chapter, which I understand to be (re)learning the past to enable a more robust and historically conscious exploration of the present.

This chapter begins by conceptualizing education from Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. Trying to explain Indigenous perspectives on education is problematic. Little of the perspectives on learning and learning practices so entrenched in communities were present in academic literature prior to three decades ago. Even now, there are many limitations to what can/should be translated from a community context and expressed in the writings of books and articles. Though I account for some of the shared ideas that underpin learning in relation to the land and the passing down of knowledge, I can never account for the different ways of knowing and doing that are specific to each community and nation. There will be a level of generalization. At the same time it would be problematic for me as an outsider to try to give a specific account of education from the perspective of any one Indigenous community. It is not my place to access certain knowledges, stories and protocols that belong in communities. Instead, I [try to] share an understanding of education based on the words of Indigenous educators and writers, taking what they have deemed appropriate and important to share with a non-Indigenous audience.

Next, I provide a historical overview of the social values and ideological underpinnings that shaped state-funded education in Upper Canada and later Ontario, as created and administered by colonists in a Euro-Western tradition. The purpose is to sketch some differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous conceptions of education and read this sketch relationally in historical context. As such, I consider how social values, attitudes and policies shaped public education in Canada, how Indigenous leaders and communities envisioned and responded to state-run education, and how state-funded education impacted the experiences of Indigenous students and communities.

With historical context in mind, the second half of this chapter looks at contradictory and contemporary interpretations of *integration*. Thus, my study goes on to talk about integration as the respectful, non-oppressive coexistence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews in the school curriculum, it does so with an understanding that integration has meant different things to

different people at different times in the context of Indigenous education. Finally, I take an in depth look at recent literature pertaining to attitudes and approaches for integrating Indigenous perspectives into the school curriculum.

Indigenous Perspectives on Pedagogy and Education

There has always been education in Indigenous communities. It is, as Jeanette Armstrong (1987) explains, a "natural process" that occurs through the activities of everyday life (p. 15). In this sense, the community and the environment are the classroom (Kirkness, 1999). The classroom which encompasses much more than the space within four walls, each adult takes responsibility for ensuring that each child learns how to live a good life and embody traditional values such as respect, humility, courage and kindness (Kirkness, 1999). Learning is not decontextualized; it happens in context and in connection to overarching values. Children are taught how all things in their world fit together holistically, how they are related and interdependent, not how they can be separated into categories of learnable knowledge (Cajete, 2000; Ermine, 1995). For example, Kulnieks, Longboat, and Young (2013) explain, "[i]t is during the preparation of plant medicines that Elders and communicate inter-generational knowledge through stories and songscapes that tell of the memory of medicines, and foods that connect us with the local places and look after us, as our ancestors once did" (p. 118). In this example, learning is interwoven through doing in the preparation of plant medicines, it is a demonstration for younger generations, and through song and story it connects the present moment to the past by sharing the way these sacred medicines and other plants were used by one's ancestors to nourish the body and spirit. Put another way, skills (doing) are not learned in isolation from values and meanings (knowing).

It is difficult to convey to non-Indigenous audiences how Indigenous ways of knowing are the basis of learning. One of the contributors to this thesis explained that for her, land is the starting point for knowing and learning in her First Nation worldview. In this sense, land is not a topic; it is the basis of knowing and being in relation with all things. Similarly, Sandra Styres (2017) explains that land is an Indigenous philosophy of education, shared by Indigenous peoples, but it is defined, implemented and experienced differently across contexts and landscapes. How different nations and communities learn through and with the land, one shaping

the other in a reciprocal relationship, is community specific (Simpson, 2014). There can be no standard curriculum, rather "the *context is the curriculum*" (Simpson, 2014, p. 10), and the context is land, and the relationships between family, community and all living beings that flow from that context. Each community has their own ways, stories and histories, and by extension the sovereignty of being a nation ensures these ways are the ones taught.

For example, a close relationship with one's traditional land is essential to learning bush skills. Ohmagari and Berkes (1997) describe the important role of Cree women in teaching bush skills. Bush skills are necessary for survival and for passing on cultural knowledge, however, the authors do not explain how "traditional knowledge pertaining to belief systems, spirituality, and cosmology" play a role in passing on these skills (p. 203). This type of cultural knowledge may not be appropriate to share outside of the community with a non-Indigenous audience out of context, which reminds us of the challenge of understanding education from two entirely different knowledge systems.

Methods of learning, too, reflect knowledge systems. In Indigenous communities, knowledge is passed on through stories, oral histories, through rites of passage, ceremonies, and rituals that develop certain practical and vocational skills. Stories, however, are layered with learning; they tell a people who they are. For example, creation stories convey the philosophy and ontology of Indigenous worldviews that are built upon cooperation, and connectivity and interdependence between all beings, markedly different from Judeo-Christian, and other monotheistic religions, creation stories built upon hierarchy, binaries, and punishment (King, 2003). The tradition of oral storytelling constitutes an important dimension of Indigenous literacy. As Battiste (1994) puts it, "reality lies at a deeper level of understanding" oral narratives "resolve symbolically those issues that cannot necessarily be worked out in the sphere of human activity" (p. 406). Although Indigenous literacy has been much ignored or misunderstood in the formal schooling system, it is dynamic: spiritual, symbolic, and linguistic (Curwen-Doige, 2001). Mi'kmaq literacy for instance, is expressed through pictographs, petroglyphs, notched sticks and wampums (Battiste, 1995).

Writing from the context of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee ways of knowing, Styres (2017) explains that an Indigenous philosophy of education must not only be rooted in ancient pedagogies; it must also understand the historical and contemporary realities of Indigenous

peoples, as well as the dominant epistemologies that shape the way education is organized, administered and practiced. Understanding Indigenous perspectives on education in the colonial realities of the present is about more than passing on knowledge. As an outsider I hear Indigenous educators explaining that education for Indigenous peoples today is about being grounded in the land and the traditions and teachings of one's ancestors, and using this grounding to approach the challenging social realities faced by Indigenous communities, to (re)affirm and (re)generate cultural identities, practices and ways of knowing. In other words, education is a pathway forward for Indigenous peoples when it is connected to the past, to the community, and to what it means to be an Indigenous person (Battiste, 1995). Tiakake Alfred's (2014) recent collaborations with the Mohawk community of Akwasanse illustrate ways the mentoring and apprenticing of traditional cultural resource practices are helping this community rebuild the connections to their land and culture that were lost due to chemical pollution in recent decades. Whereas ways of life once were once centered around the river, pollution changed this way of life leading to a loss of skills and cultural connections. For this community, restoring traditional teaching and learning models is part of a larger cultural restoration plan to (re)claim and (re)generate land based practices and build the capacity to once again place these practices at the centre of community life.

Though recent literature (see for example Styres, 2017; Alfred, 2014; Simpson, 2014) emphasizes strong connections between past and present in Indigenous education, this perspective is not recent. In 1972 the National Indian Brotherhood published a policy paper titled *Indian Control of Indian Education*. The paper, intended for governments and Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences was a response to assimilative education policies including residential schools and day schools. In outlining the aims for Indigenous education, the policy paper calls for education that is culturally rooted in connections to past and present:

> In Indian tradition each adult is personally responsible for each child, to see that he learns all he needs to know in order to live a good life. As our fathers had a clear idea of what made a good man and a good life in their society, so we modern Indians, want our children to learn that…
> - Pride encourages us to recognize and use our talents, as well as to master the skills needed to make a living.
> - Understanding our fellowmen will enable us to meet other Canadians on an equal footing, respecting cultural differences while pooling resources for the common good.

- Living in harmony with nature will insure preservation of the balance between man and his environment which is necessary for the future of our planet, as well as for fostering the climate in which Indian Wisdom has always flourished. (n.p.)

The excerpt above shows the need for education to stay grounded in Indigenous values and beliefs while at the same time preparing students for the challenges of contemporary life.

This section has tried to illustrate continuity across time and across nations in the belief that education for Indigenous children must address the realities of the present by staying connected to the teachings of the past, and it must continue to be centered in community contexts rather than controlled by a centralized and non-Indigenous body. As testament, Leanne Simpson (2014) explains the experience of alienation in a system of colonial education:

My experience of education, from kindergarten to graduate school, was one of coping with someone else's agenda, curriculum, and pedagogy, someone who was neither interested in my wellbeing as kwezens, nor interested in my connection to my homeland, my language or history, nor my Nishnaabeg intelligence. My experience of education was continually being measured against a set of principles that required surrender to an assimilative colonial agenda. (p. 6)

Her point is that she had to derive her sense of recognition and reward for learning through a state-run education system. Education as she experienced it in schools could not be considered Indigenous because it was removed from context and happened through entirely different processes. The next section will delve more deeply into the state-run education system that developed in Canada and impacted many generations of Indigenous communities through assimilation.

Historical Context of Education in Canada: Non-Indigenous Perspectives

The social values, patterns of organization, and guiding principles that characterized the development of state-funded education in Canada are vastly different from those shaping Indigenous perspectives on learning. In this section I develop two central ideas related to the way public education in Canada developed in relation to Indigenous peoples. First, I outline those values and patterns of organization that shaped the development of public education in Canada, and then talk about the ways state-funded education was a means for the assimilation of

Indigenous children and the dismantling of Indigenous cultures, systems of governance, and sovereignty. This history is gathered in detail over thousands of pages in the volumes of the Final Report of the TRC (2015a, 2015b). There are many more details and assimilative policies that contributed to the loss of language, culture, and sovereignty than I can capture here. What I propose is merely the contextual overview needed for this thesis that links history to the present. I mean to show that the historical legacy of state-funded education in Canada is ever present in education today and impacts both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners (i.e. through Eurocentric curricula, a lack of meaningful inclusion and understanding of Indigenous histories and perspectives in schools, an achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and inequitable funding and resource distribution for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous students). Through this thesis I hope to address some of the challenges associated with this historical legacy.

Foundations of Universal Education in Canada. The social values and ideological underpinnings of state-funded schooling are significant to this thesis in two ways: in the assimilationist ends for which education was used, requiring generations of Indigenous children would be required to attend school, and through the worldview generations of non-Indigenous children were also schooled into: one that naturalized and legitimized a White supremacist hegemony (Stanley, 1995). The TRC (2015b) explains, "colonists were extending beyond their own borders the social values they practiced at home" whether it be in the belief of land ownership and "productive" land use (exploitation for economic gain), or in the principles of universality that made their way into public education (p. 10). As Europe urbanized and industrialized in the nineteenth century, it moved away from private and religious education and toward public institutions. So too did British colonies in North America. There were commonalities between emerging public education in Europe and the colonies, such as the need to cultivate an industrious and orderly populace (TRC, 2015b). In the context of Upper Canada Gidney and Millar (1985) argue middle class interests drove the development of the public school system. Tomkins (1986) points out curricula, like Canadian society, was influenced by an epistemology of progress. Society at that time was swept up in a tide of modernization, and though rapid changes were embraced they also caused unease. As such, education that developed a strong moral direction for all students universally offered the feeling of certainty. Egerton Ryerson, Methodist Minister and Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada in the mid 19th

century, took up the cause of universal education for all students and he had a pivotal influence on the shape state funded schooling would take. Influenced by political unrest of the 1836-7 rebellions, he believed that non-denominational schooling imbued with Christian moral values and allegiance to the British Crown could provide the political socialization and cohesive moral direction needed to produce upstanding members of the civic community (McDonald, 2011).

Ryerson's perspective on education was also influenced by his position as a colonist, which meant the models of education he supported took into account Indigenous populations. In Ryerson's context, the presence of Christian missions in Indigenous communities would have been an entrenched part of the colonial relationship with Indigenous peoples. The work of these missionaries to civilize and Christianize Indigenous populations was sanctioned in some of the earliest charters dating back to the early 1600s that allowed trading companies and settlers access to lands in North America, and later continued on through mission run schools for Indigenous children (TRC, 2015b). With Ryerson we see such Christian ideals as a moral blueprint that extended from missionary run schools and into his vision of state-funded schooling for Indigenous children. Consistent with moral ethnosuperiority of the European population over Indigenous peoples, Ryerson believed "nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition without the aid of religious feeling. This information must be superadded to all others to make the Indian a sober and industrious man" (p. 73). Ryerson (1847) unequivocally extended what he believed to be the moral imperative of education to Indigenous children, advocating for agriculture-based "industrial schools" (p. 73) that would offer instruction in English with the aim of "making of the pupils industrious farmers" (p. 74). (See also the Final Report of the TRC Volume 1, 2015b).

As Upper Canada (present day Ontario-Quebec) developed schooling policy in the 19th century, the ideas espoused were in sync with political policies that promoted cultural and linguistic uniformity, ignoring the diversity of Indigenous peoples, and "governing minority populations…by paternalism, prejudice, and political expediency" (Axelrod, 2001, p. 69). This attitude of racial superiority did not stand apart from question of whether Indigenous peoples were fully human, deserving of the same innate rights (Tobias, 1976). As Blair Stonechild (2011) argues "the policy of aggressive assimilation was a radical experiment in social engineering" (p. 22). Thus, pre-Confederation Indigenous education policy was guided by a mission – as quoted

from N.A.C C.O. 42/27, G. Murray to J. Kempt (No. 95), 25 January 1830 – of "reclaiming them from a state of barbarism and introducing amongst them the industrious and peaceful habits of civilized life" (cited in Milloy, 1999, p. 11). John A Macdonald's government would refer to this mission as "enfranchisement" which saw an opportunity to make "the Indian a source of profit to the country" (Keshen & Morton, 1998, p. 30).

Well into the 20th century, Ryerson's influence resonated through narratives of nationalism and citizenship that shaped schooling and curricula as colonizing enterprises, while simultaneously promoting a European hegemony and racial and ethnic assimilation (McLean, 2004, 2007). Ryerson's perspective on educating Indigenous children was not unlike other British colonies around the world, many of which separated children from their families with the goal of assimilating and subordinating them (TRC, 2015b).

Inside schools an ideology of instrumentalism and linear learning prevailed that should be read in contrast to the highly contextualized and holistic thinking that shaped Indigenous perspectives on education and pedagogy outlined earlier in this chapter. In the vein of order, discipline, authority, and hierarchical categorization of the world, the public school classroom became "a world of timetables and compartmentalized lessons" (Goodson, 1995, p. 29) in which knowledge was divided into hierarchies of subjects and evaluated for competence or mastery. Like knowledge, bodies were also divided into hierarchies of gender, class, ability and race. Gender roles were taught explicitly through 'ornamental' subjects for girls while boys studied more rigorous subjects like English and mathematics or 'the classics' (Axelrod, 2001; Danylewycz, 1991; Gidney & Millar, 1985; Gidney & Lawr, 2011). Class-based exclusions were employed through rules about dress and through curricula directed to vocational pursuits (Gidney & Millar, 1985; Goodson, 1995). Together, schools and public health worked to segregate and expunge impurity, from disease to feeblemindedness (Sutherland, 1972). Here, Ryerson's notion of universality or a basic level of education for all was realized through a uniform and compulsory form of education that was centrally rather than locally controlled (Gidney & Lawr, 2011). Moreover, the vision of universal, or rather universalizing, education discussed in this section stifled cultural diversity by separating students into different classes, schools, and even school systems according to race (Stanley, 1995). With respect to Indigenous peoples, universal public schooling actively tried to erase Indigeneity. Erasing Indigenous people, as Tuck and Yang

(2012) argue, is a key feature of settler colonialism that we will see play out through successive education policies aimed at assimilation outlined later in this chapter.

Universal(izing) education where authority is derived centrally remains a vein of contention with Indigenous perspectives on education today. As we saw earlier in this chapter, in Indigenous communities, education is highly contextualized, relating not only to place but also to cultural knowledge developed in relation to place. In the present educational context from which this thesis is written, the transmission of such highly contextualized cultural knowledge is paramount to the survival and resurgence of Indigenous communities, languages, and cultures.

As we saw in this section, building a system of public education in Canada was imbued with the social values and moral underpinnings colonists brought with them. The education of Indigenous children through this system had nothing to do with building curricula around the integration of Western and Indigenous ways of knowing, and everything to do with a level of cognitive and cultural conformity that would create a subordinate class of citizens (TRC, 2015b). With this mindset, if you were a White child of European descent, you were taught that you were superior (TRC, 2015a). Similar reasoning drove the idea behind Indian education policy. It was not a question of whether to educate Indigenous children; it was how (Barman et al, 1987). The short answer was to coerce, require, and assimilate by force a White middle class Christian set of values upon Indigenous populations (Adams, 1989).

Indian Policy and Education

This section situates the education of Indigenous children within the broader context of colonial government and later federal government Indian policies aimed at assimilation. First, an overview of pre-and post confederation legislation and treaties will set a broader context for Indian policy as it moved toward more aggressive assimilation and control over the lands and lives of Indigenous peoples. Then, to show education as a key element of policy aimed at assimilation, I outline the development and failure of the state-funded residential school system to educate Indigenous children apart from their communities and assimilate them into the settler society's values and way of life. Finally, in light of the legacy of Indian policy and education for

assimilation, this section turns to the question of reconciliation and the re-assertion of Indigenous sovereignty and localized control of education.

Early Education and Legislation. Long before the system of Indian residential schools there were attempts at educating Indigenous children at day schools set up by missionaries, and boarding schools in New France dating back to the 1600s (Axelrod, 2001). In the pre-confederation colony, missionary run schools operated on a comparably small scale to the system of Indian residential schools (Miller, 1989). An aim of missionary schools was to convert Indigenous peoples to Christianity (TRC, 2015b). This mindset holding that Christian values and ideals of Europeans were superior to Indigenous beliefs would carry over to residential schools. However similar the underlying ideas, early missionary schools were not as comprehensive in their attempts to assimilate as we will see later with residential schools. For example, attending early missionary schools was not compulsory, and certain aspects of Indigenous cultures could be tolerated alongside Christianity. In the broader context of New France, trade with Indigenous nations and alliances to secure and expand the colony were likely more important than implementing a comprehensive assimilation strategy. The expanding French colony, however, meant that Indigenous nations were under increasing pressures of land encroachment by trading companies and settlers.

The British acknowledged the problem of land encroachment shortly after their defeat of the French. In the Royal Proclamation of 1673 they asserted Indigenous rights to land and put limitations on the sale of land and expansion of colonial settlements. The Royal Proclamation is regarded by some Indigenous peoples as a point at which there was some mutual respect between colonial governments and Indigenous peoples, particularly when it came to protecting land rights (TRC, 2015b). Still, the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty must be read in the context of the colonial government's interests at that time: the British were trying to secure and stabilize their authority and limit American expansion. A more comprehensive strategy for erasing Indigenous peoples would come in time.

Treaties. Treaties with the British begin to tell another story about respect for Indigenous sovereignty in the decades following the Royal Proclamation. Treaties and alliances were long negotiated between sovereign Indigenous nations before contact, with notable multi-nation agreements including the Great Law of Peace between the Haudenosaunee nations, and the

Huron League among the Huron nations (TRC, 2015b). For Indigenous nations, these agreements made or strengthened kinship ties and were marked by sets of diplomatic protocols, rituals and ceremonies. After contact colonial governments and Indigenous nations negotiated peace and friendship treaties for alliance, compacts for trade, and territorial treaties regarding land (Miller, 2009). Major complications arising from territorial treaties were that both colonial governments and Indigenous nations claimed sovereignty, and both had different interpretations of treaty agreements. For example, Indigenous interpretations of the spirit and intent of Treaties 6 and 8 hold that the agreements were for sharing land, not to give up rights to that land and relinquish all claim to it (Asch, 2014). However, in some interpretations by governments and others treaties did transfer all authority to the Crown over the lands in question (Asch, 2014). In the latter interpretation, treaties can be seen a tool for extinguishing an inextinguishable aspect of Indigenous sovereignty - the right to land and responsibility for it as given to them by the Creator. In exchange, certain promises and rights were specified in the treaty. The negotiation of Treaty 4 promised a small portion of reserve lands, agricultural grants, a lump sum of money, schooling, and hunting rights on yet unoccupied treaty lands (Asch, 2014).

In addition to different interpretations of treaties, there were a host of other complications. Early treaties in what is now Ontario often involved oral promises that were unclearly written down, a one time lump sum of money and did not necessarily establish reserve lands, nor even mark the boundaries of land clearly (TRC, 2015b). Many of these older treaties have been disputed, with a number of these disputes playing out within or near to the area where this project took place. The TRC (2015b) also argues treaties, especially after 1820, began to embody elements of Indian policy that continue today: the isolation of Indigenous peoples from the rest of society on reserves, and attempts to civilize Indigenous peoples into the settler society's values and way of life. As Thomas King (2012) puts it, the presence of Indians became 'inconvenient' if not hostile to Europeans hoping to settle in the decades after the fur trade diminished and the threat of American encroachment receded, and a new way of dealing with their continued presence was required.

Education and economic development were important elements of civilization policy in Upper Canada through the mid-nineteenth century. There was Indigenous support for economic development even though it focused on initiatives (e.g. housing) that would see Indigenous

peoples settle in permanent communities and make a living at agriculture instead of hunting and trapping. There was considerably less support for schooling based on assimilation, which was a drawback for colonial governments. The policy of civilization would progress toward more complete assimilation in the 1850s, reflecting a desire to do away with reserves and all distinctions between Indigenous peoples and the rest of society. Yet, this goal outlined in the A*ct for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Canadas (1857)* was contradictory to concerns about schooling. Students attending schools in their communities and in close proximity to their families were still influenced by their cultural beliefs and practices, which undermined their successful assimilation. There was some interest in residential boarding schools. For example, two residential boarding schools operated by missionaries in Southwestern Ontario, the Mount Elgin Industrial Institute (Mount Elgin) and the Mohawk Institute, initially had approval from local communities who wanted training for their children. However, the schools lost favour as years passed and their leadership became unsympathetic to Indigenous needs and ways of knowing (Graham, 1997).

Chief Shingwaukonse's Vision of Education. Indigenous leaders had ideas about the type of education that would prepare their communities for survival and coexistence with the settler society. Chief Shingwaukonse's (Anishinaabe, Ojibwe) vision for Indigenous education was that of a 'teaching wigwam' where Indigenous children would be clothed and fed, learn European ways, language, and religion, so they might teach these ways to their own communities to ensure their survival (Miller, 1989). Survival meant the capacity to control their possessions, lands, and resources, and coexist under the pressures of European settlement and government policies of removal (Belleau, n.d.). A contributor to this project and residential school survivor who attended the Shingwauk Indian Residential School in Sault Ste Marie, explained to me that the teaching wigwam is in no way about assimilation or domination; instead it is more like the Two Row Wampum, where Indigenous peoples and Europeans would learn from each other while keeping their own identities. Unfortunately, Shingwauk's vision for education that would help Indigenous peoples to "adapt and survive" (Miller, 1989, p. 84) would not be realized as he intended. Moving into the post-confederation era, school control and leadership would remain in non-Indigenous hands.

Indian Act, 1876. The passage of the *Indian Act* coincides with the turn toward the government's preference for residential schools modeled on industrial boarding schools mentioned above. In the context of the *Indian Act*, education is an essential component of the government's broader plan for the assimilation and erasure of Indigenous cultures. The Indian Act was a broad and sweeping piece of legislation outlining the federal government's Indian policy. The Indian policy put forth in the *Indian Act* was an elaboration of the responsibilities outlined in Section 91 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, which gave the federal government of Canada responsibility for Indians and Indian lands (TRC, 2015b). In a broader sense, the *Indian Act* defined who was and who was not an Indian, outlined how reserves and bands could operate, regulated the sale of reserve lands, and sought enfranchisement by consolidating pre-existing legislation such as the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 and *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869 both of which *allowed* literate Indians of good moral character to no longer be considered Indian, and instead become British subjects with certain rights not granted to Indians (TRC, 2015b).

John A Macdonald was influential in shaping Indian policy legislation both pre and post Confederation. He played a role in creating the *Gradual Civilization Act* and the *Indian Act* though his personal views on Indigenous peoples were based on "ignorance" and lacked "understanding or compassion" (Dutil & Hall, 2014, pp. 72-73). A statement from 1890 on the position of John A Macdonald's government illustrates continued support for assimilation through enfranchisement:

> If the Indian is to become a source of profit to the country it is clear that he must be amalgamated with the white population. Before this can be done he must not only be trained to some occupation, the pursuit of which will enable him to support himself, but he must be imbued with the white man's spirit and impregnated by his ideas. (as cited in Keshen & Morton, 1998, p. 30)

Here, enfranchisement can be read as a thinly veiled policy of racism based on the ethno-superiority of the "white population" and inferiority of the Indigenous. As Stanley (2016) argues, Macdonald's views contributed to racist state formation in Canada by introducing biological racism into legislation against Indigenous peoples and people of Chinese origins. The state in fact practiced disenfranchisement based on racialization.

With the *Indian Act* and subsequent amendments, the government had more complete authority over Indian bands, lands, and education. Whereas Indigenous communities had once exercised sovereignty through their own systems of governance and the education of children, amendments to the *Indian Act* dramatically eroded this sovereignty by replacing systems of traditional governance with elected band councils (1880), increasingly allowing reserve lands to be leased without band consent (1894, 1895, 1898), forbidding traditional ceremonies (1884, 1898), and allowing band funds to be spent by the Minister without band consent (1898) (TRC, 2015b). In 1920 an amendment to the *Indian Act* added a clause for compulsory school attendance (Milloy, 1999). That clause meant Indigenous children and their families could not legally decline to be schooled by institutions espousing social values of Christian morality and European superiority. Residential schools were the centerpiece of educational assimilation at this time.

Residential School System. Schools like the Mohawk Institute and Mount Elgin were part of the larger system of state-funded residential schools that operated in varying numbers across Canada. In 1870s the aforementioned schools were the only state run and state funded boarding schools on record, however there were also several church run day schools and boarding schools in existence (TRC, 2015b). The problem with day schools, according to the government and its advisors on Indian policy (see for example Davin, 1879) was that Indigenous children continued to be too influenced by their families and communities in the way of language and customs (TRC, 2015b). Having a culturally distinct Indigenous population was an obstacle to settling and developing the West in accordance with Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's electoral platform. The model of industrial schools used in the United States and Europe, was noted by Ryerson (1847) as a solution to transforming the Indigenous population into industrious individuals who were well adapted the ways of life of the settler society (TRC, 2015b).

Residential schools taught a basic curriculum of reading, writing, and mathematics, and required manual labour of pupils. It was little in the way of an education for Indigenous children about whom it was believed little could be done, even once separated from the influence of their communities. Much as been written on residential schools (See for example the Final Report of the TRC, 2015a, 2015b; Miller, 1989; Milloy, 1999).

In the early decades of the 20th century the system of church run, state sponsored Indian residential schools expanded rapidly: requiring mandatory attendance for status Indians until age of 16, operating 80 institutions across Canada at its peak in 1933 and often enforcing the strict separation of children from their families, languages and culture (Kirkness, 1999). Despite this expansion, the TRC (2015b) explains that by the 1930s the government knew internally that residential schools were failing to educate Indigenous children. In some schools classroom learning was a secondary concern to cultivating industrious and moral pupils, and what learning took place was through drill and memorization (TRC, 2015b). The TRC (2015b) explains:

> For children, life in the schools was lonely and alien. Supervision was limited, life was highly regimented, and buildings were poorly located, poorly built, and poorly maintained. Staff was limited in numbers, often poorly trained, and not adequately supervised. The schools often were poorly heated and poorly ventilated, the diet was meagre and of poor quality, and the discipline was harsh. Aboriginal culture was disdained and languages were suppressed. The educational goals of the schools were limited and confused, and usually reflected a low regard for the intellectual capabilities of Aboriginal people. For the students, education and mechanical training too often gave way to the drudgery of doing the chores necessary to make the schools self-sustaining—a fantasy that government officials indulged in for over a half-century. Child neglect was institutionalized, and the lack of supervision created situations where students were prey to sexual and physical abuse. These things did not just happen: they were the result of government decisions. (p. 162)

The schools were chronically underfunded, poorly regulated, and bore systemic patterns of illness and malnutrition (Milloy, 1999). In summary, residential schools were an extension of the government's civilization and enfranchisement policy, which attacked Indigenous children, families, languages, cultures, spirituality, and nationhood systematically (TRC, 2015b). By removing children, separating families and communities, forbidding the younger generations to learn and appreciate their languages, cultures and spirituality, and instead spreading antagonism and shame among students for bearing these markers of Indigenous identity (see Graham, 1997 for an account of how punishments were made a spectacle, carried out by students upon other students) the foundations of Indigenous nationhood were weakened. The long-term impacts of inadequate and harmful education continue to be lower levels of education and employment, and higher levels of poverty in Indigenous communities. These impacts compounded with the traumas experienced in residential schools including abuse, neglect, loss of culture, and loss of community continue to manifest as intergenerational traumas in the forms of violence, substance abuse, continued poverty, and ill-health (TRC, 2015b).

Decline of Residential Schools: Enrolment at residential schools remained steady until the 1960s, and would likely have increased in the preceding decades if it were not for the government's concerns about the cost of residential schooling (TRC, 2015b). It may seem a contradiction that enrollment stayed steady even though the government favoured phasing out residential schools by 1940, however, church missions were far more reluctant to give up their role in the education and moral shaping of Indigenous children (TRC, 2015b).

In 1946 a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons gathered testimony from Indigenous groups regarding their views about residential schools versus day schools (Raptis & Bowker, 2010). In reviewing the testimony, Raptis and Bowker (2010) found that a new policy of "integration" where Indigenous students would be moved to public schools as residential schools closed, was strongly favoured by the government, despite the lack of enthusiasm for this solution by Indigenous groups. In some instances, committee members put words in witnesses' mouths and made displays of bias in order to create the impression of support for "integration." For many students, integration meant placement in special, vocational, or remedial education programs (Charters-Voght, 1999), which as Kirkness (1999) and Stonechild (2011) note, was another attempt at assimilation into the dominant culture: many communities did not have a choice about moving Indigenous students to public, and students were left with feelings of cultural alienation and identity conflict.

The catastrophic consequences of the failure of educational policies aimed at overt and coercive assimilation of Indigenous children brought about a flurry of research and reports in the 1960s. During this time, a change can be noted in the tone of research and policy directives, which aimed at the "betterment" of "Indians" through improved access to and delivery of education. The *Hawthorne Report* (1966), fully titled *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*, illustrates such a tone. In its discussion of education the report rightly assumes that more Indigenous peoples would choose to live and work off of reserves in the future. However, it rests upon the liberal economic virtues and individualism. The report universally professes "they" (meaning Indians), or "the Indian child" and "those adults who have the drive to attend classes" (p. 5). Their educational attainment explained as "interwoven with needs for better employment, better health and livelihood, more capital for enterprise and a greater share in the governmental and political life of Canada" (p. 5).

Moreover, the report "abstract[s]" "the wider setting of culture and community" (p. 6) from its introduction and recommendations, burying these crucial elements in later chapters rather than emphasizing their importance to Indigenous education. The tone of The Hawthorne Report (1966) thus continues to be paternalistic in its impartial and authoritative, even while recognizing economic and educational needs in Indigenous communities.

In the context of conversations on Indian education at the time, the federal government's 1969 White Paper proposed sweeping changes that would allow the federal government to back away from its responsibilities to Indigenous peoples by 'passing the buck' (Cardinal, 1999) to provinces for responsibility, including responsibility over reservation schools (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1969). Tabled under Jean Chretien's departmental leadership, the White Paper (1969) argued:

> The treatment resulting from their different status has been often worse… The government believes that the framework within which individual Indians and bands could achieve full participation requires: 1. that the legislative and constitutional bases of discrimination be removed;…The policy promises all Indian people a new opportunity to expand and develop their identity within the framework of a Canadian society. (pp. 4-6)

To end "discrimination" Indigenous peoples' legal status, which has kept them "apart from" the rest of Canadian society would be ended. Being legally absorbed into the Canadian population would "enable" them to "act as owner" of their lands, and to do this while "develop[ing] their identity within the framework of a Canadian society" (p. 6). The government was changing its tone, calling for a new direction for the course of history, an end to discrimination, poor living conditions, and the opportunity to live equally with all Canadians. The tone, however new, continued to sting of paternalism and erasure: "Indian people must be persuaded, must persuade themselves, that this path wm [sic] lead them to a fuller and richer life" (Foreward, para. 11). Through the elimination of legal status (and effectively treaty rights) the government rebranded the assimilation and erasure of Indigenous peoples as non-discrimination. Thus, the conversation on Indian education from a federal policy point of view continued to fail to understand or at least acknowledge Indigenous education from Indigenous points of view.

In response to the White Paper, the *Red Paper* (Indian Association of Alberta, 1970) countered:

> The current arrangement for education is unacceptable because the Provincial and Federal Governments can make agreements without consulting Indian tribal councils. Our education is not a welfare system. We have free education as a treaty right because we have paid in advance for our education by surrendering our lands. (p. 202)

In their aptly titled first policy paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education,* the National Indian Brotherhood (1972), now the Assembly of First Nations, outlined a vision for Indian education:

> What we want for our children can be summarized very briefly:
>
> > - to reinforce their Indian identity,
> > - to provide the training necessary for making a good living in modern society.
>
> We are the best judges of the kind of school programs which can contribute to these goals without causing damage to the child.
>
> We must, therefore, reclaim our right to direct the education of our children
>
> We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education:
>
> > - as a preparation for total living,
> > - as a means of free choice of where to live and work,
> > - as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and educational advancement. (pp. 2-3)

As outlined above, the practical purposes for education (i.e. training, participation in modern society) echo across Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on education, and resonate with values of a liberal education (such as those espoused by *The Hawthorne Report*) and with the overarching philosophies of Indigenous education (i.e. full living, strong sense of Indian identity). The latter values, however, are notably absent from government policy documents and much research of the time. For example, government reports and academic literature suggest remedies like revising learning materials and textbooks that portrayed native stereotypes (McDiarmid & Pratt, 1971), developing a native studies course as part of the regular curriculum, providing extra assistance to Indigenous students entering postsecondary institutions (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), training Indigenous educators (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1976) and requiring native representation on school boards with significant enrollment of native students (Gidney, 1999).

While the government adopted *Indian Control of Indian Education* in principle, by the late 1980s "many of the educational shortcomings identified in 1972 were still in existence"

(Kirkness & Bowman 1992, p. 20) as "the government of Canada had failed to implement the policy of 1973 as it was intended" (Battiste, 1995, p. xi). The number of band run schools has increased significantly and curricula and instruction have moved away from colonial models and toward culturally appropriate models, however, this change does not indicate what is happening in public schools. Moreover, it misses a central point: *The obligation to fund education for the children of First Nations is not identical to the right to control that education* (Johnston & Longboat, 1986). Control over education as a right of sovereignty and self-determination should not go amiss even as we move forward and talk about what integration means to Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and researchers and in Indigenous education policy today.

Reconciliation. Reconciliation, for the TRC (2015a) is about dealing with the legacy of residential schools and telling the truths of what happened. It is also about the broader context of colonization in Canada, which as we saw in this section, involved Indian policy based on assimilation, the erosion of Indigenous sovereignty, weakening of communities and erasure of Indigenous peoples and culture. In that sense reconciliation is "an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships" (TRC, 2015a, p. 16). The ongoing process of reconciliation is individual and collective, must involve Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and must also be grounded in Indigenous approaches to justice, conflict resolution and relationship building. A challenge for education, and for public education in particular, is learning how to practice reconciliation on a daily basis such that it becomes woven into the fabric of schooling and curricula the way assimilation once was. I name this challenge while being mindful that many present day policies and practices in the school system and government perpetuate harm to Indigenous peoples and to the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This thesis will identify several of such practices in schools.

Many contributors to this research, teachers, students and First Nation community members alike shared their views on what needs to happen in education in order for the process of reconciliation to move forward. Weeks later, the Final Report of the TRC (2015a, 2015b) echoed these views. Education for reconciliation must do more than bring awareness, it must bring about a change of intentions and actions. Education for reconciliation must connect the pieces of history that were outlined in this chapter with the way they understand present day challenges faced by Indigenous communities. To achieve these goals, the way teachers and

students are taught must include curricula and curriculum materials that tell the history of colonization and residential schools and instill an understanding of what it means to communicate and relate respectfully with Indigenous peoples. This thesis gives an in depth look at the way a group of teachers attempt to implement curricula that includes this history, and how one teacher in particular made reconciliation and action the centerpieces of learning in her class.

To summarize thus far, the historical overview of literature on Indigenous education has outlined some core differences in the purposes for, and approaches to Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on education in the context of what is now Canada. These perspectives created a backdrop for understanding the development of pre and post Confederation Indian policy as a damaging project of cultural assimilation and erasure. Even as the next section looks at current perspectives on how Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing can co-exist in education, we must remember that the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination is not over. Many Indigenous students attend public schools where provincially mandated curricula is not necessarily community specific and culturally relevant. It is a contradictory reality of the current time that Indigenous nations seek fulfillment of their right to control equitable education in their own communities and at the same time it is pressing that public schools also work to make education better for Indigenous students who do not attend schools in their communities. While I support the former, this thesis, and in particular the next section of this literature review, focus on the latter.

Current Perspectives on Integrating Indigenous Perspectives into the School Curriculum

Whether justified as a civilizing mission or a path to economic betterment, the legacy of using education to the end of assimilating Indigenous peoples throughout the colonial history of what is now Canada is a strong legacy from which to chart another course. Even as the relationship between educational institutions and Indigenous peoples remains contentious, painful, and in many ways colonizing, literature from recent decades shows a continued faith in education as the way forward toward survival and resurgence. For example, Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) argued it was time to stop looking at Indigenous education in terms of retention, graduation, adjustment, and adaptation – problems that could be attributed to Indigenous students, not inflexible institutions – and instead to approach Indigenous education

based on more culturally appropriate models such as 4 R's: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. Marie Battiste (1998) has cautioned that government imposed curricula and control over Indigenous education will continue to promote an assimilative agenda that undermines Indigenous languages and cultures. As such, there are different perspectives on how to move forward.

  Not Binary Opposites. Battiste (2002), Cannon (2012), and Donald et. al. (2012) point out that Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing are not binary opposites, and that rich learning and deepened cross cultural understanding can arise when these knowledge systems are understood in relation to one another. Understanding knowledge systems in relation means Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, histories, and experiences are not evaluated one against the other for the purposes of declaring one more legitimate or accurate than the other. Instead, understanding both perspectives in relation acknowledges how one impacts the other. For example, the conflict between colonial land policies and Indigenous views on land entitlements had devastating effects on Indigenous communities, thus entwining Indigenous community histories with the histories of colonial settlement. Despite resisting the binary positioning of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, the words of Henze-Vanett (1993) resonate today, reminding us in practice it is not always easy for Indigenous peoples to "walk in two worlds," particularly when the responsibility is placed on Indigenous children to navigate these worlds effectively in educational institutions that may not attribute the same importance to both worlds.

  There are those who would simplify understanding Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives into essentialist positions. Widdowson and Howard (2013) argue that discussions of Indigenous education fall into parallelist and integrationist theoretical camps, each of which has a number of essential assumptions: self-determination, relativism, and the separation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous education systems in parallelist approaches, and universal standards and liberal notions of progress in integrationist approaches. My study, however, disagrees with the oversimplification of ascribing essentialist positions to Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives (in education and more broadly). I insist whenever these perspectives are read in parallel but not as binary opposites, *context is crucial*. To illustrate, one of the teacher contributors to this project approaches curriculum based on her First Nations worldview. She also goes out of her way to dispel colonizing assumptions that underlie notions of liberalism

developed in the West. She does not make sweeping generalizations about either of these perspectives, but rather shows students how both perspectives play out in the local context e.g. through land disputes, school practices, etc.

In my research, talking to First Nation educators in Southern Ontario who knew their local context intimately, the wampum belt (a parallel approach) and the braid (an integrated approach) were both important metaphors which I will return to later, for understanding the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and to understanding how this relationship could be rebuilt through education. For example, as we will see later in the thesis, building educational capacity within First Nation communities was a priority alongside having non-Indigenous students reach out to build relationships with local Indigenous communities.

Co-existence of Perspectives. At the outset of her book *Red Pedagogy*, Sandy Grande (2004) argues a failing of critical theorists has been to recognize the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the larger democratic imaginary when it comes to struggles for educational and social equity. This failing or omission has contributed to educational strategies and principles of critical pedagogy that do not account for the needs of Indigenous students. Grande advocates for critical approaches to education that are relevant to Indigenous "students and educators and their need for pedagogies of disruption, intervention, affirmative action, hope, and possibility" (p. 26). For Grande, Indigenous scholars and critical scholars must form new engagements that acknowledge "schooling as a site of struggle offers great potential for indigenous peoples working toward pedagogies for self-determination" (p. 26). Though Grande does not use the words relationality or co-existence, the type of engagements she speaks of resonate with literature that argues the Indigenous perspectives must be present in the school curriculum alongside non-Indigenous perspectives in a relationship that is based respectful understanding and non-domination.

A number of Indigenous educators support the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives into school curricula for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (St. Denis 2010; Kanu, 2005; Deer, 2013; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Barnhardt, 2007). These benefits include at least: 1) increased intercultural understanding (Kanu, 2011; St. Denis, 2010), 2) respect and appreciation for Indigenous cultures (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009), 3) awareness of past and present injustices to Indigenous peoples in Canada (Tupper, 2013), and 4)

a broadened knowledge base that develops the ability for problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills (Kanu, 2011). Despite these benefits, there are considerable challenges to integrating Indigenous perspectives that continue to reflect the colonial legacy of schooling traced earlier in this chapter. These challenges include: the persistence of racist attitudes and resistance on the part of teachers, administrators and parents (Kanu, 2011; Deer, 2013), denial of injustices done to Indigenous people in Canada's history, curricula that disconnects present day issues from this colonial past, ignorance (Donald, 2012; Kanu, 2011; Regan, 2011; Tuck, 2013) and reluctance to take seriously the knowledges and relevance of Indigenous perspectives to school learning (Haig-Brown, 2010, 2008; Kanu, 2011). Instead, the relevance of Indigenous perspectives for non-Indigenous Canadians continues to be dismissed and the injustices of settler colonialism reduced to 'difficulties' situated within multicultural discourse (Toronto District School Board, 2010). Additionally, it can be a challenge for non-Indigenous teachers to find and identify good quality teaching resources. The misuse of a resource, or the use of an inauthentic resource (one lacking cultural connection or context) can lead to superficial 'add and stir' approaches (Battiste, 2011) or, as Haig-Brown (2010) explains, "shallow learning" (p. 937). Here, Indigenous worldviews are analyzed through a Eurocentric point of view that risks further cultural insensitivity or cultural appropriation. Tupper (2013) suggests the challenges are indicative of a strategic ignorance, whereby teachers and teacher candidates mask racist and discriminatory attitudes toward Indigenous peoples by claiming not to have enough knowledge to meaningfully engage Indigenous perspectives in their teaching practice. It is important to note the way many of these challenges are tied to attitudes, values, and beliefs about the world, which suggests that classroom cultures continue to be influenced by non-Indigenous (namely Western) values, patterns of organization, and principles that historically have played a key role in marginalizing Indigenous peoples and knowledges in and through education. The challenges also indicate that a substantial amount of responsibility falls on non-Indigenous peoples and educational institutions to unlearn these counterproductive attitudes and relearn what it means to be constructive, supportive partners in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Policy Perspectives. Across Canada, Faculties of Education have collaboratively outlined goals for engaging with Indigenous perspectives and communities in programs of teacher education and graduate studies in education. The *Accord on Indigenous Education* (Association

of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010) envisions a transformation in education such that "Indigenous identities, cultures, languages, values, ways of knowing, and knowledge systems will flourish in all Canadian learning settings" (p. 4). To achieve this vision, the Accord outlines criteria for creating respectful and welcoming learning environments, inclusive curricula, culturally responsive pedagogies and assessments, and practical mechanisms to support and value Indigeneity and Indigenous languages in education, encourage Indigenous leadership in education, and to instil in non-Indigenous learners a similar commitment to supporting Indigenous education. The goals of the Accord are a valuable articulation of what needs happen in education on an ongoing basis when it comes to engaging Indigenous perspectives and communities. The Accord is not a roadmap that gives educators instructions or names particular pedagogical strategies. As a policy document, there is contrast between the Accord and historical approaches to the Indian education policy that overtly focused on assimilation and then outcomes. With the Accord we see education moving to a place of 1) responsiveness where the needs and ways of knowing in Indigenous communities are concerned, and 2) relationality when it comes to understanding the history that necessitates new ways of engaging and relationship building.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has taken up the challenge of Indigenous education in recent years by putting forth a First Nation, Métis, & Inuit Policy Framework (2007a) and subsequent progress reports (OME, 2009, 2013a). With the foremost aim to close the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in provincially funded schools, the policy framework takes a "rhetoric of dedication and commitment" to outline a "unique and innovative policy direction" (Cherubini, 2010, p. 14). This "rhetoric" however, resonates with the language of *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972) by iterating through a "holistic and integrated" (2007a, p. 6) approach. Here, OME continues, "First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in Ontario… will have the traditional and contemporary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be socially contributive, politically active, and economically prosperous citizens of the world. All students in Ontario will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives" (p. 7). The policy framework is complimented by Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students (OME, 2007b), which provides an outline for assisting First Nation, Métis and Inuit students with self-identification with the aim of gathering more thorough data on student achievement and responding with strategies and programs to meet student needs.

During this research I spoke to teachers, board officials, and First Nation educators and community members who explained the policy framework has had an important impact on making the atmosphere of schools a safe space for students to self-identify. As a result many more students have identified, and the Board, its schools, and teachers, have made efforts to reach out to First Nations communities for consultation and seeking their views and experience. These encouraging words were often followed with a reminder: there is still a long way to go. On the one hand, it takes a conciliatory and benevolent tone to commit to Indigenous community involvement and consultation (Cherubini, 2010). On the other hand, this conciliatory tone may distract from the fact that the government still exercises a great amount of control over education for Indigenous students, and moreover, it may position Indigenous students with an academic deficit that needs to be brought to the standard of non-Indigenous students. Citing the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007b), Butler (2015) cautions that measuring Indigenous student achievement through standardized assessments is assimilative in that such tests marginalize Indigenous epistemologies (see also Cherubini, 2010; Cherubini & Hodson, 2008).

The policy framework has made integrating Indigenous perspectives a priority for culturally appropriate and responsive curricula. It has told teachers that this history and the responsibilities of educators to learn that history are of great importance to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Battiste (2011) captures the challenge I am outlining for education and for teachers by saying, "the key in designing meaningful educational curricula in Canada is to confront the hidden standards of racism, colonialism, and cultural and linguistic imperialism in the modern curriculum and see the theoretical incoherence with modern theories of society" (pp. 305-306). How teachers take up the challenge of the curricular initiative to integrate Indigenous perspectives in the classroom is based on their own pedagogical understanding (Cherubini, 2009). So the question remains: what is going on in classrooms?

We will see in the forthcoming section, many studies focus on Indigenous students and communities (Kanu, 2011, 2005; TDSB, 2010), and on non-Indigenous teachers and teacher candidates (Deer, 2013; Kanu 2011). What remains limited in the literature is an in-depth examination of the initiatives and strategies that public school teachers and learners, respectively, take in classroom learning, what resources they use, and in what ways this disrupts (or does not disrupt) colonizing logics. This gap I intend to fill modestly through this thesis.

Integrating Indigenous Perspectives into the School Curriculum

Literature from the last decade reveals attitudes of teachers and teacher candidates toward integrating Indigenous perspectives into the school curriculum, as well as theoretical approaches and practical strategies for doing so. This section looks at literature in four parts. *Classroom pedagogy in secondary schools* focuses on empirical studies concerning classroom teaching practice with high school teachers and their students. Until recently, studies of this nature were sparse, and only in the last few years have more been published. Instead, a greater number of studies have focused on the experiences of practicing teachers and teacher candidates at the post secondary level. These studies are discussed in the second section *Teachers, teacher candidates, and their perceptions of integration*. Many of the studies in the second section survey the attitudes of teachers and teacher candidates, and a contribution of these studies is their ability to pinpoint the challenges of integrating Indigenous perspectives as experienced by teachers. These challenges reveal the need to think about classrooms (and broader learning environments) as ethical spaces, and to theorize more deeply what that means and how a more robust ethicality can be achieved. These are considerations I will discuss with the findings in later chapters. The third section explains *Learning through Indigenous perspectives at the level of teacher education*. These studies explain a number of courses and approaches taken up in faculties of education across Canada, however, they do not necessarily help a practicing teacher imagine the content they will include or the practical strategies they will engage to integrate Indigenous perspectives in their own classroom. To this effect, the *Pedagogical approaches and frameworks* section, the last section, highlights useable, context appropriate frameworks at the secondary and post-secondary levels. More studies of this kind may be a promising way to build ethical considerations into teaching strategies.

Classroom Pedagogy in Secondary Schools

Yatta Kanu's (2011) study asks what kinds of Indigenous cultural knowledge can be effectively integrated into the school curriculum as both tools for learning and for improving Indigenous student outcomes. She contends that integration is needed to challenge the dominance of Western European culture in curricula and school organization, and to reverse the colonial subjection of Indigenous knowledges by revaluing them. Drawing from sociocultural theories of

learning and cognition, macrostructural theories of minority school performance, and critical race theories, she interviewed Indigenous students and teachers respectively to understand what factors they felt mediated and influenced their learning, and to understand how they perceived the success of the integration.

Kanu collected data from 4 high school classrooms over 2 years. Both teachers and students were a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous. To constitute 'integration' as opposed to an adding content, Indigenous knowledges and perspectives had to be present on five levels. The first four levels can be identified in various stages of planning: 1) through learning outcomes, 2) through the choice of instructional methods and strategies, 3) through curricular content including the resources and materials used, and 4) through the types of assessment used. The fifth level spans each of the first four levels (meaning it must be present in each), which is a philosophical underpinning grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and perspectives. The level of engagement with each of these five levels of integration varied between classrooms. Kanu found that classrooms with the most thorough integration outperformed their counterparts on tests and examinations, showed higher-level thinking, and confidence, and among Indigenous students, attendance. Indigenous students noted the use of scaffolding and Native cultural illustrations were effective because these led to better conceptual understandings and supported a culturally relevant curriculum. Challenges included difficulty with finding materials that countered Eurocentric perspectives, and as such teachers had to spend a lot of time searching. There were also limits to the degree some teachers were comfortable and willing to take integration. It was also difficult to implement holistic assessments, as the tendency (in text books) is to break them down into measurable parts which is Eurocentric and undermines Indigenous ways of knowing. Kanu concluded the structure of schooling limited opportunity for experiential learning, and personal learning. High quality research must be conducted on the culture of classroom and schools to better understand the challenges and opportunities. Kanu's (2011) study is important to this project because it is one of only a few studies that spent time in secondary classrooms, and it outlines a framework for integration.

Saunders and Hill (2007) discuss the findings of a mixed-methods study that attempts to offer a roadmap for "authentic and equitous practice" (p. 1017) in Haudenosaunee Native education. By authentic and equitous they mean education in which students have a voice, are

included but not tokenized, and perform comparably regardless of background. Like Kanu's (2011) study, Saunders and Hill include the voices of students as well as teachers although no research was conducted in a school setting. Survey data was collected from Haudenosaunee students and educators and a formal and informal interviews were conducted with a few of the survey participants. Emergent themes revealed that students desired a Native ontology of education centering on holism, community involvement, life-long learning, and co-authorship that would intersect with respect for differences, relevance to life and reciprocity among learners. The curriculum model derived from the results of the study centered on coalition building rather than a prescriptive formula. The authors contend that treating curricula as a guide or plan alone is counter productive to Native education. It must be holistic and experiential – connected to life and learning environments rather than compartmentalized – and attention must be given to the implicit values in curriculum such that they nurture non-assimilation.

Jennifer Tupper's (2014) extensive work on treaty education also provides insight as to what is happening inside secondary school classrooms. Rather than an overarching framework, she focuses on the use of a specific resource 'Project of Heart' to implement treaty education and peace-building education in Saskatchewan public schools. Tupper collaborated on an inquiry project with a secondary school teacher, two classes of Grade 12 students, and 12 teacher candidates. Teacher candidates made several visits to the high school over the course of 6 weeks to be part of the Project of Heart unit. Between these visits, teacher candidates studied the history of treaties and the treaty relationship in Canada. There was much learning by all who were involved, including surprise and disbelief about the history of treaty making/honouring in Canada. Discussions revealed instances where the entrenched colonial mindset of students reiterated dominant narratives of history and settlement. However, these moments were punctuated with moments of disruption where settler colonial narratives were challenged and where teacher candidates expressed a change in their views about Indigenous – settler relations.

Arts-based learning at the high school level also offers an avenue to critically engage with the legacy of residential schools and Indigenous – settler relations in Canada. Dupuis and Ferguson (2016) present the results of a study in which non-Indigenous teachers and a majority of non-Indigenous students created an ethnodrama (a dramatic performance based on research, observations, field notes, interviews) to tell the story of residential schools in Canada. Through

focus groups with the teachers and students, the researchers identified four learning outcomes from this arts based learning. First, students reflected on knowledge and identity, meaning as students spoke to Indigenous community members and increased their knowledge of residential schools and their impacts, they began to think about their own identity and the responsibilities they had as non-Indigenous peoples. Second, teachers and students learned to navigate the balance between fact finding and respecting memory, meaning that as students researched they were cognizant of honouring the truths Indigenous community members shared with them. Third, the arts provide opportunities for acts of reconciliation and building relationships with Indigenous community members. Finally, both teachers and students felt their perspectives on reconciliation, remembrance and memorialization were broadened. Dupuis & Ferguson's study shares some similarities with projects undertaken by participants discussed in this thesis, namely, students engaged with Indigenous community members to respectfully learn more about the legacy of residential schools, and then based on what they learned, and in consultation with community members, they created a project for reconciliation.

Wiltse, Johnston, and Yang (2014) conducted a self-reflective action research study involving a teacher inquiry group comprised of eight secondary language art teachers. The purpose of the inquiry group was to understand how teachers were using Canadian literature to promote social justice in their teaching by using texts that pay attention to multiculturalism, colonialism, and ongoing issues of marginalization and inequality in society. Data was collected through interviews with teachers, inquiry group discussion notes (with all participating teachers present) classroom observations, and student work. The authors draw from that data to present case studies of two teacher participants chose Indigenous Canadian texts for a book study in their classrooms. Teachers found the lack of resources to be a challenge and had to create their own unit plans. Students had preconceived notions of Indigenous peoples based on stereotypes, which the books disrupted but not without some contentious moments in which the teachers had to find ways to keep class discussions moving forward to work through stereotypes rather than being shut down by them. Both teachers felt the experience was important but difficult, and the authors suggest one reason for this is dominant discourses continuing to marginalize counter discourses in school. Wiltse, Johnston, and Yang (2014) resonate with Tupper (2014) and Kanu (2011) in that teachers took initiative to integrate Indigenous perspectives and/or materials into their teaching, conscious that they may face challenges doing so. In a slightly different situation, Scott

(2013) studied teachers who were mandated to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching.

Scott (2013) interviewed 5 high school teachers who taught a Grade 10 globalization course in the province of Alberta. The province had recently added an explicit directive to teach Indigenous and Francophone perspectives in the social studies curriculum and his study sought to understand and observe how teachers were interpreting this directive. Classroom observations were also conducted with the teachers over the course of a unit, and involved 8-10 school visits. A focus group with all of the teachers present followed the individual interviews and observations. Based on semi-structured interview data, teachers interpreted this directive as the addition of another perspective and often approached Indigenous perspectives through inquiry-based learning. A dominant theme that emerged was teacher resistance to allowing space for Indigenous perspectives in the following ways. First, teachers felt that when integrating Indigenous perspectives the subject matter should have a historical or issue based connection to Indigenous people specifically, otherwise it was irrelevant. They also noted that presenting one unified 'Indigenous' perspective was problematic when there are so many different Indigenous perspectives. Finally, the teachers considered multiple perspectives to be based on arguments and counterarguments (various points of view) rather than different systems of knowledge. The findings of this study indicate to me that integrating Indigenous perspectives still has the tendency to leans toward teaching *about* rather than teaching *through* Indigenous knowledges, and to evaluate one worldview against another. Moreover, the resistance of teachers to seeing the relevance of Indigenous perspectives across topics and subject areas bolsters the claim made by Wiltse, Johnston and Yang (2014) that dominant discourses (e.g. presenting Indigenous histories as static and relevant only to the past) continue to influence teachers' decisions about the topics they teach and the materials they choose. The next section focuses on the perceptions of teachers and teacher candidates.

Teachers, Teacher Candidates, and Their Perceptions of Integration

A 2010 report on the Urban Aboriginal Pilot Project for the Toronto District School Board (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010) found that schools and classrooms need to be decolonized and Indigenized. The report found that urban Aboriginal students are not provided the educational environment or the experiences they need for success. After conducting interviews

with educators over the space of a year, the authors find teachers are becoming more aware of their "roles and responsibilities…as inheritors of the colonial legacy" (p. vi) but not without apprehension, reluctance to recognize Indigenous students within their own school community, and limited support from the school board. Teacher training and professional development must focus on "building a respectful classroom environment where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are comfortable learning and discussing the history and legacy of colonialism" (p. ix), non-Indigenous teachers and students must learn about Indigenous peoples and cultures in ways that are respectful, and be educated about the history of colonialism and its impact on present day issues.

Also shedding light on the supports and resources teachers feel they need in order to respectfully integrate Indigenous perspectives is an action research investigation by Frank Deer (2013). Deer's study gathered teacher candidates' perceptions of the opportunities and difficulties associated with integrating Indigenous perspectives soon after they had completed a course on Indigenous education. Data was gathered from interviews with teacher candidates in order to understand their attitudes toward integrating Indigenous perspectives into mainstream education and classroom practice. Emergent themes related to the study's guiding questions were identified and used to elaborate on the challenges, opportunities and apprehension that teacher candidates expressed. Findings suggest that variables such as knowledge of Indigenous cultures, available classroom resources, attitudes of administration, staff, students and community, and compatibility with institutional values greatly impacted a teacher candidate's feelings toward integration.

In a critical ethnographic study that sought to make recommendations to improve Indigenous education, Verna St. Denis (2010) interviewed Indigenous teachers to draw upon their professional knowledge and experience, their philosophies on education, and their experiences with racism and with allies. The study interviewed 59 teachers from different regions across Canada through open-ended written questionnaires and audiotaped focus groups. Her findings support regular and consistent integration of Indigenous perspectives (i.e. daily) and emphasize that a heritage month or National Aboriginal Day celebration is not enough (p. 29). These teachers believed integration must be meaningful in the daily lives of all students; it must be respectful and make use of local resources. It does not have to mean doing ceremonies, and can rather be project or issue based (p. 31). The findings of this study, like Dion et al (2010), suggest

that ongoing training, Indigenous curriculum development, and more support for non-Indigenous teachers is needed (St. Denis, 2010). However, the lack of funding and administrative support for teachers who teach Indigenous perspectives are directly tied to a school subject hierarchy that views Indigenous perspectives as nothing more than crafts and stories. Indigenous histories and perspectives are not only trivialized trivializing academically, but resistance and racist attitudes are passed off by non-Indigenous colleagues as disinterest, joking, or unaware. Preliminary findings were presented to an Aboriginal Advisory Group comprised of teachers and educators, who provided feedback by way of potential recommendations. St. Denis used this feedback as a basis for the recommendations in her final report.

In an ethnographic school-university collaboration Wiltse (2016) looked at ways school literacy and classroom practice could draw upon the literacy resources available to Indigenous students in their community. The researcher involved six elementary level Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers and their students, with whom two classes of teachers candidates would collaborate with on various literacy initiatives across various subjects (e.g. heritage, science). Wiltse found that at the outset of the project teacher candidates were not initially prepared for the socio-cultural dimensions of teaching Indigenous students, either due to stereotypical misconceptions or lack of historical knowledge. However, the university-school collaboration generated many experiences for teacher candidates where gaps in their knowledge were addressed and stereotypes disrupted. Moreover, teacher candidates increased their understanding of how Indigenous students' family and community literacy practices could be valuable in a classroom setting. Wiltse sees the collaborative project as a positive experience for teachers and students. Her study is valuable because it reveals much about teacher candidate perceptions and the value of building relationships between non-Indigenous educators and Indigenous communities, an approach that will be touched upon by studies in the last section of this literature review.

Jennifer Tupper (2011) also gathered perceptions of teacher candidates with regard to treaty education. In a survey of 348 predominately White, teacher education candidates at the University of Regina, Tupper (2011) sought written feedback about their knowledge, (mis)understandings, and experiences with implementing and understanding treaty education. Using critical race theory and theories of ignorance she found that White teacher candidates often

deployed ignorance as a strategy of avoidance or refusal to engage treaty education and to connect their own social and economic privileges to treaties. Tupper explains it is "not just teaching the "facts" of the numbered treaties; rather, it is about teaching through Indigenous worldviews and exploring the historical and contemporary relationship between First Nations and settlers" (p. 39).

Like the previous studies, Dion (2007) and Nicol and Korteweg (2011) focus on the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and teacher candidates but add a relational element to their work by focusing on how non-Indigenous participants see themselves in relation to Indigenous peoples. Dion offers a method for a critical pedagogy of remembrance, in which she explains teachers learn from the biography of their relationship with Indigenous peoples. Over a period of ten years, Dion found that the teachers and pre-service teachers she worked with defined themselves in relation to Indigenous peoples through dominant discourses that positioned them as a naïve or innocent "perfect stranger." To unravel and call into question the "truths" that underpin their perceptions, Dion had teachers recall images of "Indian" from their past and hold these up to contemporary work of Indigenous artists, filmmakers and storytellers. She argues this promotes "ethical awareness" among teachers that centers on historical implication and responsibility and encourages them to re-think their relationship to Indigenous peoples. These concepts, articulated by Dion, are similar to Donald's (2009, 2012) more detailed theoretical discussions of ethics and relationality, which will be discussed in the forthcoming section.

Korteweg (2011) also explores teachers' self-perception of their relationship to Indigenous peoples using Dion's (2007) conception of "perfect stranger." Data from focus group and interview research with White teachers in North Central Canada was drawn from a larger mixed methods study. She uses intersecting theories of Eurocentrism, critical Whiteness studies and decolonization to guide her analysis of teacher responses. Her findings suggest that the White teachers' discursive identity led to reluctance to engage in urban Indigenous education and justified this reluctance through a vocabulary of unfamiliarity and innocence that was much in line with Dion's notion of the "perfect stranger."

Nicol and Korteweg (2011) explore the ability for non-Indigenous teachers to "incorporate multiple cultural epistemologies into teaching" (p. 183) and become "critically reflexive, culturally responsive" (p. 183) educators. Methodologically, they engaged in a duo-

ethnography which co-critiqued and self-studied their approaches to culturally responsive teacher education. Data collection included teacher candidate journals and assignments, participant observations, interviews, and audio and video recording of teacher project meetings. Findings suggested that most teachers could shift how they saw themselves situated within a colonial mindset and understood the importance of decolonizing teaching practices. However, a few teachers withdrew from the teacher education course, overwhelmed by the content and responsibility to integrate Indigenous pedagogy. The researchers saw culturally responsive teacher education as a way to decolonize their own teaching practice as well as that of teacher candidates.

Theresa Strong-Wilson's (2007) study of eighteen predominantly non-Indigenous teachers teaching in an Indigenous community looked at how teachers' personal storytelling could present opportunities for decolonizing through self-reflection. Like Saunders and Hill, Strong-Wilson focuses primarily on White or non-Indigenous teachers, and undertakes this study with a concern about the resistance of these teachers to engage Indigenous knowledges from outside a Eurocentric lens. Decolonizing the personal stories of White teachers was intended to offer a counter-story to the invisible colonial relations that had shaped their perceptions of self and other, and challenge their perception of their relationships to and with Indigenous people. Data was collected from teachers through individual interviews and through monthly literature circles in which the teachers undertook critical memory work by looking at the literature that engaged them in childhood and youth. Strong-Wilson finds that the pedagogical challenge is dealing with resistant knowledges. To be equipped teachers need to re-visit and re-experience their own stories and experience counter-stories that shift and decolonize their storied pasts.

Like Tupper (2011), Kovach (2015) focuses on the way Indigenous perspectives on treaties are taught in formal schooling. She interviewed non-Indigenous post-secondary educators about their experiences with integrating Indigenous perspectives into their courses. She considers their non-Indigenous perspectives and experiences alongside Indigenous perspectives and philosophies. The discussion is grounded in Indigenous perspectives on teaching *through* treaty and treaty teaching, which Kovach explains, conceptualizes the treaty relationship as a just relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Kovach found non-Indigenous educators to be aware that 'add and stir' approaches to integrating Indigenous perspectives were

problematic, however, they feared that delving deeper into Indigenous knowledges would unintentionally cause offense or elicit highly emotional reactions. Instead, the non-Indigenous educators gravitated toward narratives of social justice as a way of understanding the way present day struggles relate to the colonial past. The perspectives of these educators resonate with this thesis because like the non-Indigenous teacher contributors to my project, the educators Kovach spoke to understood that it was problematic to teach *about* Indigenous perspectives, however they hesitated to move beyond teaching *about* treaties, and to instead teach *through* Indigenous philosophies of treaty.

The studies in this section point to similar challenges to integrating Indigenous perspectives, although with disagreement over what is the most pressing challenge. In some contexts the biggest challenge may indeed be a lack of supports and resources (Dion, 2010). In other contexts, the biggest challenge may be having teachers to overcome their own biases and step away from dominant discourses that would position non-Indigenous peoples innocently apart from Indigenous peoples, and as Scott (2013) found in the previous section, see Indigenous perspectives as irrelevant across all subjects (Tupper, 2011, Korteweg, 2011, Stong-Wilson, 2007). There is agreement that Indigenous perspectives must be a meaningful and ongoing presence throughout curriculum (St. Denis, 2010) and the learning must happen through Indigenous paradigm (Saunders & Hill, 2007, Tupper, 2011). In other words, there is more to integrating Indigenous perspectives than even a strong critique of colonial history can offer. Having dealt with perceptions, the next section looks at how teacher candidates are learning through Indigenous perspectives in teacher education programs.

Learning Through Indigenous Perspectives at the Level of Teacher Education

Teacher education programs have implemented a variety of strategies to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into their courses and into mainstream education. This section selects from that literature the studies that detail frameworks that have been developed to support integration initiatives. Including studies that refer to teacher education is useful because they are plentiful and the strategies used are intended to influence future classroom practice.

Korteweg, Fiddler, Bissel, Primavesi, Clark and Moon (2013) gathered data from 40 mostly-non-Indigenous students in a specialized teacher education course that sought to

indigenize mainstream education and decolonize non-Indigenous teacher perceptions. More specifically, the course sought to honour and integrate Indigenous ways of knowing while preparing students to acknowledge and respect treaty relationships. Over several weeks the course explored: teacher identity, Indigenous content in history, geography, and contemporary issues, privilege and Eurocentrism, Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous education models, treaty history, residential schools, Indigenous families and students today, and decolonizing curriculum. Data consists of coursework and reflective journal assignments. Indigenous guest speakers, Elders, and web material created by Indigenous people. Students were required to participate in an action based cultural immersion component of the course. The course aimed to help teacher candidates develop *awareness* (of Indigenous history, knowledge, issues), *engagement* (with developing student and community relationships), *responsive* practices (that transform teaching towards cultural responsiveness), and *alliances* (and advocacy beyond the classroom). Data revealed that after coming to *awareness* some students would become metaphorically "stuck" or "stumbling", meaning they were struggling with or working through the disruption of encountering difficult knowledge. However, many students found ways to reorient their practice in culturally responsive or advocacy ways, and reflected on how much they had learned from Elders or Indigenous students during the cultural immersion component of the course. An important consideration was the time investment and institutional flexibility that organizing this culturally immersive type of course required. The authors also note the energy and commitment required of participants is significant, but maintain that it is necessary in order to Indigenize mainstream education.

Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi (2013) discuss the Deepening Knowledge Project at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), which encourages staff and students to engage with Indigenous perspectives in various ways. The authors draw data from a series of workshops planned for teacher candidates that would cover topics of Indigenous identity, historical trauma, present day social issues, and ways to integrate Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into teaching practice. The series of workshops was held once each year for two years, and evaluation forms that attendees filled out provided the data for the study. The results illustrated that the majority of students had received some postsecondary instruction regarding Indigenous peoples and perspectives, but in most cases it was minimal. Few students felt very comfortable with teaching the material, but many believed they were at least somewhat comfortable, and were

interested in learning more. In particular, teacher candidates wanted more concrete examples of how to integrate Indigenous perspectives in a variety of subject areas. A conclusion of this study, which is echoed almost unanimously throughout the literature, is that initiatives that expose teacher candidates to Indigenous history and perspectives should be mandatory.

Nardozi, Restoule, Broad, Steele, and James (2014) continue to study strategies for integrating Indigenous perspectives through the Deepening Knowledge Project by surveying approximately 70 teacher candidates and interviewing 5 from a small cohort of teacher education program who chose to focus on Indigenous education. The findings reiterated some of the previous challenges to integrating Indigenous perspectives, such as positioning oneself as the unknowing but benevolent "perfect stranger". Moreover, findings revealed that while Indigenous perspectives are acknowledged as important they are often cast as part of multiculturalism, given many other diverse groups of students. The teacher candidates had a hard time imagining how integrating Indigenous perspectives would work in practice and cited the need for more teacher education in this regard. The misconception that Indigenous perspectives are only for Indigenous students continued to act as a challenge to teacher candidate willingness and indicated limited understanding of the (ongoing) impacts of colonialism. One of the most effective strategies for integrating Indigenous perspectives was Voice Testimony – having Indigenous guest speakers or Elders in the learning environment. The impact of Voice Testimony speaks to the need to make community connections and alliances with Indigenous people part of mainstream education for *all* students.

Ng-A-Fook and Smith (2017) make a case for the value of oral history in history education, explaining that oral history can be a praxis of reconciliation to address the educational mandate outlined by the TRC. As part of a larger study on digital histories Ng-A-Fook and Smith sought to understand "how [teacher candidates] interpreted the complex historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as it pertains to the history and on-going legacy of the IRS system. In other words, how did they understand the lived experiences of those who died or survived the IRS system" (p. 69). The activities teacher candidates took part in included a survey, a workshop, and filming a recorded interview of an oral history with an Elder from the Kitigan Zibi community in Quebec. Focus group data from teacher candidates who shared their experiences interviewing and recording the oral histories indicates that oral histories were an

opportunity to co-create historical meaning outside of dominant settler colonial narratives and in relation to the experiences of the residential school survivors they interviewed. Moreover, the experience of meeting and building relationships with Elders was an impactful way of making their history real to teacher candidates. The goal outlined in this study and the approach to learning one on one through oral histories is significant to my thesis because it is similar to what a group of high school students undertook. They also recorded filmed interviews with First Nation community members and a residential school survivor. The high school students wanted to bring awareness to their peers and deepen their understanding of how residential school experiences, situated in the broader context of colonialism, impacted local First Nation communities.

In a social action project that brought teacher candidates together with First Nation community members, Ng-A-Fook (2013) worked with a class of teacher candidates who took part in voluntary community service learning placements in a local First Nations community. Drawing on Indigenous knowledges and perspectives, a goal of the project was to "re-imagine and re-articulate familiar curriculum concepts across different subject areas" (p. 9). Focusing on the elementary science curriculum, teacher candidates worked with the local community to create lesson plans and other learning materials that took up Algonquin conceptual frameworks. The cross-cultural collaboration encouraged students to reconsider their own subjectivity decolonize their approaches to the school curriculum.

Sanford, Williams, Hopper and McGregor (2012) discuss the ways Indigenous principles have been integrated into a teacher education program. The authors offer their experiences with integration as course instructors through narrative accounts. As an overarching framework for integration they name: respectful environments, inclusive curricula, culturally responsive pedagogies, mechanisms to promote Indigeneity in education, and culturally responsive assessment (p. 22). The teaching and learning is centered on 6 Lil'wat principles. These principles helped instructors create "rules of engagement" to orient students i.e. put your peers learning before your own, create work that will benefit seven generations, use your own passion to energize the community (p. 29). The creation of new courses and alternative practica made space for these principles to be enacted. An inquiry-based course was developed that allowed students to choose the topics of personal and professional relevance to their own learning. Other

changes include assignment-based assessments evaluated by set criteria, student portfolios that included documents and artifacts that had an impact on their learning, a day of rest or "stillness" mid week. The authors note that changing the courses for teacher candidates also shaped their own teaching orientations and practices. They also stress that it was a challenge and a commitment to create the space for Indigenous principles, and to work through challenges posed by administrative structures and students who are unfamiliar with Indigenous based approaches.

Vetter, Haig-Brown, and Blimkie (2014, 2014) use narrative accounts and a case study respectively to discuss their implementation of culturally responsive teaching practice "infused" with Indigenous perspectives. By infusing they aimed to "develop teacher candidates' knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives, and contemporary issues to respond to the specific needs and interests of Indigenous students, and therefore facilitate respectful and relevant learning for all students in Ontario classrooms" (p. 305). This was accomplished by centering land, Indigenous peoples and the complexity of relationships, refusing "deficit" models, and examining what it means to take Indigenous people and though seriously. Five guiding principles were developed for culturally responsive teaching: 1) see "not knowing" as an opportunity for learning, 2) recognize diverse histories, teachings, and protocols, 3) make space for alternate perspectives (let students create the learning environment so it reflects them), 4) use resources in context (make meaningful connections between the past and present, and using Indigenous created resources), and 5) *infuse* not *include* (p. 306). The narrative account of their work (2014a) has practical application in that it gives in depth examples and lists many types of infusion that can happen in the classroom. Their case study, which "took place over 10 months and used questionnaires, focus groups, course syllabi, student assignments, university and ministry policies, reflective research journals, and field notes as sources of information" (2014b, p. 50) involved 48 teacher candidate participants. The results indicated that teacher candidates learned a lot from the infusion but then admitted they had a lot more to learn. Most teacher candidates went on to include Indigenous perspectives in their practicum teaching but sought the security of a (prescriptive) step-by-step or technical guide to infusing their teaching so they could feel more confident in doing it respectfully and accurately. The study notes that a longitudinal study that would follow teachers into their own practice to see how they continue with infusion would be an asset.

Hart, Whatman, McLaughlin, and Sharma-Brymer (2012) discuss the task for Indigenous pre-service teachers to imbed Indigenous perspectives throughout the curriculum, which is inherently Eurocentric, as is school culture in Australia. The authors draw on a theory of cultural interface (where there is tension between western hegemonic and Indigenous knowledge systems but the learner has agency to work through this tension). The data tells stories of six Indigenous teacher candidates using interpretive phenomenology. The findings illustrate a paradox: teacher candidates experienced lowered expectations from supervising teachers in their practica, but were assumed to be experts on Indigenous knowledge at the same time. They found it difficult to always live up to the expectation of imbedding Indigenous knowledge in the subjects they had to teach (i.e. math). The authors note that without Indigenous perspectives being present throughout teacher education, there is limited opportunity for students to develop comfort and understanding, and to use strategies to engage Indigenous ways of knowing in practice.

Pedagogical Approaches and Frameworks

Finally, the literature in this section describes frameworks and pedagogical approaches developed by educators at secondary and post secondary levels. These studies do not describe the in class experiences of applying the frameworks as much as they articulate the approaches.

Kulniels, Longboat, and Young (2013) offer a framework for eco-literacy and environmental leadership that draws upon Indigenous environmental studies, Western scientific knowledge, and eco-justice education. They contend Indigenous and Western knowledges must exist alongside each other in environmental learning at all levels. Their framework is informed by science and environmental educators, Indigenous scholars and Elders, and other educators with a background in environmental issues. They outline an eco-mentorship program for teacher candidates based on eco-literacy and environmental leadership, through which the teacher candidates build community networks to revitalize inter-generational Indigenous knowledges within science and environmental curricula. A practical activity to build community networks is a communal garden, where food, relationships to food, and by extension local plants, lands and waters, are explored through inquiry based learning processes that draw on Indigenous and Western knowledges. The framework resonates with current perspectives on the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in education, and it develops relationships through shared experience. Shared experiences can be seen as are one way to develop common ground

between distinct communities. Martin Cannon (2012) elaborates on the importance of finding common ground.

Offering a pedagogical approach for the post-secondary level, Cannon (2012) argues that finding (and troubling) common ground is the most urgent challenge Canada faces in terms of building productive linkages between "diverse communities, and providing for a united front against the racism and colonialism aimed at Indigenous peoples" (p. 25). In his course with teacher candidates, Cannon unpacks the concepts of privilege and oppression paying careful attention to the complex way these can overlap and converge. Through activities such as taking on a pseudo identity or step exercise (privilege walk) students develop an understanding of how their teaching practice can reproduce or intervene in systems of privilege and oppression. By focusing on issues such as environmental sustainability, common ground becomes a way of building dialogue across Indigenous and settler communities and ways of knowing, and for non-Indigenous students, troubling the (unfair) advantages colonialism has granted them.

Judy Iseke-Barnes (2008) also outlines a pedagogical approach for decolonizing at the post-secondary level that has students engage two hypothetical frameworks for seeing the world from the beginning of their course of study: one is based on hierarchy, individualism and competition, and the other is based on cooperation, shared resources, and equality. As students move through scenario based activities these frameworks come to represent Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. They often come to see colonization as an interconnected system of oppression, of which they are a part. Iseke-Barnes then goes on to explore decolonizing projects to make tangible the ways in which colonial systems of oppression can be challenged. In this sense her decolonizing pedagogy does not stop at critiquing colonialism, but encourages students to understand acts of resistance. Iseke-Barnes (2008), Cannon (2012), and Kulneiks, Longboat and Young (2016) outline pedagogical frameworks that share in common an element of relationality. Relationality is developed in various ways, from relearning the history of coloniziation to finding common ground and shared experiences in the way present day environmental challenges are addressed.

Like Kulnieks, Longboat and Young (2016) the next two studies focus on Indigenous community involvement. In a secondary level project that developed connections between

students and Indigenous community members, Halbert and Kaser (2012) describe an inquiry based learning project that took place in British Columbia. The researchers are the co-directors of Networks of Inquiry & Innovation and Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network, government-funded initiative to foster educational change through school-based inquiry targeted at specified learning needs. The specific learning needs this article addresses are improved literacy and educational outcomes among Indigenous high school students in BC. They provide five case studies, which integrate Indigenous cultural knowledges through an inquiry, based learning program. Key successes note that drawing on students' prior knowledge, creating time to explore of interest topics (i.e. issue-based inquiry), developing ongoing connections with community Elders, and introducing non-fiction materials to explore Indigenous contributions to society all contributed to heightened engagement and heightened appreciation of Indigenous knowledges. Both Barnhardt and Halbert & Kaser stress that clear and useable frameworks are crucial if educators are to be empowered to integrate Indigenous knowledges. With strong frameworks, educators were able to choose the materials and teaching strategies appropriate to their learners.

Barnhardt (2007) writing from an Alaskan context, discuss the results of a ten-year educational development project to integrate local Indigenous ways of knowing and pedagogies across the public school curriculum. An overarching belief in the study is that exploring and developing points of intersection between Western and local Indigenous knowledge systems will strengthen educational experiences and create culturally relevant curricula. The study found that a lack of Indigenous peoples with "advanced expertise" made it difficult to integrate Indigenous and Western knowledges in a balanced way, and necessitated long term strategizing between researchers, local community, and natural environments in order to foster ongoing connectivity. Significant time was spent articulating or mapping out Indigenous knowledge systems so educators and Elders would have shared understandings about the values and practices to be implemented in schools. This mapping ensured that any curricula development would 1) focus on teaching through rather than about Indigenous knowledges, and 2) form the basis of standards for culturally responsive education that all teachers could draw upon. An important take away from the Alaska study is that a comprehensive strategy for integrating Indigenous knowledges was developed so educators could implement it in ways specific to their local area.

Finally, two studies from the Australian context are worth mentioning. Mary O'Dowd (2010) discusses a strategy of 'ethical positioning' as a way to engage teacher candidates in a discussion of colonial history, racism, and Indigenous perspectives. As a lecturer at a rural teacher education program, she gathered data through course feedback and used this to reflect on experiences with 5 cohorts of students over two years. She developed the strategy of 'ethical positioning' as a response to the unacknowledged racism and overt resistance of students. As O'Dowd explains, part of student resistance was the idea that all views were equally valuable, so she asked students think through the ethical consequences of their views in the context of promoting social justice. Ethical positioning as a strategy provides an opportunity for reflection, as well as a framework for understanding how views are constructed. The implications of one's views for social justice were considered in terms of the individual, the Other, the community, nationally, and globally. As students were rural, issues of social justice that faced rural populations (i.e. wealth distribution, access to resources/education/jobs) were drawn upon. Contrasting historical narratives (celebrated Australian pioneer history and counter history of Indigenous massacres) were presented together, and by linking this history to the present, students were encouraged to take ethical *actions* toward social justice in their teaching, rather than merely advocating socially just views.

Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) offer a framework for assessing the depth and breadth of engagement with Indigenous perspectives throughout the Australian curriculum. Land, language, culture, time, place, and relationships represent six categories comprising the breadth of content. Each of these categories is then assessed according to four levels of depth: protocols, values, processes, and systems. The authors note that many intangible aspects of Indigenous knowledge cannot be itemized. Using the breadth and depth matrix, the authors analyzed curriculum documents and found that the majority of references to Indigenous perspectives referred to tangible or factual content knowledge and descriptors. In the majority of cases mention of Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum did not necessarily reflect an Indigenous perspective (just reference to it). The authors then applied Bloom's revised taxonomy to assess what level of cognitive understanding the curriculum was demanding. They found that higher order thinking was not consistent in instances where Indigenous perspectives were required. The authors conclude that despite aspirations to thoroughly integrate Indigenous perspectives in all subject matter, the curriculum fails to achieve this goal, and particularly fails to achieve a substantive

level of depth. Finally, the authors looked for links between Indigenous perspectives and social justice in the curriculum and found that social justice was disproportionately connected to discussions of rights and language but omitted from issues of sovereignty, autonomy, and racism, which contributes to the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous peoples and knowledges in Australia.

Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013) provide a framework that if used in combination with Kanu's (2011) framework for integration, could assist teachers in imagining what integration looks like in practice. Two ways of showing the combination of frameworks are as a three dimensional shape such as a cube, and more organically as a tree. Recall that Kanu identifies five levels of integration for Indigenous perspectives: 1) learning outcomes, 2) instructional methods and strategies, 3) learning materials and resources, 4) assessment, and 5) overarching philosophy). Taking Lowe and Yunkaporta's 6 content areas: 1) land, 2) language, 3) culture, 4) time, 5) place, and 6) relationships) we can weave these areas into each of Kanu's five levels. For example, a teacher choosing learning materials and resources would consider resources that, 1) enable students to connect to the land, or use the land itself as a resource, 2) make use of Indigenous languages in the naming of places and concepts rather than using English names only, and so on for culture, time, place and relationships. Even if a teacher does not have extensive background knowledge or experience with Indigenous perspectives the 6 content areas give teachers and students identifiable areas to explore, perhaps through research or inquiry and project based learning. With the content areas in mind, we can return to Kanu's requirement that 'philosophy' represent an overarching level of integration. Again, for a teacher with limited (or even extensive) background knowledge, philosophy can be challenging and abstract. Lowe & Yunkaporta's 4 levels of depth: 1) protocols, 2) values, 3) processes, and 4) systems) offer a 4-point approach to engaging Indigenous philosophy. These four levels of depth would cross over into each content area and level of integration. For example, in this research, one teacher chose a learning resource that would enable students to connect to the land and understand its significance in a First Nation worldview. The resource was a First Nation community member who explained to students how tobacco is used at the sacred fire (protocols) as a way of giving thanks to the earth (values), and connecting to the spirit world. This explanation did not only incorporate land, it drew on multiple content areas (i.e. place and relationships) as well as philosophical levels of depth (i.e. processes and systems).

Figure 1.
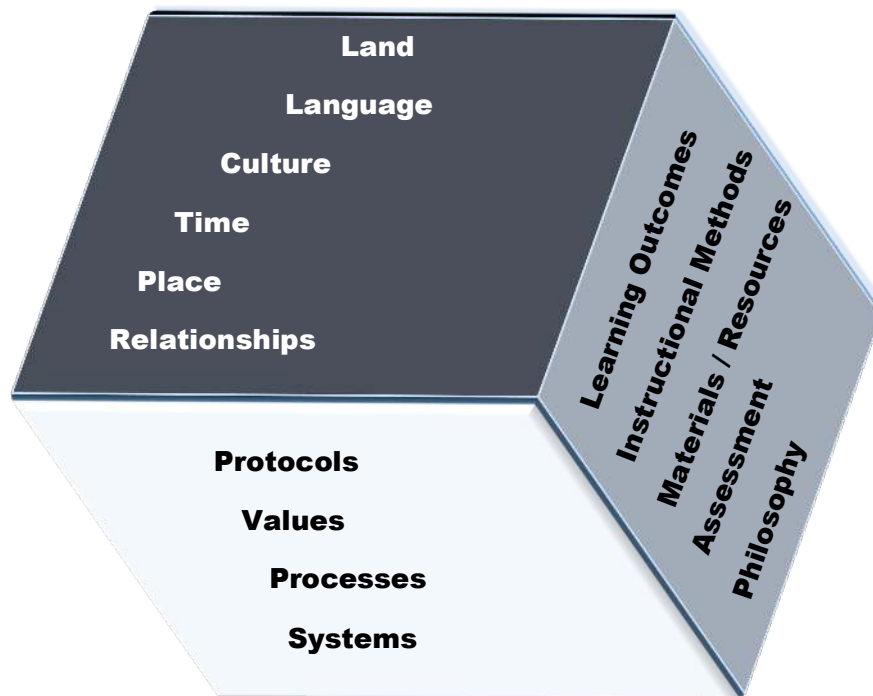
When the two combined frameworks are shown as a three-dimensional shape the various layers and intersections can be represented visually without implying hierarchy. How one sees the integration of the frameworks depends on their perspective relative to the three-dimensional shape. We can imagine that behind the surface, these criteria for integration are not only intersecting, but also weaving themselves together.

Figure 2.
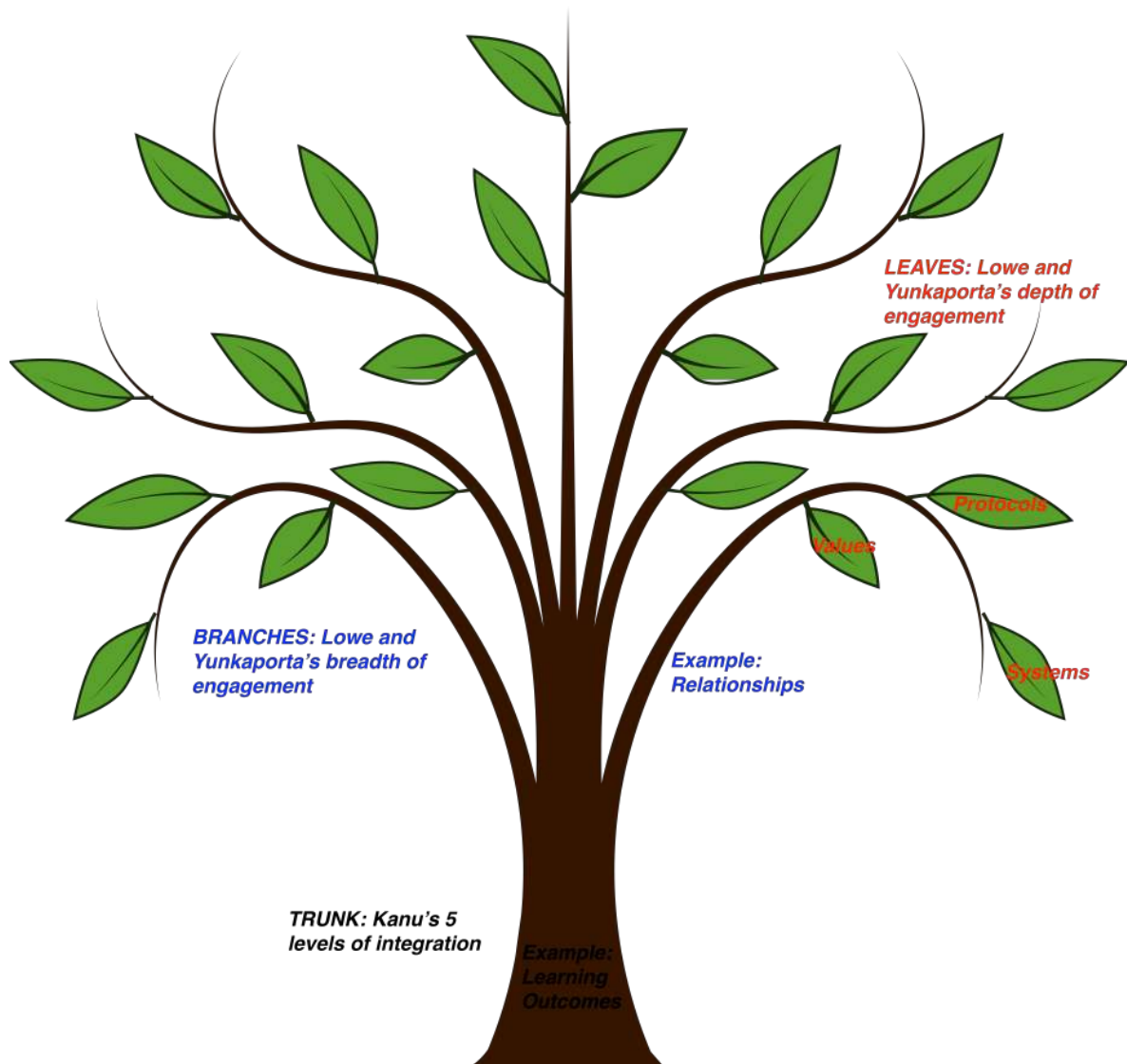
When the two frameworks combined are shown as a tree the various parts of the tree (trunk, branches, and leaves) illustrate interdependence. The different branches remind us of the many possibilities for integrating Indigenous perspectives. The seasonal cycle of the tree, which starts the life cycle of new trees reminds us that integration is not necessarily grounded in the tree trunk: the fallen leaves and seeds of knowledge systems, values, protocols and processes can also give birth to many opportunities for engaging Indigenous perspectives.

Thinking through integration as a combination of two frameworks that span content areas and depth provides a non-prescriptive guide to including and connecting key concepts and understandings. It can remind educators who may encounter abundant resources on First Nation "culture" that "time", "place", and "relationships" need also be considered alongside "culture",

particularly in the ways these are philosophically significant. A single resource, such as a novel, may not address each concept directly, but the framework contains a vocabulary with which teachers and students can access those concepts indirectly and explore their significance through the tangible and intangible, the concrete and the abstract, the physical and the spiritual.

Gaps and Implications

The recent studies reiterate the importance of integrating Indigenous perspectives for all students. However, the studies and findings focus overwhelmingly on the attitudes of teacher candidates and practicing teachers, to a lesser extent on the perceptions of students, and almost non-existent are the perceptions of non-Indigenous students. Yet these students and their attitudes toward Indigenous peoples and histories are crucial role in moving reconciliation forward as a country and in generating future leadership that is committed to a different relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Moreover, while many studies that focus on teacher education discuss the importance of transforming or Indigenizing mainstream education, nearly all of the collected data is based on initiatives that are optional for students to participate in (such as an elective course, special cohort, or workshop series). When we look at the reach of these initiatives in terms of numbers (i.e. one course of students from within an entire cohort) they are not reaching the majority of students, which illustrates the institutional constraints (at the present time – the impossibility) of thoroughly and comprehensively integrating Indigenous perspectives – even when that is what the initiatives are designed to work towards.

Of the literature reviewed, only Kanu (2011), Scott (2013), Dupuis and Ferguson (2016) and Tupper (2014) spend time in a high school classroom environment. Evidence of what is going on at the classroom level is an important gap for this study, especially as the literature suggests that many teachers are intimidated by the lack of professional development and classroom resources, or simply have difficulty imagining how integration would look in practice. This gap raises the central question of this study: (how) are Indigenous perspectives being integrated into the classroom curriculum? As the studies in this literature review point out, some educators continue to teach *about* rather than *through* Indigenous perspectives and risk presenting Indigenous perspectives through a non-Indigenous lens.

There also appears to be a wide variety of strategies for integrating Indigenous perspectives into teacher education programs and the way practicing teachers interpret integration. The former strategies repeatedly emphasize multifaceted approaches: teaching through Indigenous ways of knowing, promoting awareness of history, establishing connections with communities, and Indigenizing curriculum, rather than incorporating Indigenous points of view as one of many perspectives. Given the limited institutional reach of teacher education programs to reach all students, and the resistance of practicing teachers to create adequate space for Indigenous perspectives, the literature review illustrates that it is paramount that school boards prioritize professional development opportunities and the development of context appropriate frameworks and partnerships with local Indigenous stakeholders that will assist practicing teachers.

In summary the proposed study addresses what I perceive to be four main gaps by looking at: 1) a number of promising practices that explore how successful and genuine aspects of integration are being implemented in high school classrooms, 2) what kind of impact the integration is having on students and teachers, 3) how these pedagogical strategies can work toward reconciliation and reconceptualizing the historical and present day relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and 4) how the integration of Indigenous perspectives is (or is not) decentering Eurocentric classroom discourses and initiating cross-cultural dialogues that support respectful relationship building.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Curriculum, Colonizing Logics, and Ethical Spaces

The school I went to started based on the idea of a teaching wigwam where both cultures learn from each other, neither dominating the other. Then the government got involved in running residential schools and changed that vision.

- Susie Jones, educator, residential school survivor, and member of the Walpole Island First Nation

Imagine the curriculum as a bridge for building a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples based on a relational ethics of one not dominating the other. It is a vision of education that residential school survivor Susie Jones, quoted above, explains can be traced back to Chief Shingwaukonse (Anishinaabe, Ojibwe), who advocated for education that would teach Anishinaabe people the ways of European settlers while preserving their own language and culture. The literature review in the previous chapter allowed us to glimpse how far education for Indigenous children in Canada has departed from that vision. As I have argued from the outset, now is the time to build that relational ethics of non-domination in education. This chapter conceptualizes the ways a decolonizing pedagogical praxis can support a relational ethics on which curricula are based, and through which engagements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are reframed. The framework in this chapter unfolds in three parts. First, I offer a conceptualization of curriculum as broad, epistemologically open and grounded in relationships between and among teachers, learners, their communities and their worlds. Next, I unpack the way colonial logics have and continue to shape curricula and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in (what is commonly known as) Canada. Finally, in turning to a question of ethics, I consider how the classroom (thought of broadly beyond four walls) can be a more ethical learning space for the integration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing.

A Curriculum in Relation: The Bridge and the Abyss

> frameworks yes we used what the newcomers called frameworks
> to gather our relations   the salmon nations
> these   were our installations and properties and sets
> molding us to the places of the river which named us
> through our naming of them   the land languaged us
> with the breath it gave us   we spoke   to identify (actually to relate).
> (Cole, 2006, p. 29)

The previous chapters have made the case that education of Indigenous people by non-Indigenous people has, and continues to have, a colonizing force. In light of this legacy, the belief in education as a way forward as shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators is almost a contradiction. Still it is a contradiction to remind us that even the common ground we share is built upon assumptions about the terms we use, the purposes we articulate, and the approaches taken up. Curriculum is such a term. In school, for example, the curriculum may refer to a specific government issued document; in an Indigenous community, curriculum might be understood as the activities and interactions of everyday life through which highly contextualized knowledge and experience is passed along (Armstrong, 1987). In a broad sense, where curriculum involves formal and informal learning in all aspects of life, curriculum is a 'complicated conversation' between teachers and learners, between pasts and presents, between selves, others and societies at large, in which meanings are continuously made and re-made (Pinar, 2012). In essence, curriculum is about relationships. Although a focus of this project is the colonial (and present day) relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, *relationship* like curriculum, must be thought of broadly and inclusively. Is a relationship something between people(s), or between all things, of which humans are only a part? Given that Canada's colonial history has in many ways failed to foster a mutually fruitful relationship with Indigenous peoples, this framework outlines a way of thinking about how curriculum can interrogate and reframe the colonial and settler logics which frame that relationship and work toward renewing it through an ethics of non-domination.

Cole (2006) in the quote above acknowledges "the salmon nations" as relations. When we think of the need to build a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people we are talking about a relationship that includes humans and extends far beyond them as well (TRC, 2015a). If Canadians are to take seriously the need to build a relationship based on respect and

understanding, they must respect and understand that in Indigenous ways of knowing and being there is connectivity and equal importance among all things in the universe. "The expression 'all my relations' proclaims a profound reality: As we make our way through life we travel in a relational existence. Because all parts of life are interrelated, these relationships provide wholeness to existence" (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 78). Nicole Bell, Anishinaabe from the Kitigan Zibi First Nation explains:

> Everything is but an individual manifestation of an underlying whole. Everything is connected, just like the strands of a spider's web. Touch one and you affect them all. True wisdom is thus a recognition that everything is dependent on everything else; that everything is interlinked with everything else in an intricate network or web. (p. 99)

Nikaaniganaa (also *Nii'kinaaganaa*) is the word Bell (2013) and Dolleen Manning Tisawii'ashii (2014) used to express 'all my relations' in their understanding of Anishinaabeg relational ontologies. Explaining the place of humans into a web of 'all my relations,' Bell continues:

> Enacting responsibility toward the natural world includes the recognition that all things in nature which give us life are considered family. The life-givers in the environment such as the sun, waters, plants, and animals are relatives and are included when 'all my relations' is spoken. Anishinaabe teachings remind us that as the human species we have responsibility to all the life-givers and must enact our responsibility to ensure our actions fulfill our part in the 'work' that needs to be done. (p. 103)

When we enter into relationships we may not all share the same beliefs but we understand that to nurture a harmonious and mutually agreeable relationship, we must respect each other's beliefs. We do this by acting, communicating, and making decisions that do not neglect or treat with indifference the importance of those beliefs. A profound ethical implication for non-Indigenous people to grasp in building a new relationship with Indigenous people is that respecting Indigenous belief systems (which include ways of knowing, being and doing) is not just entering into a people to people relationship; it is connected to a larger web of relationality, the whole of which must also be respected. An important question is how to conceptualize curriculum if it is to help in building this relationship?

Brenda Lafrance (2000) explains that curriculum can be thought of broadly as experience in First Nation cultures, where "education is a lifelong continuum of experience gleaned from interaction with one another, with all of nature (seen and unseen), as well as with all of the cosmos" (p. 101). There is no textbook in this curriculum of experience. There is Mother Earth

who teaches about understanding and using soils and plants in medicine and agriculture, understanding life cycles and interdependencies, and comprehending oneness with the universe (Lafrance, 2000). Important survival skills such as trapping, hunting, fishing, and food preparation are taught through observation and practice, with extended family members playing important roles in demonstrating technique or offering teachings through stories (Neegan, 2005). Shirley Stirling (1995), for example, reflects on the ways her mother was her greatest teacher, telling stories that connected her not only to her culture, but to traditional pedagogies of engagement, enjoyment and communication as passed down from her grandmother. Curriculum in this sense is a relationship between generations, among members of communities, and the actions of everyday life. It is intertwined with living, not isolated inside a room with four walls (Neegan, 2005), and if we are lucky, a window.

In thinking through the relationships that shape our experiences and way of viewing the world, Aoki gives insight:

> I find it important to center curriculum thought on a broader frame, that of "man/world relationships," for it permits probing of the deeper meaning of what it is for persons (teachers and students) to be human, to become more human, and to act humanly in educational situations. Given this center, which I consider to be irreducible, I am able to view people situated in their world and acting upon themselves and their world. (p. 95)

Although Aoki's theorizing does not represent an Indigenous perspective, his words are useful 1) for seeing curriculum in the midst of a web of relationships, keeping in mind that 'man/world' is not a binary relationship, nor is it humans at the center with the world revolving around them, and 2) for showing that ideas about how and why we learn are not binary opposites in Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. Using the metaphor of a bridge as a place of meeting and lingering to explore "temporal and spatial connections and transitions" invites us to imagine conversation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing (p. 83). For Aoki, the bridge is not "for helping us to move from one place to another, the speedier the better" as if crossing over a void between lands, continents, or cultures (p. 316). Rather a bridge is as one would find in an Oriental garden, designed to be pleasing to the eye so the act of crossing becomes one of lingering, observing, and participating in the experience of a space between two places. Thought of in this way, a bridge makes possible cross-cultural conversations that are "guided by an interest in understanding more fully what is not said by going beyond what is said"

(p. 227). In other words, cross-cultural encounters that have more than a utility purpose: they are dynamic and are characterized by listening, watching, relating, and sharing a space.

As we step onto the bridge, we enter a place of multiple ways of knowing. Other curriculum theorists and educators (Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2010; Kincheloe, 2008) have suggested that engaging multiple epistemologies, or epistemological pluralism is a way for curriculum to be more attuned and responsive to experience, and "to listen carefully and learn from the insights of individuals who are subjugated by existing socio-political, cultural, and pedagogical relationships" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 230). A multi-epistemological approach to curriculum is aware of the ways we non-Indigenous peoples, and curricula are constituted by Western assumptions. But what happens in the absence of awareness? We close our eyes and ears, unaware, and step onto Aoki's bridge only to find that it is not a space of connecting, but a narrow walkway that leads to nowhere: an abyss. Drawing on Boaventura de Souza Santos, Andreotti, Ahenakew and Cooper (2010) caution against abyssal thinking, which is a metaphor for the shifting line between epistemological dominance and epistemological pluralism. That line of shifting meanings, determines which knowing is visible and valid, and what is invisible, void. An instrumentalist curriculum (Aoki, 2005), for example, illustrates one side of the line of the abyss. Mono-directional, premised on the linear movement of knowledge through hierarchies of authority (i.e. from expert to novice) and modeled on a narrow (Western) positivist scientific inquiry, the instrumental curriculum suffers from a lack of awareness: "epistemic blindness (to other epistemologies)" (Andreotti et al, 2010, p. 41). Consequently, when curriculum is seen as a means to an end it imparts an ethos of "manipulation and control" which assumes a "split between body and mind, body and soul, the separation between the knower and the objective reality out there" which can be understood through mastery of facts and theory (Aoki, 2005, p. 224). For Ted Aoki this is alienating for teachers and learners because the learning process diminishes their experiences, and their relationships prescribed by it. Taken in the context of (colonial) Indigenous education, alienation is magnified by a historical legacy of epistemic blindness, where Indigenous experiences, ways of knowing, and being in relation did not matter, and where curricula was a means to the end of cultural assimilation. In a more subtle example that shows the shifting of the abyssal line, Donald (2009) explains that narratives of progress that emerge in certain notions of progressive education can likewise be alienating in the sense that Indigenous ways of knowing are engaged on the terms of linear Western ideology. The line of the

abyss shifts, masking progress as universal, and masking continued epistemological dominance. If we are to understand curriculum through dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing, Andreotti et al. (2010) argue:

> Special attention needs to be paid to how conceptualizations and technologies (such as writing or teaching in square rooms) will affect and transform representations and interpretations across contexts. Acute self-awareness and vigilance in relation to one's intent is also necessary: in carrying a tribe's knowledge up the plateau one may reinforce the abyss in relation to other knowledges. The most important question here is how to conceptualize knowledge in ways that make abyssal thinking and its resultant epistemic blindness impossible, and that enable the production of knowledge based on a principle of solidarity. (p. 44)

In other words, a curriculum that is experienced in relation is epistemologically open to multiple ways of knowing. In the opening quote of this chapter Susie Jones recalls a vision for education where two cultures would learn from one another in a relationship of equals where neither was dominant. For her, the teaching wigwam is the place of coming together and lingering, like the bridge. If we peer into the abyss we see that the failure to realize this vision for education is but one piece of the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. What has stood in the way of that relationship? In the next section I explore ways that logics of colonialism have created a cognitive imperialism, or in other words, become part of the psyche of the settler society. As Marie Battiste (2011, 2005) explains, cognitive imperialism is a consequence of the education system teaching Indigenous children to feel inferior to, and accept Western ways of knowing. The same can be said for the settler society, whose learning is found on the flip side of the indoctrination equation: settler culture and ways of knowing are superior.

Colonial Logics

One day, during an on-site visit to a school a First Nation educator from a local community explained to me in First Nation culture as she experiences it, a person's story is their truth. Their truth is derived from knowing: "Knowing is believing. That's different from the Western belief system where seeing is believing and you have see it first and have proof in order to believe." Her words illustrate what truth is believed to be (i.e. contingent or constant) and from where it is derived (i.e. experience or objective facts) has important consequences such as

misunderstanding between worldviews, hierarchies of legitimate knowledge, and the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in what we call Canada.

In the context of colonial history in Canada, Cree scholar Dwayne Donald explains much of what is believed to be a truthful account of history as we may have learned in school is actually myth. However, myth reveals many truths about culture through which it is possible to understand the cultural values that idealize certain versions of history (Donald, 2009). For example, colonial forts, built to protect a European foothold in North America, position Indigenous peoples, experiences, and interests outside of the fort's walls and apart from European peoples, experiences and interests, which happen within the fort's walls. The literal and metaphoric separation of early Europeans and settlers from Indigenous peoples forms a "reductive Canadian national narrative" that continues to shape the way past and present relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are understood (p. 3). For Donald, the Canadian narrative is part of a colonial frontier logic that perpetuates the belief that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and histories are separate and that the settler epistemology (values, beliefs and principle) is rightfully the most valid. The fort represents a colonial logic of separateness that is relevant to the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the Canadian context. The next paragraphs will trace the foundations of colonial logics and explore ways that settler colonial narratives of peaceful settlement and legitimacy on the land are illustrative of such logics.

Walter Mignolo (2011) asks us to think of coloniality as the darker side of modernity, or "an underlying logic of the foundation and unfolding of Western civilization from the Renaissance to today of which historical colonialisms have been constitutive, although downplayed" (p. 2). He explains narratives of modernity that originated in Europe celebrated the achievements of Western civilization while hiding its darker side, coloniality. The colonial relationship between Europe and the Americas had an economic basis in capitalism and an epistemological basis in revolutionary advancements in science/knowledge. "Hidden behind the rhetoric of modernity… economic practices dispensed with human lives, and knowledge justified racism and the inferiority of human lives that were naturally considered dispensable" (p. 6). In other words, the modern celebration of freedom of "man" and market forms a colonial logic that masks the colonial dispensability of humans (subjugating their ways of knowing, their truth and their experiences) in pursuit of expanding markets.

The economic and the epistemological also underlie a colonization of space. The mapping of new lands and economic trade routes is more than a geographic dividing of worlds; it is an epistemic dividing between the modern/traditional world, and scientific knowledge/cultural knowledge. John Willinsky (1998) argues dividing, "classifying, and ordering humanity" (p. 2) are core colonial and imperial logics that "gave rise to peculiar and powerful ideas of race, culture, and nation" (p. 3). Writing from a Native American context, Byrd (2011) contends the converging of new "scientific racisms and territorial mappings inaugurated through Enlightenment voyages for knowledge" produce a "paradigm of Indianness" (p. xxi). In such a paradigm, nations derive legitimacy from their constitutionality, and state hegemony is justified through the logic of territorial rights and conquest. That which stands in the way of the settler colonial state's interests is rendered "Indian." To summarize succinctly, "coloniality represents the spatiality (expansionist control of lands), ontoepistemic racism (elimination and subjugation of difference) and geopolitics of knowledge production (epistemic violence) that are constitutive of modernity" (Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew & Hunt, 2015, p. 23).

Through this geopolitics of knowledge production we find colonial logics, which masquerade as universal in dominant (Western) sense making, but are in fact, laden with epistemic violence of a singular colonial reasoning. Tracing a colonial logic, Mignolo explains the concept of "nature" as one-way colonialism was introduced into the "domain of knowledge." He explains "the phenomenon that Western Christians described as "nature" existed in contradistinction to "culture"; furthermore, it was conceived as something outside the human subject (pp. 12-13). The concept of nature supplanted Indigenous understandings of the relationship between humans and all beings in which there was no distinction between human culture and nature; humans existed in nature, not apart from it. Thus, "nature" as it is understood in prevailing (colonial Western) common sense and in the school curriculum is a colonizing logic whose hegemonic ties to Western Christianity and a capitalist economy are largely obscured in curricular discourses. For example, the Ontario Curriculum for elementary Social Studies, History, and Geography (OME, 2013b), for me, quietly subscribes to this colonizing logic through the language of the "extraction/harvesting and/or use" (p. 170) of natural resources, and by imposing the concept of natural resources onto curricular expectations that explore Indigenous peoples' relationship to the land and environment (p. 91, 110). Learning, one may argue, is here framed through colonizing Western lens rather than drawing upon an Indigenous lens to disrupt

or compliment it. Having traced a number of colonial logics in accordance with Donald (2009) I will bring this notion into the analysis portion of this thesis. However, I will use the term *colonizing logics* to indicate that colonization is an ongoing reality in the lives of many Indigenous peoples, and to acknowledge that dominant Western or hegemonic ways of thinking, while not necessarily colonial in their origins, hold currency in the settler society today in ways that are colonizing to Indigenous peoples.

Colonizing Logics and Settler Colonialism. While Mignolo (2011) paints a picture of the foundation of colonizing logics in broad strokes, settler colonialism is one particular colonial formation with many specific contexts. Settler colonialism, as a narrative is driven by the logic of imperialism wherein settlers benefit from the oppression of Indigenous peoples and the privileges conferred to them by the power imbalance maintained by government policies and legislation. Confessing this privilege is one way by which settlers attempt to come to terms with their position in the colonial relationship, but a confession of privilege also helps to constitute the settler subject along racial lines (Smith, 2014). A key feature of settler colonialism is the erasure of Indigenous people and their replacement with settlers, who then take on the naturalized position of the Indigenous, only more Enlightened and more legitimate (Battiste, 2005; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). As long as Indigenous people remain invisible settler colonialism does not have to acknowledge its antagonistic and violent relationship with Indigenous people. However, assertions of Indigenous voices threaten the violent disruption of the peaceful settler colonial order, which in fact "pits Settler and Indigenous peoples against each other and Indigenous societies against themselves and benefits government and corporate elites at the expense of individual and collective autonomy" (Barker, 2009, p. 325).

In a system of settler colonialism, the term *settler* can include "most peoples who occupy lands previously stolen or in the process of being taken from their Indigenous inhabitants or who are otherwise members of the society founded on co-opted lands and resources" (Barker, 2009, p. 328). For example, settlers may have been born into the society or immigrated there later in life, which is increasingly changing the make up of primarily European to hybrid settler societies. There is some contradiction in referring to newcomers as settlers, given the land was settled by Indigenous peoples long before Europeans. More problematic, however, is the assumption that *settler* is synonymous with *non-Indigenous*. Writing in an academic blog post, Morgensen (2014)

explains, the term settler is burdened by unacknowledged links to White supremacy that continue to subjugate "settlers of colour" or non-Indigenous people who "inhabit Indigenous lands while experiencing colonial and racial subjugation" (n.p.). As such, we should think cautiously about what is being proposed when we use words like 'solidarity' to refer to alliances or the building of relationships between Indigenous people and settlers, and whose non-Indigenous identities may also be erased or subsumed by White settler supremacy in the process. Morgansen (2014) challenges:

> White people may participate in Indigenous solidarity as a way to shore up our political authority, whereby addressing one violence seems to relieve us of addressing our culpability in others, while our self-presentation as anti-colonial insulates us against criticism of our racism. (n.p.)

The critique resonates with education policies and curricular imperatives that espouse culturally responsive education for Indigenous students all the while remaining provincially mandated. With respect to control of Indigenous education being key to self-determination (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972), Fallon and Paquette (2012) caution that even in local-federal agreements First Nation control has been narrowly interpreted. The language of the agreements, they write, "remained firmly rooted in relations of internal colonialism while avoiding issues of equality" and "failed to address exclusionary practices, socio-economic and educational marginalization, and power inequalities affecting First Nations groups" (p. 3). Thus, *settler*, although a contentious term, distinguishes a certain type of colonialism that is based on seizing and maintaining access to lands and laden with ties to White supremacy that are purified and embedded into the fabric of Canada's national origin myths. As I use the term settler throughout this thesis it is important to keep in mind its potential, through myth, to re-inscribe rather than destabilize colonial relationships.

Settler colonialism as a set of values, discourses, and patterns of organization, works to erase Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012). For example, the physical presence of academic institutions with architecture imported from Europe is a form of Indigenous erasure disguised in plain sight (Battiste, 2005). Likewise, cityscapes are also agents of erasure: transforming natural landscapes, renaming them for settler colonial military heroes, explorers, and politicians, attempting to re-fix meaning through "deliberately engineered forgetting" (Stanley, 2009, p, 144). More generally, the erasure of Indigenous people and histories is also weaved throughout

curricular discourses that are built around narratives of the recent past (since European settlement), and of the progress European settlement brings. Here the landscape is (literally and figuratively) cleansed of meaning and inhabitants before settlement. Curriculum is deeply invested in settler colonialism, not only in the version of the past it acknowledges, but in that it depends on erasure to continuously depict the present and a future that centers settlers in accordance with imperialist values and attitudes.

Consequently, the Western prejudice embedded in curriculum produces a "cognitive imperialism" (Battiste, 2011, 2005). Cognitive imperialism has a psychic function, which is to normalize settler colonialism (the seizure and settlement of lands) and validate its corresponding belief systems such that they can continue to structure lives and institutions. Certain values (such as a linear view of progress as growth and development, and the superiority of Western knowledge ideals and those who promote them) are thus made explicit and implicit in one's learning. For example, the province of Ontario's "curriculum of neo/colonial dominance" reproduces settler colonial ideology through standardized curricula, subject matter, policy, and curricular materials i.e. textbooks (Smith, Ng-A-Fook, Berry, & Spence, 2011, p. 54). Certain stories are told that (re)produce myths about the development of the Canadian nation-state and settlement, while other stories remain untold. When taken together, these stories reinforce particular creation and settler narratives (colonizing logics) that are employed by official curricula and form the basis of narratives available to citizens and in circulation among institutional, political, and cultural institutions (Donald, 2012).

What is Canada's settler colonial story? Chambers (2012) notes, "the national narrative goes that by the twentieth century, the Dominion of Canada had evolved "peacefully" into "an autonomous nation" united with other countries by a "common allegiance" to the British Crown" (p. 26). Within this narrative, settlers and immigrants can situate their immigrant families and ancestors who immigrated to Canada "for the promise of social cohesion and economic prosperity" (Ng-A-Fook, 2013, p.1), and with "faith in modernism" and "ambivalence about the past" adopted their new country as if it had "no story, or at least not one worth learning about or remembering" (Chambers 2012, p. 25). Here, the land now known as Canada was for settlement, and nature an expendable colonial 'resource.' Settling meant starting a new, even reinventing oneself and forging a sense of belonging to the Canadian nation. In this sense, the concept

"nation" serves a settler colonial purpose of unifying newcomers who see themselves as part of an imagined community (Anderson, 1983). The colonial binaries of self and Other mark out the terms of inclusion and exclusion to such a nation and are further legitimized by rites of membership as outlined by the state. Indigenous conceptions of nation do not fit within this teleological model of nation and citizenship promoted by schools and curricula, where sovereignty is derived from the state. Instead, sovereign Indigenous nations derive legitimacy as an inherent right grounded in nationhood, which problematically continues to be reconciled or accommodated *within* the Canadian state (Coulthard, 2014). However, Indigenous concepts remain 'outsiders' and their knowledges are effectively excluded from Canadian public institutions, schools and universities (Donald, 2012, p. 44).

Positioning Canadians through settler narratives (Tupper, 2011), enables Canadians to 'forget' a colonial past, and continues to disinherit Indigenous history and knowledge (Ng-A-Fook, 2011). Furniss (1999) notes, the narrative of separation forms a key part of settler historical consciousness that creates a dichotomy of good and evil between Indigenous peoples and settlers. In this mythologized dichotomy, settlers are protagonists who journey in to a wilderness of primitive lands, morals, and materials, struggle against the harsh environment, the threat of hostile 'Indians' and prevail through hard work and the establishment of homesteads and civilized life. The themes that form the basis of the settler frontier myth (and a settler historical epistemology) sanction the settler state's moral imperative toward aggression and violence in order to bring civilization and salvation to the Indigenous population, and progress and peace to the frontier. Violence then becomes the unsung part of the settler's myth while stories of strength, struggle, and hard work are glorified. At the same time violence goes unsung, the narrative of settler and colonial state peacemaking is propped up (Regan, 2011). In a narrative of peacemaking, Indigenous peoples are positioned as the unfortunate Other in need of settler benevolence and the surety of British law and justice. For example, the process of treaty negotiation between the Crown and Indigenous nations brought peace and order to the Western frontier so land was made available for settlement and Indigenous people could benefit from the generosity of the Crown and missionaries in their attempt to bring salvation, education and productivity to all. Settlers can thus forge an identity that is cleansed of any complicity in wrongdoing and legitimizes their presence on the land.

Once settler presence is naturalized the history of the settlers' arrival is forgotten, which is also the history of Indigenous erasure. Generations of settlers can claim ignorance to colonial violence towards Indigenous peoples because as the decedents of peacemakers, they are innocent. A myth of innocence holds much currency today and is evident by omissions in history books, school text books and curricula, but also in political discourses of reconciliation which seek to make peace with Indigenous peoples and move forward on the settler society's terms (Coulthard, 2014). By the same token, we should ask if educational discourses of engagement with Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing are anything more than an attempt to make peace with Indigenous peoples and move forward on the settler society's terms.

A Relational Ethics for Curriculum: Reconciling and Decolonizing

> *The treaties are still real. They're still legal documents even if they've been broken. What was written in one of the treaties is "as long as the rivers flow, as long as the grass grows" and you know, the ice just broke up on the river yesterday and I could see that water flow, and I told the high school students, all winter long while it was buried under the ice, that water is still flowing.*
>
> *- Susie Jones, educator, residential school survivor, and member of the Walpole Island First Nation*

A relational approach to curriculum gives teachers and learners an opportunity to transform the ethics of the classroom and the way they think of the settler-Indigenous relationship. More specifically, Marie Battiste (2011) explains, relationality can be a site of transformation where Indigenous knowledges can be centered, and Western norms and canons challenged. The knowledge systems must coexist, not on another's terms or as articulated through another's language and definitions. As Susie Jones recalls in the opening quote of this section, the vision of schooling for First Nation children that she knew was to be based on reciprocity where cultures learn from one another where Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems are a basis of knowing in their own right. In the following chapters I strive to value the words she and other participants shared with me, as the theoretical contributions of community and firsthand knowledges "can produce forms of analysis that take up political issues in ways that have important consequences" for reframing the Indigenous-settler relationship (Simpson 2014, p. 7).

It has been difficult for multiple knowledge systems to coexist in curricular discourse. Kanu (2006) describes the notion of curriculum as a historically situated cultural practice. School

knowledges and practices shape a dominant (in this case settler-colonial) consciousness by normalizing and disseminating certain knowledges, values, attitudes, and behaviours through the school curriculum (Apple, 2004; Bourdieu, 1977; Giroux, 1983; Willis, 1977). In other words, the normalizing of certain (Western) school knowledges bars other knowledges (Indigenous) from being normalized. If settler-Canadians are to engage in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, they must not only reconsider the history of the country by disrupting the myth of an empty land that renders First Nations peoples invisible (Tupper, 2013; Epp, 2008; Furniss, 1999), they must fundamentally reconceptualize Indigenous and Canadian histories as shared and relational (Donald, 2009). Identifying and juxtaposing the colonizing logics with Indigenous perspectives offers the possibility of unpacking the representations that discredit Indigenous knowledges (Battiste, 2011) and "reframe[ing] historical understanding in ways that cause readers to question their own assumptions and prejudices…and thus foster[ing] a renewed openness to the possibility of broader and deeper understandings that can transverse perceived cultural, civilizational, and temporal divides" (Donald, 2009, p. 6). For the school curriculum, this requires a paradigm shift substantial enough to acknowledge the depth and complexity of Indigenous knowledges, and "reconstitute the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the immigrant societies in which they are embedded" (p. 20). Pedagogy must be oriented against the epistemic and cultural violence of Eurocentrism, which underlies the politics of content and knowledge in education, and instead oriented towards non-dominative principles of coexistence (De Lissovoy, 2010).

The difficulty of realizing a decolonizing paradigm shift was illustrated in Chapter 2 which explained, there are many ways educators, teacher candidates and students show resistance to learning about and acknowledging Indigenous histories, perspectives, and worldviews that seemingly contradict their own (see Dion, 2007; Tupper, 2011). Settlers cannot learn about colonialism by hearing about its impact on Indigenous peoples from the safe distance of a passive bystander; they must see their privileged position in the colonial relationship and engage this history (Cannon, 2012). For students and teachers, not being a bystander means embracing discomfort, and consciously engaging the emotional attachments they hold to particular worldviews and values (Boler, 2014; 1999). As upcoming chapters consider the daily habits, routines, values and worldviews reflected in classrooms and dialogue, it will be useful to keep in mind the way a decolonizing pedagogical praxis calls on students and teachers to embrace and

challenges their discomfort and read their own values, beliefs, and experiences in relation, instead of in comparison, to Indigenous worldviews.

Calling for a paradigm shift that will transform Eurocentric curricular narratives is one way of illustrating the shared work of decolonizing for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Here, decolonizing is a shared project led by Indigenous peoples with non-Indigenous peoples. As Morgansen (2014) explains, "White settlers do not lead the work of decolonization, in practice or in theory" (n.p.). There has been resistance to colonial thinking and doing for as long as there has been colonialism (Mignolo, 2011; Simpson, 2014), but in large part it has not been on the part of settlers. When seen as a shared endeavour, decolonizing re-imagines and re-constitutes colonial relationships so they can move forward based on deepened cultural understanding and an ethics of relationality and respect (Donald, 2009). Linda Smith explains decolonizing as "a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power" (Smith, 1999, p. 98). In other words it is process of political, material, ideological, and pedagogical transformation. As a pedagogical process, decolonizing means:

> recognizing the structures of colonization, meanwhile strategizing and engaging in practices and processes that disrupt colonial power… Understanding this colonial system is of central importance if students are to begin to consider how it was historically oppressed and how it continues to oppress. (Iseke-Barnes, 2008, p. 124)

As such decolonizing pedagogical praxis involves a transformation in knowing and doing, in means and ends.

A relational ethics focuses awareness on the ways colonizing logics can be encountered and reproduced in the structure of research, in research relationships, and in curricula and dominant pedagogies (Donald, Glanfield & Sternberg, 2012). For example, taking knowledge from a community as an outsider and not attributing it to local teachings, or not returning the benefits of the research to the community reproduce colonizing logics where the authority of knowledge rests in the researcher rather than being shared between participants and researcher. As a non-Indigenous person and White settler-Canadian researcher, a relational ethics involves an ongoing personal reflexivity and identifying colonizing logics that shape my personal history and research. Here, personal reflexivity is not an attempt to confess Whiteness or privilege more thoroughly than someone else (Smith, 2014). Rather it is to shed light on complicity in colonial

relations, and attempt to work through the ways in which the politics of knowledge production shape the limits of one's thinking (Nakata, Nakata, Keech & Bolt, 2012). As the granddaughter of immigrants, my family made their way by farming and working in industrial manufacturing. These occupations shaped a relationship to the land and to the places where my family lived. Farming dictating how they interacted with the land directly (for sustenance and for income), and manufacturing did so indirectly (to turn the natural resources extracted from the land into consumer goods). In both cases utility was paramount but not the only consideration. Accounts from both sides of my family talk about survival depending on being able to work the land: in the sense of putting food on the table, and to find peace of mind and clarity in the midst of daily life. I knew how my family had acquired the land, but consistent with the erasure and replacement of settler colonialism, no history of place prior to my family's settlement was ever deemed relevant. This short reflection illustrates how a curriculum of settler colonial and capitalist values was passed down through my family. By drawing on a relational ethics I can reconsider this history in relation to Indigenous and omitted histories of this place, and ways of being in this place according to a different set of values. It encourages me to ask: whose traditional land are we on (Haig-Brown, 2009), and how should an awareness of the knowledge derived from this place by reaffirmed in curriculum (Chambers, 1999)? These questions illustrate in a relational approach no single version of history or way of knowing can remain dominant. Instead, there is coexistence based on ongoing dialogue and deeply respectful engagement.

How knowledge systems coexist, however, begs a closer look at ethics when it comes to engaging Indigenous ways of knowing. Cree scholar, ethicist, and educator, Willie Ermine (2007) conceptualizes an ethical space with an analogy of distance between Indigenous and Western worldviews. He draws on Poole (1972), who describes the term 'ethical space' as an area of encounter between two entities with different intentions. For Ermine, different intentions are reflected in Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. For example, when Western knowledges present a mono-cultural viewpoint about what constitutes knowledges, morality, and what humans are supposed to be, they fail to engage Indigenous ways of knowing ethically. Rather than existing in relation, different worldviews are measured against one another from a Western point of reference. This presupposes the Othering of Indigenous ways of knowing, and as Ermine explains:

[S]chismatic ambience is created between peoples and cultures, and in particular whenever and wherever the physical and philosophical encounter of Indigenous and Western worlds takes place. At the superficial level of encounter, the two entities may indeed acknowledge each other but there is a clear lack of substance or depth to the encounter. What remains hidden and enfolded are the deeper level thoughts, interests and assumptions that will inevitably influence and animate the kind of relationship the two can have. It is this deeper level force, the underflow-become-influential, the enfolded dimension that needs to be acknowledged and brought to bear in the complex situation produced by confronting knowledge. (p. 195)

The space of encounter between worldviews holds the possibility of an ethical engagement, but it is not a given. What makes the space ethical is "the capacity to know what harms or enhances the well-being of sentient creatures" (p. 195) and "to stand up for our cherished notions of good, responsibility, duty, obligations" (p. 195). As such, when talking about ethics, we must give reflect on "those crucial lines we draw to delineate our personal autonomous zones and demarcation of boundaries others should not cross" (p. 196). These boundaries, or "moral thresholds" may be personal, familial, or imposed by cultural communities, but they are "established by collective principles" that "reminds us of what is important in life as we collectively negotiate the future" (p. 196). The edges of these boundaries can be uncomfortable spaces, ambiguous, shifting, or hostile, as we have seen in the collision of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews in policy, law, education, and in research ethics and methodologies (Youngblood Henderson, 2012; Smith, 1999). In this sense an ethical space can be thought of as Aoki's Oriental garden bridge, where worldviews with distinct histories, ways of knowing, traditions, values, and realities meet unhurriedly in dialogue, and where cross-cultural interactions are cautiously committed to clarifying the terms of engagement between diverse communities.

Moreover, it is one's responsibility to seek an ethical space for engagement (Ermine, 2007). I read Ermine's sense of responsibility as more than responsibility for oneself (one's actions and behaviours), which could imply an inward looking sense of personal responsibility that reiterates liberal assumptions about the human subject. Rather, it is a relational responsibility that sees the well-being of both as inherently interdependent and prior to one's self-interest, epistemology, ontology, or expectation of reciprocity. Contextualized to the space of encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and knowledges, the ethics of responsibility extends beyond the encounter with Indigenous people, but to all that is alive, animate, and knowing – to all one's relations. In an Indigenous knowledge paradigm for example, the

meaningful interconnectedness among all things (Ermine, 1995) is fundamental to sense-making (Haig-Brown, 2008). Diverse cultural groups have unique linguistic ways of expressing interconnectedness through phrases that affirm *all are related.* For instance, Atleo (2004) describes heshook-ish tsawalk, *everything is one*, as a Nuu-chah-nulth understanding of holism based on interrelationships between humans and/as nature where all things are animate (from plants, to animals, to rocks, to people) related, connected in cycles of constant motion, flux, and energy. In Indigenous philosophies, interrelationships are more than interactions between humans and the natural environment. Moreover, making use of language that assumes a human/nature divide is to reiterate a worldview where ordered hierarchical dominance places one species over another. An ethical space, then, is not one that is dominated by categorizations that reflect a single way of knowing, or by conceptions of time that are only linear, or by hierarchies that presuppose inequality between two entities based on the worth of their values systems and moral codes. In this sense, to be ethical is to engage a worldview of interconnectedness that moves beyond the bounds of Western epistemologies and ontologies (that would commodify or compartmentalize all knowledge as socially constructed). It is with an orientation so open that I contend Ermine asks us to approach the ethical space.

For Ermine (2007) ethical space is foundational to research with Indigenous people and knowledges. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012/1999) builds on Ermine's concept of ethical space as it applies to the researcher in a researcher – participant/community relationship with Indigenous people. She describes ethicality as:

> a 'way of being' for a social science researcher, for an ethnographer, it is embedded in every conscious and subconscious interaction (Ermine, 1995). It is one of the most fundamental tools for engagement with participants and is not simply a process for gaining entry into a community. Ethical values, practices and expectations are constantly being negotiated throughout the research process. (p. 18)

Questions of ethics are bound to researcher reflexivity and she poses a series of questions to ask oneself when entering into an 'ethical' space of meeting for the first time. For example: How did you come to be here at the entry point of this community? Who is your community? Whose voices best represent your community? How do you 'see' the people you are moving towards? What does this meeting mean to you? As I explain in the next chapter, these are questions I asked myself as part of the research methodology. Ermine and Smith speak about ethics in fluid terms – an ethical relationship is an ongoing dialogue that is revisited, rather than a set of rules one must

follow (out of obligation), or a prescribed way of behaving that is determined/dictated at the outset of an engagement.

Derrida's notion of hospitality (2000) is useful here as it distinguishes between a limited or conditional hospitality that is extended out of obligation and an unconditional hospitality, which is extended without hesitation or reservation. In a classroom, we might imagine conditional hospitality as a shallow type of learning about Indigenous cultures, an add-and-stir approach, culturally saturated or culturally static representations of Indigenous peoples. It does not engage with colonial history and memory, and it is delivered without disrupting colonizing logics. We can also think of conditional hospitality as compliance with a mandate or curricular initiative to include Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing in specific subjects and in order to meet specific curricular expectations. Under these conditions, "testimonies like those of residential school survivors become an object of a lesson taught in schools, where the complexity and feelings evoked within the narrative are reduced and mobilized…as a means of addressing a specific category of knowledge and skills (Ng-A-Fook & Milne, 2014, p. 93), rather than for the purpose of cultivating a sense of responsibility toward another's experience of trauma and past/present wrongs. The concept of conditional hospitality speaks to a question of creating an ethical space for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, namely in which school subjects and in which school spaces do we imagine Indigenous perspectives to "fit?"

By contrast, unconditional hospitality does not ask that Indigenous ways of knowing defend themselves on non-Indigenous terms, does not question their legitimacy nor limit their scope of applicability to a particular school subject, i.e. history. Thinking of Ermine, unconditional hospitality is to forfeit all forms of dominance in the space of encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. For example, in classroom contexts, an unconditional welcome to Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous people transcends anachronistic incorporations of Indigenous perspectives (Donald, 2009). For Derrida, this is an impossible ethics; engaging different worldviews in the school curriculum ventures onto contested terrain and means leaving behind the certainty of Western knowledge systems (see also Ibrahim, 2005). For Ermine (2007) and Donald (2009), however, an 'ethical space' is precisely where Western and Indigenous worldviews must engage each other in order to move forward together from a place of mistrust and misunderstanding of each other's knowledge systems, and toward a relationship of respect and understanding. Here, in a cross-cultural conversations are

mindful of the history of marginalization and colonization especially of Indigenous peoples yet seeks hopeful future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Ng-A-Fook & Milne, 2014).

For a non-Indigenous person (i.e. a settler Canadian) who might be accustomed to the unearned privileges of being represented in dominant discourses and narratives, coming to an ethical engagement can be a disorienting and discomforting experience. Relying on one's own set of values and best intentions will not ensure that the engagement be ethical. For example, Bell (2014) discusses the settler's want for dialogue and inclusion with Indigenous peoples to be a problematic "colonizing romance of unity" that is not reflective of "the lack of an indigenous voice, but of the white liberal inability to hear it" (p. 184). Here, the value placed on dialogue is serving the settler's desire for redemption for colonial wrongs, rather than fundamentally shifting the settler's consciousness to one that *listens* with a sense of responsibility and responsiveness to another's experience (Simon, 2000). Hearing only those Indigenous voices those afforded a specific space falls short of being ethical because it occurs out of settler a gesture of settler benevolence and centers out rather than centering (normalizing within discourse) Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing. Having one's benevolence called into question can come as a blow to settler consciousness. The question of how to respond arises: how to work through a disorientating and discomforting impact rather than resisting or diminishing it? In the coming chapters I explore themes of respect and discomfort in greater detail, and suggest that to achieve more ethical spaces and live out more ethical engagements respect and discomfort must be allowed to coexist.

To conclude, in this chapter, I have outlined conceptual understandings of curriculum, relationality and ethical engagements. Drawing on Donald (2009) to summarize the significance of these concepts to this framework and this research, he outlines the task for educators and learners seeking to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing:

> What are required are curricular and pedagogical engagements that traverse the divides of the past and present. Such work must contest the denial of historical, 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)

Further, an ethical space for such curricular and pedagogical engagements is one in which participants:

> understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to one another. This form of relationality is ethical because it does not overlook or invisibilize the particular historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a particular person understands and experiences living in the world. It puts these considerations at the forefront of engagements. (p. 6)

Moreover, there is acknowledgement that relationship is itself, and the lens through which that relationship is viewed, is problematically constituted by colonialism.

The coming chapters explore the pedagogy and perspectives of teachers and learners who strove (or did not strive) to traverse the divides of past and present, to understand different histories and experiences in relation, and to participate in building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people based on respect, rather than denial or domination. Guided by this framework, I employ a critical ethnographic methodology to analyze the experiences of teachers and learners, and grapple with questions that have ethics at their heart: What are the consequences when Indigenous ways of knowing are engaged on colonial Western terms? Can a space be ethical when the articulation of one person's experience negates or contradicts the experience of another? And in these moments, what is teacher's or a learner's ethical responsibility? How far do we push ourselves and others?

Chapter 4: Methodology

Critical Ethnography with Indigenous Communities: An Ethics to Live By

In her book on decolonizing research methodologies, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012/1999) contends in the Western tradition research is linked to cultural imperialism in the ways knowledge is thought about, and in the ways it is sought through methodologies and governed by academic disciplines and powerful research institutions (see also Foucault, 1972; Said, 1994/1979). While so-called scientific research itself need not be at odds with Indigenous research agendas and priorities, it carries much baggage by way of tradition that has ignored, appropriated, and dismissed the knowledge and practices in Indigenous communities, and instead served researchers, institutions and the knowledge of dominant (i.e. settler colonial) groups. For Smith, there is an urgent need to decolonize methodologies; and even more, there is a need for a new ethics of conducting research *with* Indigenous communities. As I conceptualize it it throughout this thesis, a decolonizing approach to research is about transforming both the conceptual understandings of how research is conducted (methodology), as well as the research procedures and techniques undertaken (method). Moreover, it is about re-valuing Indigenous ways of knowing and doing so on Indigenous terms; it is about building ethical, sustainable and reciprocal relationships.

This chapter is an attempt to take seriously and put into practice a decolonizing approach to research. The first part will introduce the research questions and conceptualize the approach taken by the current project to answer those research questions. A discussion of 'methodology' it will consider the ethical possibilities of research with Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing when *research* is reframed as a *relationship*. It will then discuss critical ethnography as a mode of inquiry suitable for projects that seek to understand and transform the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The second part of the chapter will provide background to the research site and participants, discuss the methods used to gather and interpret participant contributions, and address a number of ethical dilemmas that arose in my attempt to honour people and relationships and at the same time attempt to capture them on the page.

Research Questions

As I outlined in Chapter 1, this study looks at how Indigenous perspectives are (or are not) integrated into the classroom curriculum, how colonizing logics are reinforced or disrupted, and how, through classroom dialogue, teachers and students negotiate what it means to be part of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. To answer these questions I draw on qualitative methods used in critical ethnography and focus on pedagogical approaches, classroom dialogue, and student and teacher perceptions. The following questions guide the study:

3. How are (or are not) Indigenous perspectives integrated into the classroom curriculum? a) What resources, strategies and pedagogical rational do teachers draw on? b) Do resources and teaching strategies reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics (i.e. through dominant historical narratives or Eurocentric curricular discourses)? c) Does classroom dialogue reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics? d) What narratives and normative assumptions do students and teachers draw upon when integrating Indigenous perspectives and how does this impact engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing? e) How do students and teachers perceive of the learning experience with integrating Indigenous perspectives?

4. How can classrooms be (more) ethical spaces for engaging Indigenous perspectives? a) which (if any) pedagogical approaches that allowed Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews to co-exist, and what did these approaches look like? (i.e. temporal and spatial considerations)? b) how can learning spaces be safe? c) how is the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples framed? d) how do teachers and students understand their role and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation?

Ethics of Research with Indigenous Peoples and Ways of Knowing

Any research with Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing has an ethical responsibility to draw upon contextually appropriate Indigenous knowledge frameworks and resist research frameworks, terminologies, and discourses that would invalidate or discredit these fluid and relational ways of knowing. This project is influenced by critical non-Indigenous and Indigenous methodological approaches. The critical, as I explain later, is built largely upon Western thought,

but valuable in its ability "to deconstruct the Indigenous-settler power dynamic" (Kovach, 2015, p. 46), and "examine and change the systems and discourses within which we function" (Lincoln & Cannella, 2009, p. 279). The Indigenous methodological approaches, as Margaret Kovach (2015) explains represents an epistemological grounding based on holistic knowledge systems, relationality, collectivity and sharing, in which knowing and doing are inseparably intertwined in how one understands and lives in the world.

While Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous researchers, educators, and community members have influenced my approach, I still identify as a setter Canadian, marked by racialized Whiteness, and all the unearned privileges these aspects of my identity entail in life and in research (see Lund & Carr, 2015). As such, before I go on to talk about relationality, I feel I must attempt to understand where I am (perceived to be) relating *from* by considering how my positionality comes to bear on this project. I do not mean to insert a disclaimer that checks off boxes: White, female, heterosexual, middle class, and educated. That would show that I understand myself from within dominant categories. Moreover, I cannot know exactly how each contributor to this research perceives me and the roots of my intentions but I must be aware that it is from a different set of social relations and experiences from my own. As Harding (2009) notes:

> [i[t is one thing to gesture toward "including the excluded" in our thinking and social projects. It is quite another to engage seriously not only with their ways of understanding themselves and their social relations, but also with their ways of understanding us and our social relations. (p. 193)

Thus, engaging my positionality is influenced by feminist standpoint methodology (Harding 2009) and very importantly an ongoing part of this project visited through various questions and reflections that I discussed in Chapter 1 and revisited by keeping a journal throughout the project. Ongoing engagement is important as a non-Indigenous researcher because who I am factors into all phases of this project from the questions I ask to the tools I use to answer those questions. Ibrahim (2014b) explains:

> [H]ow data is collected and what conclusions are drawn… are contiguously and discursively (co)authored by the researcher's subject location…Who the researcher is, and

what her or his racial, gender, sexual, and social class embodiments will necessarily influence, if not govern, the research questions and findings. (p. 16)

Here, for example, I find it appropriate to acknowledge that with a settler's positioning comes a certain set of roles and responsibilities in the Indigenous-settler relationship (i.e. to listen rather than lead). Thus, I approach Indigenous methodologies based on a personal ethical commitment to finding ways for non-Indigenous researchers, educators and students to become better equipped to understand and support the processes of reconciliation and decolonizing in Canada. I write in a historical moment of high hope and high skepticism about the ways in which these processes can move forward without the language and priorities being co-opting and (re)colonized by non-Indigenous peoples (Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2014). Part of that ethical challenge is to understand my responsibilities as a non-Indigenous person in research and in life such that the work I do can find a place on the bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; the bridge that endeavours to make possible a new relationship, resist colonial discourses present in research, in schools, and in society more broadly.

Research as Relationship

Research, when thought of as relationship, as opposed to a (linear) quest for knowledge, troubles the categories of researcher and participant, and the colonizing power imbalance that positions the researcher as the authority on knowledge. Central to the relationship are reciprocity (Kovach, 2015) and genuine dialogue (Ibrahim, 2014a). For Kovach (2015) reciprocity is inherent in Indigenous knowledge frameworks and a foundation of Indigenous methodologies that are built around respectful relationships, and an ethics of responsibility to the collective. This, she notes, is markedly different from individualist research where a researcher poses questions, determines participants, analyzes and writes up findings. Drawing on Kovach, I imagine dialogue as a central part of a reciprocal research relationship involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing. For Ibrahim, genuine dialogue is an ethical imperative in research with Indigenous and marginalized communities. Here, research participants are not the researched, named and defined by academic 'experts,' but rather they are subjects or co-researchers, who, experience and come to understand the world on their own terms (Buber, 2000). In this sense there is "no research per se, there is, instead, genuine dialogue" (Ibrahim, 2014a, p. 16), which reformulates the traditional research-participant relationship such

that it is above all guided by love with its aim to build trust, build relationships, and live in ethical relation. Here, love is imagined with Ermine (2007) in mind, part of an ethical space of engagement based on mutual respect and non-domination. In an ethical space of engagement love is vastly different from the historical context between Indigenous peoples and early Christian missionaries, where 'love' was to carry out the work of saving Indigenous peoples through Christian morals and European ethno-superiority. It is with this understanding of research as a relationship that I approach this project. Although I refer to the teachers and students who are involved in this project as *contributors*, and to moments of genuine dialogue as *interviews* and *conversations*, these words are only intended as identifiers to give the reader context. The meaning I attach to these words is as I have outlined here, where we are all as much researchers as participants, and where the aim of the research is to build ethical relationships of co-existence that centre Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and decolonizing pedagogies.

In the current project, I did not wish to subscribe to the (re)colonizing roles researcher-participant, and despite the way I tried to position my self (i.e. verbally, physically), I encountered contributors who expected these roles as given. Seeing through the colonized lens of researcher-as-authority on knowledge changed the way they participated. To explain, some non-Indigenous teacher contributors, for example, were nervous to have me in their classroom; they prepared polished and engaging lessons while I was there, turned to me mid-lesson looking for approval when pronouncing names like *Ojibwe* and *Chippewa*. One teacher verbalized how worried she was that her class would refuse to engage with respectfully that that this would reflect poorly on her. Although I tried to convince her that those situations were just as, if not more valuable than a compliant class willingly following along, I was left with the impression she was not convinced the research-participant relationship could be otherwise.

On an institutional level, the ethical burden of the researcher's privileged location becomes more entwined with the limits of knowing. In that sense there is an inescapable contradiction in the current endeavor: I am looking *within* the formal education system, legitimizing on some level that colonizing structure with a set of colonizing institutional practices. For example, when I look at the formal curriculum as a framework and ask how Indigenous perspectives are being integrated in relation to that framework, I am asking a question where the answers will fall within certain limits of knowing. Granted, I hope this project will be

able to push those limits of knowing into new and transformative spaces, but at the end of the day the formal school system will still be grappling with ways for Indigenous ways of knowing to exist *within*. My response to that is Indigenous ways of knowing can never and should never *be asked* to exist *within* schools. That is to say, if schools are asking for reconciliation, genuine dialogue and deeper ethics of relationality, then it needs to open itself up and create a mutual and reciprocal relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. However, non-Indigenous (Euro-Western) ways of knowing thrive *within* schools. Acknowledging the contradiction of Indigenous ways of knowing existing *within* schools, one First Nation educator put it thus in an interview, "if [we] don't know the history and attempt to break that complete lack of understanding then that whole cycle will just continue and it's not going to get any better for our kids. For *all* of our kids." In the historical context of settler colonialism, and with the pressing need for reconciliation and a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, I am contending, there must be a level of co-existence between knowledge systems in their own right – not one merely learning *about* the other as spectator or appropriator.

For research that asks Indigenous peoples to share their ways of knowing *within* schools, the question arises: what should be shared and how much? Kovach (2015) explains that taking time to talk to community members even if they are not research participants is an important element of reciprocity. This was an important part of my method, as I will explain later. Still, I am mindful that every time I ask a First Nation educator or community member to share with me, I also put them in a position of wondering: what knowledge and experience should they share for the common good and how much should they hold back, and will they have any say in what I do with that knowledge after our conversation is over? The ethical relationship is this: participants "offer us their lives" (Ibrahim, 2014a, p 19) so it can be experienced "in context" (p. 17); not so it can be used as a "tool of/for colonization" (p. 19) that appropriates their ways of knowing for another's ends. I do not become an authority on the knowledge shared with me by participants; it is their gift to share coming from their experience of the world, and accepting this gift is a responsibility.

Another important ethical question is: what do I hope to gain from this research? I do not approach Indigenous community members and educators in this research with the presumption of

gaining an insider's knowledge or to report on what has been shared with me. I do this research so non-Indigenous peoples and educators like myself can better understand their position in the relationship with Indigenous peoples and learn to listen to Indigenous peoples when they do (or do not) tell us how to be better supporters, allies, neighbours, and educators. In that sense, this project is part of a dialogue happening at the local level through individual conversations, and more broadly in Canadian society. For example, the students I observed were also part of a dialogue about building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. To be part of this relationship we non-Indigenous peoples have to understand more genuinely the history of colonization that brought us here, listen more genuinely to what Indigenous peoples are (not) telling us, and begin to understand our positionality not only from our perspective but from the way Indigenous peoples see it.

A challenge of learning how to live ethically and relationally, for non-Indigenous peoples, is attempting to (re)learn from the position of outsiders. I do not mean to use the term 'outsider' in an objective or binary sense, but rather, in a relational sense, where an understanding of the politics of one's positionality is paramount in the way unequal relations of power are re-inscribed through colonizing logics (i.e. erasure of Indigenous peoples) and research practices (i.e. appropriation of Indigenous way of knowing). To trouble the term 'outsider' even further, in the context of the colonial relationship, non-Indigenous settlers are learning what it even means to be on the outside, to look in and see something other than one's default expectations in familiar spaces. For example, I who benefit from inclusion in settler society must learn from the outside when First Nation educators and community members share with me their knowledge and experience. But if I really want to understand the world differently, I must un-learn and-re-learn to see the places I know and the relationships therein. In the school system, for example, where colonizing logics that have shaped my journey as a student and educator tempt me to re-inscribe a knowledge system that makes me feel like an insider, I must remind myself: I am seeking a decolonizing praxis, which calls on me to disrupt the ways I too may take schooling for granted. As such I propose thinking about the traditional insider-outsider distinction in ethnographic research in relational terms to reflect a radical ethics of reciprocity and genuine dialogue between worldviews (see also Ibrahim, 2014b). This requires me to do away with presumptions of being the knower, learn to *listen* in new ways, and feel that which would make me secure, disrupted. As others explain, non-Indigenous and settler Canadians find ways to pretend Indigenous peoples

and priorities are centered in discourses of recognition and decolonization by co-opting the language, positioning oneself as innocent, or taking the lead to preserve their own supremacy (cf. Coulthard, 2014; Morgansen, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012). In so-called engagements with Indigenous peoples, these strategies are a refusal to see the world on any terms except those of an insider. If I approached the research relationship in this way, I would be paying lip service to the idea that Indigenous peoples are insiders to their own knowledge and experience, and would likely be appropriating their contributions as my own and in the process shoring up my own settler Canadian identity. Thus, in the interest of listening and re-learning to live relationally, I attempt better understanding of what it means to be an outsider, so I might look in and see things differently.

To summarize thus far, I have attempted to outline as the foundation of my methodology, research as a relationship built on reciprocity and dialogue, and to understand my (researcher's) positionality in a relational sense. Now, I turn to critical ethnography, to explain how I have drawn upon it in ways that are (and maybe are not so) compatible with Indigenous research frameworks.

Critical Ethnography and its Criticisms

For this study, critical ethnography is about understanding relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, between teachers and students, and between students and texts. How are these relationships navigated by those involved, and how do they perceive of their roles and ethical responsibilities? Margaret Kovach (2009) explains that many qualitative and Indigenous approaches are both relational and interpretive. Likewise, Shawn Wilson (2008) explains that certain qualitative approaches can be used in ways that respect the epistemology, ontology and axiology of an Indigenous research paradigm, even while these approaches are ultimately rooted in non-Indigenous (eg. critical) research paradigms. In essence, Kovach and Wilson speak to ways of finding common ground in research. As in the previous section where I attempted to understand "research" and "methodology" by drawing on Indigenous research frameworks, this section continues to tease out tensions and spaces of common ground between Indigenous methodologies and critical ethnography.

In a most general sense, critical ethnography provides a non-Indigenous research orientation and methodological tools for reaching deeper understandings of the perceptions, values, and behaviours of the peoples or cultures involved, without attempting to uncover proven truths (Cresswell, 2013; Walford, 2001). Methodological tools, as Creswell explains, may include observation that continue over a long period of time, and detailed and layered descriptions, which in addition to the data can serve as a source of interpretation in and of themselves. However, according to Carspecken (2001), what sets critical ethnography apart, or makes it 'critical' is in its value orientation, or political stance, rather than methodological uniformity. Critical ethnography in educational research is informed by a number of critical theories (i.e. feminist, post-colonial, neo-Marxist) and seeks to understand relationships of power, privilege, inequality, inequity and marginalization (Ibrahim, 2014b; Clifford, 1988; Weiler, 1988). As a form of critical qualitative research, critical ethnography "embodies the emancipatory, empowering values of critical pedagogy" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). It represents a form of interpretive inquiry that brings researchers and participants together into a space of multiple epistemologies seeking critique, liberation, and resistance (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Lather, 2007).

Critiquing the Critical. A number of Indigenous scholars contend critical approaches are not adequate to challenge contemporary colonialism, or "the dominant economic, cultural, political, judicial, and educational arrangements… reinforcing systems of colonial and capitalist domination and exploitation that have organized social relations" (Tejeda, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003, p. 10). Building on Freire (1984), they argue, it is only through a critical *decolonizing* consciousness that pays attention to the colonial past that social transformation is possible. Too often, critical approaches omit the colonial seizure of lands and the disruption of life and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples as a starting point upon which a matrix of gendered and racialized marginalizations were imposed upon the first peoples and subsequent inhabitants of North America. Critical approaches must see colonial and neo-colonial ideology and as the framework through which conditions of social inequality and domination are reproduced. Failing to recall the colonial past obscures its contemporary effects and its inseparability from everyday material conditions. The present study addresses the criticism that critical approaches fail to address the challenges of contemporary colonialism by focusing on the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and the presence of Indigenous perspectives in

education and curricula. For example, I outline a decolonizing pedagogical praxis that resists the organizational hierarchies within classrooms and encourages learning that centers Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. That being said, a critical ethnography cannot address all the challenges of contemporary colonialism. There are many contexts and questions beyond the scope of this project that employ different modes of inquiry and build different forms of alliance with Indigenous communities to tackle the challenges of contemporary colonialism.

Critical approaches have the potential to "more fully ascertain how the (presumed) disappearance of Indigeneity actually structures critical theory" (Simpson 2014, p. 15) and further erase Indigenous people, knowledges, and histories from curricular discourses. For non-Indigenous people, there is a long learning journey that involves unlearning, uncovering and deconstructing the way colonialism continues to operate through (educational) institutions, public pedagogy, dominant historical narratives, and everyday habits that reflect a particular set of values and beliefs. Moreover, taking a critical approach to ethnography allows me to look inside classrooms, and see if the critical approaches to teaching and learning [used] are also guilty of the same presumed disappearance of Indigeneity. Later chapters will discuss at length the limitations (and possibilities) of the critical approaches used by teachers with particular attention to the way these structured informed the questions and arguments students made, as well as their ability to engage *through* Indigenous perspectives.

Interrogating the Ethnographic. Ethnographic research carries the burden of its own legacy which for many Indigenous communities has been damaging, misrepresented and misappropriated Indigenous voices and ways of knowing, failed to benefit the Indigenous participants and communities (Smith, 2012/1999), and ignored power dynamics of (Western) research that simultaneously center on and deny a voice to third world and Indigenous participants (Spivak, 1988). Moreover, Clifford (1988) asserts that historically, ethnography has been defined by a Western imagination, which erased the distinct histories of Indigenous peoples and treats them as "endangered authenticities." Here, stable and unchanging Indigenous identities were constructed truths that did not allow Indigenous cultures to change and have futures. For Smith (2012/1999) ethnography is not simply culture collecting in the quest for better understanding; it risks culture re-arranging, re-presenting, and re-distributing. It is not the objective study of culture by an outsider who becomes as immersed as an insider in the day-to-

day life of research participants, as the researcher's socio-cultural positioning and research protocols may include certain assumptions and perspectives that are inappropriate or detrimental for Indigenous populations. For example, debate about what constitutes 'science' continues to marginalize and delegitimize Indigenous science, dismissing it as folk knowledge and privileging Western science based upon universal truths that can be objectively sought and understood through physical reality (Cole, 2006; Atleo, 2004; Cajete, 2000). Bound to these assumptions about Western science are neo/colonial discursive practices that assume the Indigenous peoples to have a "real" or "knowable" authentic essence. The assumption of an authentic essence 'whitens' Indigenous ways of knowing through academic language, for example (Cole, 2006), and can prevent Indigenous peoples from having meaningful cultural and intellectual identities in research (Cary & Mutua, 2010; Deloria, 1968; Ng-A-Fook, 2007) because it presupposes an authentic Indigenous identity that is located in a static past (Smith, 1999).

As a non-Indigenous person an ever-present question is: on whose terms and through whose languages are Indigenous ways of knowing articulated and understood in the research? Revisiting his work from the 1980s in 2013 Clifford sees Indigeneity through a lens of cultural endurance, survival and renewal. The sites of ethnography with Indigenous peoples are thus contested and "power-charged" and indicate that the Western categories that once defined history are becoming decentered (Clifford, 2013, p. 7). He argues ethnography can and must make room for plural histories that allow for different interpretations, trajectories and movements, and for intersecting and relational identities.

Some Indigenous researchers have used critical ethnography to re-learn and re-assert community knowledges. For Flocken (2012) critical ethnography was part of a personal sacred journey. Interviewing current and former community leaders allowed him to develop and deepen community relationships and came to learn the values of traditional Ojibwe leadership. Moreover, Hermes (2007) found that drawing on methods of observation, interviewing and focus groups strengthened her community relationships with educators and allowed her to give back directly to the community. In addition to asserting Indigenous way of knowing critical ethnography allowed these researchers to simultaneously critique colonizing hierarchies in systems of governance (Flocken, 2012), in language teaching and learning (Hermes, 2007) and in museums displaying Indigenous art (Rangel, 2012).

Still, I recognize that ethnography is informed by discourses of colonization and am mindful of Grande's criticism (2008) that even the terminology of critical research contains Western assumptions. There are a couple of ways to illustrate this point. First, what I consider to be 'data' and what I do with it can make this research project a colonizing rather than a decolonizing endeavor. For example, when research participants share their knowledge and it is recorded as 'data' they are "talked about, not talked from" (Reyez Cruz, 2008, p. 652), meaning when data is talked about, the participant/contributor too becomes talked about, rather than someone who speaks. Talking about 'data' places nonacademic actors (and their knowledge) as the subject of research rather than part of the theoretical grounding of the research. For this reason, I avoid the word 'data' and instead refer to stories, experiences and perspectives shared with me by contributors to this project. In another example of language that positions participants-as-subjects, Walford (2001) describes the relationship between researcher and participants: "through prolonged involvement with those who are being studied the ethnographic researcher is able gradually to enter their world and gain an understanding of their lives (Walford, 2001, p. vii; see also Ibrahim, 2014b). With Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing this is problematic because it shores up the authority and claims to knowledge of Western scholarship. In the theoretical framework chapter and in subsequent chapters many sections begin by highlighting a quote from an Indigenous person who participated in this research as a modest way of showing that the knowledge and experiences shared by Indigenous participants is an important part of the theoretical grounding.

Second, coding and sorting according to themes and sub themes means that sense making happens in categories, events may be spliced apart rather than examined holistically in their exhaustive and unaltered original context. I will explain my approach to identifying and sorting themes in an upcoming section. The categories and themes I have chosen will, to the best of my ability, uncover and challenge the complexity of colonialism within the classroom curriculum, with an awareness that my own experiences and the ethnographic and curricular discourses I draw from are still within a colonial grasp (González, 2003). The existence of ethnography as an imperial endeavor continues to bear on historically located (i.e. postcolonial) critical ethnographies that aim to disrupt the colonial normativity of knowledge and knowledge production, challenge dominant discourses of European imperialism, and presumed positions of privilege and oppression (Clair, 2003; González, 2003; Morgansen, 2009; Pathak, 2010). At the

same time I recognize a challenge for critical ethnography is to be a language of resistance and possibility (Clair, 2003).

Ethical Responsibilities. According to Madison (2011), the critical ethnographer works from a position of ethical responsibility toward *human* well-being and equitable conditions of existence. As such, writes Madison, "the critical ethnographer also takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the *status quo*, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (p. 5, original emphasis). Summarizing somewhat differently, Cresswell (2013) describes the critical ethnographer as taking a position of advocacy for marginalized groups, and focusing on themes such as power, privilege, and inequity. What is common in both of these descriptions is an ethical stance, which makes critical ethnography appealing on moral grounds, but, as any other type of research, also involves a number of pitfalls. For example, in research involving Indigenous peoples, advocating *for* can be a delicate step away from speaking *for* and re-inscribing colonial paternalism through research. In contrast, Kovach (2009) explains the ethical imperatives of research differently than both Madison and Creswell, noting relational research is ethical research and has a collective responsibility to *all one's relations*, and to ensuring the integrity of Indigenous knowledges. Hence, we need to take a different turn even within critical ethnography, particularly in research with Indigenous communities and ways of knowing, such that understandings of ethics, relationality, research, and so on are derived in harmony with Indigenous knowledge frameworks. In this project I strive to adopt a critical ethnographic stance is not guided by prescribed (colonial) notions of ethics, but instead generates its own ethics through its relationship to the participants and communities involved.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, this research begins from a critical stance that contends there is an unequal colonial power relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that is reproduced through curricula and classroom pedagogy (Donald, 2009; Smith, Ng-A-Fook, Berry, & Spence, 2011). This contention, as political stance, is one way critical ethnography finds congruence with Indigenous approaches, which "have the potential to provoke substantive political and ideological shifts within Western research contexts" (Kovach, 2009, p. 31). This critical ethnography, rather than attempting only to outline how the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples operates, which will come through

in the following chapters, attempts to understand how students and teachers are engaging that relationship and working against it.

Critical Ethnography and Classroom Culture

This critical ethnography takes place in and around classrooms. A classroom exists within a school, and within a neighbourhood, and within a broader community, making what we might call "classroom culture" *embedded* within, and reflective of, broader social groups, structures and historical contexts (Bloome, 2012, p. 9). The attitudes and values that are shared and negotiated within a classroom are as such influenced by what is outside the classroom as well as the interactions that happen with/in it. Weiler's critical ethnographic research (1988) describes schools as places of tension and contradiction that not only reproduce relations of institutional and ideological power, but also create opportunities for resistance. Her words resonate with this study, as subsequent chapters will discuss, where classroom discussions that were intended to disrupt Eurocentric perspectives in curricula by integrating Indigenous perspectives simultaneously drew upon colonizing logics. The complex relationships between past and present, local context, family, official curricula, and peers (i.e. through conversations that take place in the classroom) inform teacher and student perceptions of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and what it means to be part of this relationship (i.e. as student, teacher, Indigenous person or settler). Critical ethnography attends to this web of social and cultural influences beyond classroom walls, making 'classroom' more a metaphorical place of meeting and interacting, than a physically contained space. As I explained in an earlier chapter, classrooms can be thought of broadly. A classroom does not have to be a closed in space within four walls where learning takes place; it can be outdoors, it can be one's community. Even in this study, learning did not always happen in classrooms; it happened in hallways, libraries, offices, auditoriums, in telephone conversations, and outdoors; thus raising a number of significant questions that have guided this research.

Researcher Preparation and the Research Site

As I outline my rationale and reasons for choosing a research site in Southern Ontario, I am

guided by a series of questions posed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2013). She asks researchers who are approaching Indigenous communities:

> How did you come to be here at the entry point of this community? (a) Were you invited or did you select the community? (b) What are the implications of being invited or doing the inviting? (c) What intellectual, emotional, ethical, political and spiritual preparation have you had? (d) Why the interest? (e) Where have you come from? What are your geo-political origins and touchstones? (p. 17)

A significant question to add, to this list is: What do you intend to do with the contributions, stories and experiences gathered? These questions are challenging; they force one to engage positionality on a deeper level, which is important for research based on an ethical relationality, a decolonizing methodology. I used these questions as a way of preparing and found that my preparation for this research began years ago. I grew up in a place where the cultural geography lent itself to patterns of racism (systemic and overt) toward First Nation people but failed to recognize it as such. There were social divides and curricular exclusions at my high school, exclusionary hiring practices at businesses around town, and acts of violence between natives and non-natives that were explained as something else i.e. drunken bar brawls. First Nation community members who spoke to me for this project told stories of similar patterns of racism in and around their own communities from being questioned about their citizenship at the border, to being stopped on the way out of stores so sales associates could check for a receipt of purchase.

A curriculum of colonial dominance was also built into the schools I attended: a main entrance punctuated a Canadian flag, shiny plaques, the Queen, quiet orderly hallways near the front of the building, library, offices, trophy case. Order, obedience, ranking of achievement. I took this silent curriculum for truth - never seeing how it was connected to a cultural fiction about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In fact, there was only one high school geography course in which I recall a teacher voluntarily including (local) Indigenous perspectives. As the years passed I wondered from time to time: *how would I re-read school now if I had the chance?* As the time came to create a research proposal that wondering inspired me to ask: what has changed in the way Indigenous ways of knowing are integrated in the school curriculum since my time as a student?

Growing up in the colonial fabric of Southern Ontario, I felt drawn to the region for this research. To begin with, I knew something firsthand about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, whether it was something I observed in my hometown, or a more recognizable issue that gathered widespread media attention, such as conflicts at Ipperwash and Caledonia. These events reverberated beyond the places they occurred and I remember adults having conversations about them even though I was young. Moreover, I had a relationship to the land in that place, an understanding of how my family had come to live on it, and how settler colonialism had changed the ways the land was used more broadly. There were benefits to choosing a research site where I had local understanding. For one thing, it was close to "home," in the sense that Chambers (2006) asks us to imagine:

> the places where we live, walk, write, work, and go to school; the physical, emotional and spiritual places where we learn to be at home with others, as well as, ourselves; the place where *others* means not only neighbours but ancestors—spiritual and familial —theirs and ours—as well as our descendants… these places with all animate beings (the land, the stars, the animals, the plants) those with no power to purchase comfort or survival. (p. 7)

When I think of home, as the region where I grew up I think of the smell of mossy earth or the different sounds wind makes in the trees during abundant spring thunderstorms. I think of the open road, no traffic, square fields stretching for miles, tractors turning up clouds of dust as they creep along perfectly fertilized rows. Growing up in a rural environment, the association of home with land is striking, but whose land (Haig-Brown, 2010)? It isn't lost on me how colonialism allowed my (extended) family to become landowners, immersed in the big business of industrial agriculture, planting genetically modified seeds patented by multi-national corporations to grow food that will be transported far and wide. My relationship to this place is privileged. It is also complicated, and as a non-Indigenous person and researcher, I felt it was important to have and acknowledge a complicated relationship with the place where I would carry out this research. Contemplating my relationship to this place would become part of my daily routine as I commuted to the schools each day and then back again. Sometimes I would wonder what the land looked like before the fields were cleared. It was spring, so sometimes I would count the number of tractors I passed that were out working the land, as if through that number I could trace the linkages between capitalism, the agriculture industry, and colonialism. Sometimes I would take stock of the space in kilometers that was treaty land, and let it sink in

just how much of the local landmass that included. Through this contemplation I was able to trouble my relationship to this place and its local context.

Local Context

The school board where this research took place is located in Southern Ontario and stretches across a number of urban and rural areas. The rural communities in particular are not known for ethnic diversity, and English is the primary language spoken. For several First Nation communities the area encompasses their traditional lands. I would like to acknowledge each community in much more detail. The drawback to this is compromising contributor anonymity for both teachers and students, as such I am caught between a relational ethics and an institutional research ethics. On reserve populations fluctuate around several thousand and off reserve membership is significantly higher. The First Nation communities have unique identities today and their membership is made up of distinct and mixed nations prompted by a colonial history of forced migration, loss of land, war, and population decline. In the recent past, children from the local First Nations communities attended a number of residential schools. Today there are band run elementary schools although many First Nation children attend public and Catholic schools. Secondary level students attend public or Catholic high schools and a number of academic and emotional supports have been made available to students in recent years as they transition to the public system.

Various local land disputes have received media attention over the years bringing the issue of land to the attention of settler Canadians who perhaps do not have the historical background knowledge to understand the scope of injustice surrounding the treaty relationship between First Nations, the Crown, and settler communities. During an interview one teacher participant recalled a land dispute that angered a nearby town in recent years. It gave rise to a flurry of overt racism. As she said, "people get riled up" by Indigenous – settler tensions. There is still a need for the broader community to be "more open and more accepting." In time, the tension quieted down but it is not forgotten. That similar local land disputes have happened in any number of communities in Southern Ontario speaks to the broader context of the Indigenous-settler relationship. Clearly, the local climate of Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations has as important bearing on the participants and their views in this research. However, it is difficult to delve more deeply into local history that accounts for incidents and tensions that have arisen in

recent years and decades without revealing the site of the research. That being said, I bear in mind that in this research teachers, students and First Nation community members alike all made reference to specific incidents between local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities indicating these incidents have an important place in the psyche of the community.

Two High Schools

The on-site portion of this project happened at two high schools: River High School and Greenwood High School (throughout, all names are pseudonyms). River HS is a relatively small school of 600 students. It is located in an urban area and as one of the teachers explained to me, despite its small size has the most diverse student body of any high school in the board. Its enrollment is not strictly urban as some students from suburban and rural areas attend. On my first visit to River HS, I found myself in a quiet middle class neighbourhood with spacious bungalow houses. Reflecting the architecture of the neighbourhood, the high school itself is a sprawling, low single story building, with a central façade that emphasizes windows, allowing natural light to spill into the front entrance hall and adjacent library. It gives an airy lightness to the building as visitors enter and illuminates the display cases that symbolize school pride and achievement through an assortment of trophies, certificates and plaques. Quite notably, there is a plaque in the midst of this trophy wall, which contains the text of the Government of Canada's official apology to former students of Indian residential schools. Surrounding the text, several photographs capture the traditional dance of a First Nation student who previously attended River HS. The darkness of the text is thus juxtaposed with images of talent, culture, and resilience.

Compared to the wide, bright front hallway where the office and library are located, the remaining hallways at River HS are darker and lower, lined with lockers and doors. A teacher contributor tells me they have recently painted the hallways a lighter colour, which has made a huge difference, and I find it hard to imagine the hallways were once even darker. The three English classrooms are clustered together with windows looking onto the courtyard. I will describe the classrooms in which each of the teacher participants taught when I introduce the teachers and their classes. What stands out for me, however, are the equity-minded posters in and around the English classrooms. These include posters promoting awareness and acceptance of LGBTTQ students. During the period of 9 weeks I spent at River HS, the Me-to-We student club, which promotes social responsibility, empowerment, and change, was creating posters to promote

awareness about empowering rather than silencing victims of assault. From my observation of the school, the conversations with teachers, and information on the school website and morning announcements, there are three hubs of activity for student life outside of academics at River HS: the Me-to-We club, the athletic program, and the library. The library is a special place at River HS. The librarian takes pride in creating an atmosphere where collaborating, lounging, meeting friends, eating lunch, surfing the web and browsing resources were all welcome activities. The library is always buzzing with (quiet) activity at lunch and during each period groups of students frequently work there on projects.

In terms of academics, both River HS and Greenwood HS offer programming at various levels of study and notably, have strong technological and apprenticeship programs to support trades, industry and manufacturing. Greenwood HS, however, is a larger school, with approximately 800 students. It is in a smaller community than River HS and has close proximity to a First Nation community. As such, one teacher contributor estimates that 20% of the student population now identifies as First Nation. Greenwood HS is physically larger than River HS and has undergone various expansions over time.

Evidence of a First Nation presence is evident at Greenwood HS. A medicine wheel has been constructed near the front entrance. Down the main hallway, which is spacious and minimalist compared to River HS, crisply painted walls showcase works of art by First Nation students. The first painting shows a forest and horizon in the background with an eagle and medicine wheel and two warriors in the foreground. The second painting is a painting of contrast. Two buildings both resemble schools. One is new and bathed in sunlight; the other is old, deep grey and shadowy, lit only by moonlight. From the background, two arms reach forward. On one side, the side with light, an extended hand holds a cross to symbolize Christianity. On the other side, the side in darkness, an extended hand holds a medicine wheel. The size of the painting, which is easily two meters tall by three meters wide, its location and its imagery make a powerful statement. On the one hand, both sides of the painting coexist, like two cultures, or two worldviews. However, there is darkness cast over First Nation culture, which I read to be the history of colonial oppression and misunderstanding. The darkest point of all in the painting is the school, which I read to be a poignant reminder to all who pass through this school, of the legacy of residential schooling to First Nation students and culture(s).

From my observations at the school, conversations with a teacher participant, and from information on the school's website and twitter feed, I note many activities that are culturally relevant to First Nation students including an annual Pow wow, regular guest presentations and career fairs/gatherings, and field trips to local First Nation communities that link science and ecology to culture. These activities are supported by the school's centre for First Nation education, which liaises between students, school, family and the local community. When I introduce the teacher participants I will explain the classrooms with more detail.

Teacher and Student Contributors

Five high school English teachers agreed to contribute to this project. I will detail how I contacted these teachers in my methods section. Four of the teacher contributors, Dena, Kim, Julie, and Cristine, teach at River HS. At River HS these four English teachers were preparing for units of study that integrated Indigenous perspectives through novels written by Indigenous authors. Kate, the fifth teacher contributor, teaches at Greenwood HS.

Dena is a curriculum leader (department head) at River HS. She has over fifteen years of experience as an educator, having worked for this school board in various capacities as an advisor, equity representative, and high school English teacher. At the time of this research, she had been a curriculum leader at River HS for seven years. Dena identifies as a First Nation woman, and explains, she is "bi-racial" with one parent being of European descent. Dena grew up locally, and though she did not grow up living on a reservation, she identifies strongly with her First Nation culture and has deep ties to her community. Thus, Dena has always drawn on her First Nation culture in teaching and has been integrating Indigenous perspectives for as long as she has been teaching. In fact, even before her teaching career began she was encouraging others to do the same. After Dena completed her Bachelor of Education at Queen's University, she met with her professors to ask why Indigenous perspectives were absent from their courses and to explain the importance and relevance of Indigenous ways of knowing. She recalls not being taken very seriously. Some years later, however, when passing through the Queen's University bookstore, Dena checked the shelves and noticed that just one of the professors she approached had added a required text on Indigenous education. Dena continues to develop curricula that integrates Indigenous perspectives for her department but has been involved in other curriculum development initiatives locally. When I first met with her she explained how lucky she felt to

have a full time group of colleagues in the English department because they were able to plan curricula collaboratively so that each grade level would take a slightly different focus for integrating Indigenous perspectives. Building curricula this way is intended to give students a well-rounded understanding of Indigenous perspectives by graduation. To this project, Dena contributes the gifts of her insight, expertise, experience, and generosity to welcome a non-Indigenous researcher into her classroom, and trust that her words and her pedagogical approaches will be represented with integrity. Her contributions are instrumental in two interviews, in the classroom observations, in and numerous conversations I recorded in my journal.

At River HS I observed Dena's Grade 11 Academic English class of 24 students. I will detail my method of observation in the methods section; however, for the sake of introducing the class and its students I provide some detail here. My observations in Dena's class consisted of twenty-five hours of observations spread over the course of 17 seventy five minute periods, plus time before and after the bell when students were entering the class, talking to Dena and each other, getting organized, or continuing their conversations as they left class. Spring activities and athletics regularly meant that some students missed class so only on a few days was the entire class present. Students were 16 or 17 years old. They were primarily non-Indigenous students with the majority being of European decent, but also African, Southeast Asian and First Nation descent. At the end of my period of observations, eight of Dena's students consented to participate in a focus group. I held two focus groups with four and three students, respectively. To students in the first focus group I have given the pseudonyms Eric, Fay, Gen, and Helene. Eric is a 17-year-old White male. He is part of a male peer group within Dena's class that I would describe as popular and athletic. Fay, also 16, identifies as a First Nation student. Though she does not live on a reservation, her mother does. Gen, 16, had not identified as a First Nation student at the time of this project, although Dena knew from private conversations that she was thinking about it. Helene, 17, is a White female student. Fay, Gen, and Helene are friends. Students who attended the second focus group were Ian, Jess, and Noah. Ian, 16, is a White male student from a Christian family. He is a good student who is interested in math and science. Jess is a 16-year-old White female. She is a good student and an athlete. She lives on the same street as the Mayor of her town, and though her family is politically involved, they do not share this elected official's conservative affiliation. Noah is a 16-year-old White male. Ian, Jess, and Noah

had previously taken an English course with Dena so they had some background in Indigenous perspectives. They were of European descent. Unfortunately, Noah arrived late to the focus group and having forgotten his consent form left to retrieve it from his locker. He did not return with the consent form so I did not transcribe and include his comments. To the focus groups, student participants contributed their perception of learning about/through Indigenous perspectives.

Kim is a teacher at River HS. She has been teaching high school English for over fifteen years, and like Dena, is in her early forties. Kim is of European descent. She has been integrating Indigenous perspectives into her teaching for the past seven years. She offers her classroom as a lunchtime meeting place for the Me-to-We club. Her support for the club is evident through a number of posters in her classroom that express various social justice issues. In her classroom, desks are arranged in a double U shape (two rows, one behind the other). Depending on the activity (i.e. class discussion or book talk), students move the desks into a circle. She always sits at a desk among them and her rapport with students is friendly and respectful with plenty of good-natured joking. Kim invited me to observe her Grade 12 Academic English class which had an enrollment of 22 students. Their unit of study was underway before my period of observation began; however, I was able to observe 8 periods in Kim's class for a total of approximately 12 hours of observation. Three of Kim's students, Ben, Cam, and Danika, consented to participate in a focus group. Ben is an 18-year-old White male. He is a good student and an athlete. Cam is a 17-year-old male Vietnamese Canadian. As he explains, his parents who immigrated to Canada encouraged him to adopt a Canadian cultural identity and he reflects upon this in the focus group. Danika is a 17-year-old White female. She grew up in a low income family and continues to live in subsidized housing. She wanted to participate in the focus group but was initially shy about speaking so I reassured her it was anonymous, there were no wrong answers, and she could choose to review her contributions after they were transcribed.

Both Dena and Kim were reading the novel *Three Day Road* (2001) by Joseph Boyden[2] with their classes. *Three Day Road* is a story that follows two friends, Xavier and Elijah, who are Cree men from northern Ontario. Their experiences as snipers during World War I are juxtaposed

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[2] Joseph Boyden self-identifies as a person with Indigenous ancestry. Since this project took place, Boyden has come under scrutiny in the media for inconsistencies in his claims to Indigeneity, and if and how he has used claims to Indigeneity to his advantage. The debate about Boyden's identity illustrates there is little consensus to what constitutes acceptable 'proof' of Indigenous ancestry: is it blood count (a colonial measurement), historical family records (which are often incomplete or inconsistent), or contemporary community membership?

with flashbacks to their boyhoods, Elijah who spent many years in a residential school and Xavier who spent most of his younger years living traditionally and learning from his aunt, Niska. The story is narrated by Xavier and Niska, with Niska offering vignettes of her own girlhood and young womanhood that run parallel to Xavier and Elijah's experiences in the present. Themes of death, healing, and identity are explored through colonial and traditional Cree lenses. Dena and Kim took different approaches in their discussions of the book and in the assignments students completed for the unit. Both teachers, however, used a "book talk" format for days devoted to discussing a certain portion of the book as a class. On book talk days re-arranged the desks in the room to form a circle. I sat at a desk in the circle with my laptop and took observation notes.

Julie is a White female in her early forties. She has been certified as a high school English teacher in Ontario for the past 15 years but received her degree from a college in Michigan (US). She has been integrating Indigenous perspectives into her teaching for the past 5 years. Although she has taught at River HS for several years, the semester I was present was the first semester the school was able to give her a full course load. Thus, she was teaching Grades 9, 10, and 11 applied English and was feeling much busier than usual, if not slightly overwhelmed. Despite her schedule, she was a willing and sincere participant, and invited me to observe 2 of her classes: a Grade 10 applied and a Grade 11 college stream English. Due to a scheduling conflict with Dena's class I was only able to join her Grade 11 on two occasions and both times there was a guest teacher or guest speaker. I observed her Grade 10 applied class for a total of 6 periods, or approximately 9 hours. This was a very lively class. Most students were of European descent, one identified as having some First Nation ancestry, and four more students identified as having some African Canadian or African American ancestry. I spent less time in Jen's class because she began her unit of study several weeks later than Kim and Dena.

Cristine is a White female also in her forties. She grew up locally and previously taught at Greenwood HS before accepting a position in the English department at River HS. She has been teaching for 13 years, and integrating Indigenous perspectives through the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (2007) by Sherman Alexie for the last 7 years. I spent 6 periods or approximately 9 hours observing Cristine's Grade 10 applied class. In Cristine's opinion, this is the best Grade 10 applied class she has ever taught. The class is small, with about 15 students,

and only 3 female students. Most students were visibly White of European descent, although there were three students who self-identified as African Canadian. I spent less time in Cristine's class because, like Julie, she began her unit of study several weeks later than Kim and Dena.

Both Julie and Cristine's classes were reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (2007) by Sherman Alexie. The novel follows a year in the life of Arnold (Lakota) when he decides to transfer from his high school on the reservation to a more affluent high school off the reserve in a nearby town. The novel explores themes of hope, loss, and identity as Arnold struggles to navigate his home life on the reservation and his school life in a White community. Julie was also reading *Indian Horse* (2012) by Richard Wagamese with a Grade 11 college stream class.

The only teacher participant who does not teach at River HS is Kate. Kate is a curriculum leader at Greenwood HS (the same high school from which she graduated). She has been a high school English teacher for nearly 15 years. At Greenwood HS Kate's Grade 12 academic class was completing a unit on literary theory, which explored a variety of critical lens including an Indigenous lens. Kate was happy to participate in this project but since she had never integrated an Indigenous lens into this unit, asked if we could meet before she began the unit to create an outline for an Indigenous lens. We met at her home. I brought some notes and complied a list of resources that I thought would be helpful. She did the actual lesson planning on her own after our meeting. Given the time constraints of her unit and a scheduling conflict with other participants, I only spent 8 hours with Kate and her students. There are 22 students in Kate's class, the majority of whom are non-Indigenous students of European descent. Four male students are First Nation and bussed to the high school from a nearby community. Due to attendance issues and family responsibilities, one of the First Nation students was not present during any of my classroom observations. Kate makes a point of explaining that her class is not talkative and due to limited course offerings several students who are more suited to college level English are enrolled in the class. Kate explains to me that a lack of full time English teachers in her department make planning more difficult, as some English courses are given to teachers with space in their timetable. In the past she has offered an English course with a First Nation, Métis and Inuit focus but she could not say for certain that Indigenous perspectives were reaching all students in all English courses despite the high enrollment of First Nation students at the school. At the time of

my research Greenwood HS was planning to offer a Native Studies English course in the next academic year. Kate told me it would be her responsibility to develop curricula for this course.

The teachers contributed their perspectives and their pedagogical approaches to integrating Indigenous perspectives. Having five teacher contributors whose experiences and perspectives are shared in various ways (e.g. observations, interviews, casual conversations) allowed me to juxtapose their various approaches. For the overall project, the methods I used to gather perspectives and experiences were: document consultation, classroom observations, teacher interviews, student focus groups, conversations with First Nation educators and community members, and researcher's journal. This combination of methods was chosen in order to a) gain a well-rounded and more holistic view of the learning environment(s), b) to move between the notions of curriculum-as-planned (formalized units, lesson plans, etc.) and curriculum-as-lived (the implementation in class of these units, lesson plans, etc.) (Aoki, 2005), and c) to have many stories, experiences and perspectives come from teacher and student voices. In that sense, I do not envision this project as 'researching subjects,' but instead see it as a broader "journey of relating, participating and understanding" (Bastien & Kremer, 2004, p. 46).

Gathering Stories and Experiences: Methods Used

Consultation of Ministry Documents

Before I began on site visits to the two high schools, I consulted six Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum and policy documents. These documents represent official Ministry policy and indicate the goals the Ministry has set out for teachers and students. Teachers are expected to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching as more than an "add on" of content, and as such I wanted to know what goals and expectations are outlined in the documents, and what guidance the documents offer in terms of content and overarching approach, and how comprehensive is this guidance. Moreover, consulting official documents compliments what I learned and observed from teachers with regard to the ways integration is/is not happening at the classroom level. The documents I consulted include:

Policy documents:

a) Ontario First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007b). This is a strategic policy document to improve Indigenous education and outcomes.
b) Implementation Plan: Ontario First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Education Policy Framework (2014). This document outlines roles of responsibilities of stakeholders and partners involved in providing publicly funded education to Indigenous students
c) A Solid Foundation: Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2013). This document highlights successes and next priority areas.

Curriculum and Pedagogical Documents

d) Aboriginal Perspectives: A Guide to the Teacher's Toolkit (2009). This document provides a framework to teachers for integrating Indigenous perspectives that compliments a number of lesson plans designed for various grades and subjects.
e) Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12 English (2007d). The official curriculum document that outlines overarching approach, expectations, and examples.
f) Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 19 English (2007c). The official curriculum document that outlines overarching approach, expectations, and examples.

My reading of policy documents was guided by the questions: What are the Ministry's goals for teachers? What are the Ministry's goals for students (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)?

My reading of the curriculum and pedagogical documents was guided by Kanu's (2011) and Lowe and Yunkaporta's (2012) criteria for integrating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. Together, these frameworks (shown previously in Figures 1 and 2) capture various dimensions of engagement with Indigenous perspectives: depth and breadth, and across five levels of planning and implementation.

In the curriculum and pedagogical documents searched for all instances of "Aboriginal", "Indigenous", "First Nation", "FNMI", "first peoples" and "colonialism." Then I entered each of these instances onto a table that outlined depth and breadth of engagement, and marked each entry as Content Description (CD) or Explanation (E). I used the reading of curriculum documents to support my analysis and discussion of findings.

Gaining Access

Gaining access to research sites was not a difficult process as much as it was long and meticulous. The school board I initially approached for permission to carry out this research accepted my request but with certain limitations – there was only one secondary school I was allowed to approach. Despite the board's verbal support, the principal at this school was

uncooperative, making it difficult to recruit participants and enter into a school culture where my research seemed neither fully understood nor a priority topic. Given these limitations, I felt the research would be compromised if I continued to pursue it with this board. Therefore, I contacted a different school board.

After reviewing my request to conduct research in schools the superintendent responsible for Indigenous education contacted me and expressed his interest in the project. He outlined initiatives that were currently underway at various schools in his board (both elementary and secondary) and suggested that there would be many avenues for research that would benefit myself, participants, and the board. With the board's support the superintendent explained my research to an Indigenous advisory committee who also gave their support. This expression of approval was very important to me because no advisory body had been consulted by the other board, and because it opened the possibility of consulting with Indigenous advisors on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of the research project.

With my request to conduct research approved, the superintendent provided me with the contacts of two First Nation educators who were involved with integrating Indigenous perspectives into curricula at schools within the board, and with whom I might coordinate my own research site. One contact was an education advisor who was involved with a collaborative inquiry project between a local First Nation and a public school, and the other was a First Nation teacher who was currently the English curriculum leader developing a Native Studies English course. I contacted both by email including a summary of my research and asked about the opportunity for collaboration. The educational advisor was slow to reply to my emails, however, the teacher responded immediately and enthusiastically. She and the three other teachers who made up the full time teaching staff in her department were all open to participating in the research. I decided to coordinate my project with the English teachers. A week later the principal of anther school forwarded me the contact information of the teachers in his English department. I sent an email to the curriculum leader and she agreed to participate in the research as well. This gave me five teacher participants at two different high schools. I coordinated an initial meeting with each curriculum leader to get a sense of what the departmental initiatives were as far as integrating Indigenous perspectives, and to plan the schedule for classroom observations and interviews.

Initial On-Site Visits

On my first day at River HS Dena met me at the office and introduced me to the principal. She showed me to the English office where we chatted informally. She was warm but professional and I took this meeting to be as much about relationship building and getting to know each other as it was informative. I recorded the details of our conversation in my researchers journal at the end of the day, as I did with all conversations that happened in passing, or outside of classroom observations, interviews and focus groups. Dena and I scheduled our first interview for a couple weeks later. This would give me time to orient myself to the school and a sense of how she and the other teachers were integrating Indigenous perspectives. My first day at Greenwood HS was much the same. I arrived during Kate's prep period and was surprised to find the office staff expecting my arrival. Kate also introduced me to the principal who wished me well with the research. Apart from attending Kate's classes in the morning, I was unable to spend much additional time at Greenwood HS because I would commute to River HS over the lunch hour and arrive in just time to observe Kim and Jen's afternoon classes. I did, however, take the time for a critical reading of the space outside Kate's classroom, which included the school hallways and grounds. Here, I noted prominent art, posters, plaques, books, displays and commemorations that honoured First Nation culture. I did a similar critical reading at River HS. I had more time to spend at River HS and typically spent the lunch hour interviewing the teachers or chatting informally, or writing in my researcher's journal in the library (which was a hub of lunch hour activity).

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations accounted for the bulk of my time with contributors during on-site visits. Over a period of nine weeks in the spring of 2015 I conducted classroom observations at the two high schools where the five teacher participants taught. There were five classes I divided my time among. As the high schools I visited only had four periods each day I could not observe every class every single day. To maximize the time spent in classroom observations, I coordinated with the teachers every week to determine the days that would be most valuable for observations. For example, "book talk" days where a class discussed the novel they were reading, or guest speaker days when a First Nation person or a local historian would be speaking were

more valuable than days where students worked independently on a writing project. I spent a total of 63 hours observing 5 classes and was at one or both schools an average of 3 days each week. I did not visit every class every day because some days, as teachers explained, not a lot was going on that would be useful for me to observe i.e. independent writing (no discussion that day), some students completing a make up assessment while others worked in the library, field trips in other classes, etc. Some teachers were integrating Indigenous perspectives on an ongoing basis (above and beyond my nine weeks of observations), others were focusing on a single unit of anywhere from one to five weeks in length. Therefore, as I explained when introducing teachers and their students, the amount of time I spent observing was different for each class and varied between 8 and 25 hours.

Classroom observations consisted of me taking notes on my laptop. I included as much detail as possible so the notes would recreate the context of the classroom when I read them later. Conversations often moved quickly so I used short forms and paraphrased in ways that preserved the mood of conversations and the meanings conveyed as much as possible. I also noted tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, posture, eye contact, seating arrangement, room décor, room location, natural light, interruptions, silences and sometimes clothing. I recorded my observations by date in Word documents, one document per class. The typed notes reflect what I saw and heard in classrooms. For efficiency and ease of reading I typed the notes as a script with dialogue from different contributors and paragraphs of description interspersed. The scripts are not transcripts. The notes are my rendering of classroom conversations.

Depending on the available seating, I either sat at an empty desk among students, or at a table adjacent to the teacher's desk. Each of the teachers introduced me on the first day as a researcher who would be visiting the class over the next few days/weeks. I then said hello to students, summarized my research in a brief sentence or two and told them if they had questions they could ask me at any time but they were under no obligation to speak to me or pay any attention to my presence.

The stories and experiences I gathered through observations allowed me to: a) identify and analyze the settler and colonial narratives that were present within the classrooms (i.e. through conversations, through spatial arrangement, etc.), b) the ways in which these narratives were supported, questioned, and disrupted, and c) the ways Indigenous ways of knowing were

engaged (i.e. superficially, briefly or ongoing, etc.). Later I will explain how I interpreted and analyzed classroom observations because it applies also to the teacher interviews and student focus groups.

Teacher Interviews

Each teacher contributor and I sat down for (at least) one interview. All interviews took place at the school in the teacher's classroom or the library conference room, and ranged from about 30-75 minutes and were audio recorded. I had originally intended to interview teachers twice, once before and once after the period of classroom observations. However, I found that waiting until the second or third week into our classroom observations was a more ideal time because the teacher and I had established a rapport and some trust, I had a sense of the teacher's class, her teaching style, where the unit of study was going, and based on various events and that had occurred in the class I could avoid asking redundant questions and instead ask more detailed and specific questions.

The purpose of interviewing teachers individually was to highlight their attitudes, perceptions, and expectations surrounding the integration of Indigenous perspectives. The questions intended to get a sense of the teacher's rationale for choosing resources and materials, and explore some of the facilitators and barriers they have experienced with integrating Indigenous perspectives. The guiding questions (Appendix D) for this semi-structured interview aimed to establish a comfort level or shared understanding and can be thought of as 'contextualized conversations' (Stage & Mattson, 2003) in which there is reciprocal participation between teachers and interviewer. This meant each interview unfolded in a unique way and involved different follow up questions based on the teacher's responses and the various lessons or incidents that happened in her class. Methodologically, reciprocal participation was important to me, as I was looking to teachers as knowledgeable contributors and asking them to share their experiences. To set a conversational tone based on reciprocal participation, I invited teachers to think of the interviews as conversations through which I would learn from them.

Student Focus Groups

I held three focus groups with students from the classes I observed at the end of the observation period. Each audio-recorded focus groups had 3-4 different student contributors. As I mentioned previously, the time I spent observing classes was not distributed equally. Therefore, I held focus groups with students from the classes in which I had spent the most time. It turned out that students from these classes were also the most engaged, talkative and willing to voluntarily attend a focus group to discuss their learning experiences surrounding Indigenous perspectives. To recruit students for focus groups, the teacher explained to students or asked me to explain, what a focus group would involve. All students involved in focus groups signed consent forms and those under 18 also had a parent/guardian sign. Student focus groups were important to this research for a number of reasons. I wanted to include student voices and experiences to mediate the possibility of the study being too centered upon voices of authority (the researcher, teacher, curricular resources). Students play an important part in the relationships at the centre of this research i.e. Indigenous – non-Indigenous, student – teacher, student – student.

To develop focus group questions I was guided by St. Denis' (2010) critical ethnographic study in which each question asked of participants related back to the initial inquiry. This enabled her to address her research questions by connecting them to the themes she drew from participants. I planned my interview and focus group questions in a similar manner, the formulation of each question guided by: what information do I need to gather in order to answer research question #1, #2, and so on. To answer my research questions, I determined that focus group needed students to a) indicate their knowledge/prior learning of Indigenous perspectives, b) gather their perceptions on the learning that had taken place over the course of their unit of study that integrated Indigenous perspectives, and c) talk about how they saw themselves and Canadians more broadly positioned in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Therefore, I asked open-ended questions that were broad enough to draw out emergent themes in the analysis. Questions were mainly knowledge questions (to get a sense of what students knew about Indigenous perspectives based on their prior learning either in or outside of school) and value/opinion questions (in order to generate a variety of objective, subjective and normative responses that would be useful in reconstructing meaning in my analysis, as I will explain later).

Researcher's Journal

Each day that I spent in the high schools was full of conversations and incidents that happened between classes, or incredibly rich interactions that happened during classes that my fingers could not type fast enough to capture with enough detail in the moment. Therefore I kept a journal that I wrote in at lunch or at the end of each day. The journal was intended to supplement my observations and allow space for reflections; it was not a place where I attempted to pass judgments and make definitive interpretations about teachers or students. In the journal I wrote about conversations between teachers, conversations between the teachers and I, more details about interactions I observed in class or in the hallways, or about a resource a teacher used. The journal was also a place for reflection, where I recorded the thoughts, feelings or questions certain observations had brought up in relation to my research.

The decision to keep a journal was also part of a methodological approach that attempted to engage in self-reflexivity on an ongoing basis. In this sense, "it offered a means for tracing personal analysis and discoveries of the research that were emerging in narrative" (Kovach, 2009, p. 50). My thoughts and feelings did not have a place in classroom observations, but I needed to write down the many thoughts I was having in the moment. For example, one teacher had a student who was repeatedly terse in his interruptions, and whose comments were at times filled with racialized assumptions. After a few weeks of watching her (almost always) manage this student with grace, respect, wit, and tact, I wrote about it with detail in the journal so I would not forget the impact of these interactions when I returned to the observation notes months later and found them fragmented across several weeks. I use the researcher's journal in my analysis; it is shown indented in *italicized* font.

Conversations with First Nation Community Members

There were a number of First Nations educators and community members whom I spoke with during the course of this research. Having conversations as opposed to interviews is an important choice in method that "shows respect for the participant's story and allows research participants greater control over what they wish to share" (Kovach, 2009, p. 124). I wanted to

invite conversation on the terms of the First Nation educator or community member as much as possible, without predetermining through a list of questions where the conversation would go (although I had a few questions in mind) or thinking I needed to maximize this opportunity to gather rich contributions, which to be honest, is a concern when formulating focus group questions for teenagers who may potentially not wish to engage. I made contact with First Nation educators and community members in a number of ways. Either a teacher or someone a the school board provided their contact information, referring them to me as someone who would have useful insight, or I was introduced to them at the school when they were visiting as a guest or working. Each community member I spoke to knew in advance that we would meet and had agreed to speak with me for the purpose of the research. However, I saw some community members on more than one occasion and an impromptu conversation happened during those unplanned meetings. If the conversation was impromptu, I recorded it as an observation. If our meeting was arranged in advance I took notes (but did not audio record our conversation) and invited them to review and sign a consent form if they wished to have their name used in the research. I chose not to record the conversations because I did not want to add the pressure of formality and because these conversations stood outside of the school board approval process. After typing up conversation notes, I gave a copy to the person I had spoken with and they edited and approved the notes. Again before submitting my final thesis chapters I asked them for approval of the context in which I used their words.

There are three First Nation community members whose conversations I refer to in the stories and experiences gathered. Each community member was from a different First Nation community, although one had family ties across communities. I cannot refer to two of them by name due to the positions they hold in their communities and with the school board.

Susie Jones is known widely in Southern Ontario for her involvement in education. She previously served as the First Nation trustee for a school board. In recent years, she has spoken at schools, churches, workplaces and other organizations including the United Nations about reconciliation and her experience as a residential school survivor. She has been involved in education for over twenty years. It was a humbling honour to speak to Susie. Her perspective and insight about Indigenous education, reconciliation, and the future is a true gift to this project.

I also spoke to a reengagement officer who worked for the school board. She too had been involved in education for over twenty years and had rich insight about the direction in which education (should) go for Indigenous students. The third community member I spoke to introduced himself to me as a "fancy dancer." Indeed, he was a tremendously skilled traditional dancer who visited many schools in the region, teaching students about traditional Indigenous ways of knowing through dance.

Transcribing

Each interview was transcribed on the same day it was held. I did this so the conversations would still be fresh in my mind and I was more likely to remember gestures, facial expressions, or words that might not have been captured clearly in the audio recording. I recorded these nonverbal communications in my researcher's journal, along with any thoughts I had about the interview, or connections between the interview and another experience or interaction that I did not want to forget. This worked well because hearing the audio for a second time in one day helped me to write more fully in my journal about conversation that happened once the tape stopped rolling. I transcribed every audible word for all interviews and focus groups, with the exception of one focus group where I deleted 127 grammatically unnecessary uses of the word 'like' as these distracted too much from the meaningful content of what was said. In focus group transcripts each student participant is identified by a pseudonym. In subsequent chapters, whenever a student in named it is in reference to comments made during a focus group.

At the end of each day, I had compiled classroom observation entries in a Word document, which consisted of pages of sentence fragments and short forms. To avoid the problem of returning to these at a later date and being unable to decipher my hasty writing, I copied my observation notes into a second Word document where I turned the barrage of incoherent short forms into grammatically correct and comprehensible sentences. I did this daily when the observation details were still fresh in my mind. That is why in forthcoming chapters the sections of quoted dialogue taken directly from my observation notes resemble coherent English. In my observation notes students are not identified by name or pseudonym. They are simply identified as MS (male student) and FS (female student), the reason being I did not gather any information

about students other than what I could observe[3]. A limitation of identifying students only as male and female is that we cannot understand how their own identity shapes their engagement and learning experiences. Students who teachers identified to me as First Nation were indicated in the observation notes as FNFS (First Nation Female Student) or FNMS (First Nation Male Student). I included this identifier because it was relevant to the aims of this project to gather student perceptions and experiences when it comes to integrating Indigenous perspectives. There may have been more students who identified as First Nation but had not disclosed this to their teacher, and if so I am not aware of these students. I did not make assumptions of Indigeneity, racial or ethnic background based on my observations. There were students who, in conversation, I heard self-identify as African Canadian, mixed (not specified), South Pacific, Vietnamese, Polish, Dutch, and Irish. For the most part, I did not know how students self-identified, and referring to them by gender only is not an assumption of Whiteness.

As Carspecken (2001) explains about critical ethnography, "knowledge is the more valid the more that power relationships are equalized between all of those who have a stake in its production" (p. 10). Therefore, I had interview transcripts approved, or at least offered interviewees the opportunity to approve the transcripts before I began analysis. Not all teachers chose to review their interview transcripts. Some First Nation community members did choose to review the transcripts. This was an important step as I did not record these interviews, but rather took detailed notes during our conversations. After typing up the notes I provided them with a copy of the transcript(s), which they reviewed on their own time and then we arranged a time to go through any changes that needed to be made together. There were few changes requested, namely accuracy in names, clarification of meaning, and the omission of information that could identify someone.

Interpretation and Analysis

Kovach (2009) makes a distinction between analysis as reductive, which decontextualizes knowledge by sorting 'data' and "reducing the whole to the sum of its parts in order to explain a phenomenon" (p. 130), and analysis that observes and makes sense out of patterns and

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[3] Teachers did not draw my attention to any students who identified by a gender other than male or female. They did, however, draw my attention to any students who identified as First Nation.

behaviours that are highly contextualized and not intended for generalization, but rather interpretive, storied, and subjective. In working with the stories, experiences and perspectives shared with me by contributors I tried to keep both understandings in mind, given that the perceptions of teachers and students shared with me in interviews and focus groups are contextual and reflective of their experience, but also speak to broad patterns of colonizing logic. There is one exception to the way I approached the contributions shared with me. I did not analyze the conversations with First Nation community members and educators in the same way that I analyzed observation, interview, and focus group conversations. I chose not to break up conversations with First Nation community members and reorganize them by theme. Instead, I use these conversations as an interpretive lens for understanding what I observed in classrooms or what was shared in interviews and focus groups.

First Reading: Themes. After transcribing (if necessary) and compiling observations, interviews, focus groups and journal entries into Word documents, I was ready for an initial reading. In an Excel workbook I created a tab for each of the following: observations, focus groups, interviews, conversations, and journal. The research questions provided me with three overarching themes that would guide my first reading: classroom pedagogy, worldview, and ethics. These represent a priori themes and I marked the margins of the transcripts accordingly, highlighting conversations, paragraphs, or standout words and phrases in broad thematic strokes. Kanu's (2011) ethnographic study, which included site observations, interviews, and focus groups, uses similar method of a priori coding which links back to the research questions and theoretical framework for coherence. I colour coded the three overarching themes with the intention of breaking them into subthemes during a second reading.

Some methods lent themselves more to one theme or another. For example, teacher interviews provided a lot of perspective on classroom pedagogy, such as the teacher's strategies and rationale. Classroom observations complimented teacher interviews, because they highlighted teacher directives (i.e. questions or instructions), the nature of student work (i.e. worksheets, discussion), the placement of questions in discussion. After the first reading there were many sections of dialogue that were applicable to more than one theme. Organizing the subthemes reconciled (but did not eliminate) much of this overlap because it introduced a set of more specific avenues for interpretation.

Second Reading: Subthemes. Choosing subthemes and groupings of subthemes was not a random exercise, and while I call it a 'second reading', it would be more accurate to say this stage involved 'several second readings.' In total, I identified 42 subthemes. Even when arranged by subtheme, I tried to preserve the integrity of context by keeping conversations on a given topic in their entirety where possible. I did not extract sections of dialogue and reassign them to multiple subthemes if the conversation as a whole spoke strongly to an overarching theme. I did however, note cross-thematic relevance in my Excel workbook. To name and recognize subthemes, I drew upon language from the literature referenced in Chapters 2 and 3. For example, the three dimensional framework I explained above based on Kanu (2011) and Lowe & Yunkaporta (2013) named 'instructional methods' as one level of integrating Indigenous perspectives. Therefore, I drew out *teaching strategies* as a grouping of subthemes within the umbrella theme of classroom pedagogy.

The second reading also drew out emergent themes. Frank Deer's (2013) use emergent themes in an analysis of interviews allowed him to situate emergent themes within larger narratives. Likewise, the emergent themes I identified highlighted some new subthemes, but were most useful for picking out subtle differences among subthemes. Given that most interactions in this project were conversational, another way I derived subthemes was by the *content* of a statement or section of dialogue made by research participants, or the *kind* of statement a research participant made. For example, there were a number of ways participants talked about colonizing logics directly and indirectly. On the one hand, some conversations spoke directly about *worldview*, or *critiqued dominant versions of history*. On the other hand, some utterances unwittingly reproduced *colonial narratives* or challenged these with *counternarratives*. Each of these *italicized* subthemes lends itself to a slightly different analysis of the ways classroom dialogue promotes or decenters a Eurocentric lens. Subtle differences in the content of a statement determined the subtheme to which a statement would be assigned.

Keywords, such as 'genocide' or 'reconciliation' were another way I sorted the content of statements or sections of dialogue by theme. Genocide formed a sub theme because it was a recurring topic of conversation in one of the classes I observed, but also because of the *kinds* of statements uttered during these conversations. During conversations around 'genocide' there I noted several *kinds* of statements such as *doubt/denial*, *claiming ignorance*, *sanitizing*,

joking/changing the subject, *personal exemptions/excuses*, and *silence* (not responding). In context, these kinds of statements indicated discomfort and/or the desire to distance oneself from the difficult knowledge of colonialism, and I will explain later how I loosely grouped such statements together. Other kinds of statements included: generalizing/universalizing, demanding/referring to "facts," seeing Indigenous peoples/ways of knowing through a Western lens, authoritative commands/instructions, collaborative, and questions. Sometimes a certain kind of statement, e.g., *personal exemptions/excuses* occurred often enough that I sorted these statements into their own subtheme.

With themes and sub themes identified, I cut and pasted conversation excerpts and observations from Word docs into an Excel workbook. Three colour-coded sections represented the three overarching themes: classroom pedagogy, worldview, and ethics. Within each coloured section I arranged excerpts by sub theme. In an adjacent cell I made note of why each entry was significant, highlighted in bold anything I thought had potential for exceptionally rich analysis, and flagged conversations and observations that cut across themes so I could easily find and re-sort it at a later time if need be. As I populated the Excel workbook I organized the subthemes into 7 groupings. Some of these groupings, such as *dis/comfort* and *reconciliation* would become substantial sections in the analysis chapters.

Third Reading: Objective, Subjective and Normative Claims. Having sorted themes and groups of subthemes, I turned my attention to reconstructing meaning by looking at the claims made by participants in conversation and interview transcripts. It was not enough to have a sub-theme with a group of similar statements; I needed to understand how worldviews were being articulated through these statements. Given that the guiding questions for this project and some of the literature cited in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 (Battiste, 2002; Donald, 2009; Ermine, 2007; Kanu, 2005) looked at the struggle for coexistence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, I wanted the analysis to account for different notions of 'truth' and different value systems being negotiated at any give time during classroom discussions. Here, I drew from Carspecken (2001) who identifies three types of validity claims: objective, subjective and normative. An objective claim is something accessible to many i.e. "This is sweetgrass. It is grown and harvested [in a place close to where my family is from]." A subjective claim may be in reference to one's feelings or experience i.e. "My blood was boiling!" Subjective claims were also useful in the analysis because they speak to positionality in a relational sense. In this

research, for example, it is not only the researcher in dialogue with the Other (Madison, 2012) but participants themselves were engaging in and negotiating ethical dialogues with the Other. Finally, a normative claim reflects a level of group consensus about shared values or norms, i.e. "Its like how a lot of people look down on First Nations but its because they don't know their backgrounds and experiences." Normative claims are key in understanding assumptions related to worldview that are embedded in utterances, resistances, and dialogues, particularly in conversations that challenged and attempted to shift perspective. Moreover, the social values in some normative claims allow me to trace certain colonizing logics (Donald, 2009) that frame the way certain teachers or students understand a particular issue, like reserves being "isolating" for Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous communities needing "help." The following chapters will discuss these examples at length.

As I completed the third reading, I did not identify every single statement made by every participant as an objective, subjective, or normative claim. Instead I looked for a) moments of tension during classroom observations (including resistance or disagreement), or b) participant responses to values/opinion questions taken from interviews and focus groups. Then I could trace a) how these claims were deployed by participants (i.e. strategically), and b) how these claims were interwoven in conversations where there was personal struggle between knowledge systems/value systems and colonial positioning, and c) how worldviews were articulated through various and sub-themes. Adding this layer of analysis is useful for supporting claims I make and the conclusions I draw. When a participant makes a normative statement indicating their beliefs about what values should be upheld in a certain situation, I can point to that value statement upon which a decision or course of action hinged rather than simply assigning the statement to a subtheme because it includes a key word or indicates a resistant attitude.

Write Up

There were a number of considerations I faced in writing up the interpretation and analysis chapters that can be described as having contradictory ethical imperatives. First, the tension between confidentiality and acknowledging context posed an ethical dilemma. On the one hand I wanted to ensure the participants and the schools they worked at remained unidentifiable. On the other hand, I felt an ethical imperative: 1) to acknowledge by name the First Nations on

whose traditional land the research was taking place, 2) to acknowledge the importance of place i.e. through local historical context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in that place, and 3) to attribute the words First Nation community members shared with me to the person who uttered them (where written consent was given). Doing these things would make it possible for someone familiar with the area to approximate the geographic location and identify the school board (but not the schools) where the research took place. Not doing these things would render the nations, peoples, and knowledge they shared anonymous in the research; it would add detach the person from the voice, make the language I used to speak about local nations more abstract, and in summary shed a layer of invisibility over Indigenous peoples that I felt would be very colonizing. It is an ethical dilemma because academic research ethics require anonymity, and so the First Nation community members did not have a say in whether their nation was named or not. By extension, I am forced to take the knowledge they shared with me and not contextualize it properly in relation to specific communities. Moreover, the importance of place was a subtheme running as an undercurrent through many conversations. Participants and First Nation community members provided relevant local history that pertained to education and Indigenous - non-Indigenous relations, indicating that the broader importance of place was integral to the classroom context and the research findings. Therefore, I have made many identifiers generic, and where I have not, it is because I consider relevant local context to stretch beyond the geographic borders of the school board. Thus I am confident that participant identities remain protected.

A second ethical dilemma was how to explain my reasons for choosing the research site. As I explained earlier, I am familiar with the local context because I grew up a commuter's distance from the research sites. In disclosing this, someone could look up all the places I have lived and approximate where the research took place. However, there are a number of public and Catholic school boards within commuting distance. Moreover, if I did not disclose my own relationship to this place, I would misrepresent my motivations for choosing this site. That would be highly unethical in research involving Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing where the intentions and motivations of non-Indigenous researchers has left a legacy of damage in the past. Moreover, as I have explained, it was ethically important to have a connection to the site of the research rather than parachuting in as a complete outsider, conducting research, and leaving again.

There were a lot of decisions about *how* to include things that troubled me a great deal more than *whether* or not to include them. For example, including personal stories shared by First Nations community members was difficult, even when I had explicit permission to use their words. When someone is talking about the trauma and abuse one or more of their family members experienced in residential schools, they are telling a story about someone else. It is their story to tell, but it is someone else's story as well, and I don't know that other person. As one First Nation community member explained, she told her stories in the hope they would be shared widely. While personal stories are one's truth, one's testimony, and are crucial to learning a lesser known history, I wonder if I can re-tell these stories with the integrity they deserve? Some stories were so powerful in the moment they were expressed that I choose to leave those stories in that moment, and to instead, capture how moving the moment was in other ways. Therefore, in the analysis chapter I share some personal stories that were shared with me, but not all of them.

While writing the theoretical framework I had intended to include concepts with local significance as shared with me by community members' so the Indigenous ways of knowing I draw on are not only coming from a book, or from nations and regions far from where my research was taking place. The fact of the matter is that everyone I talked to spoke and thought in English, and although they were active in their community culture, English was the language used to describe traditional ways of knowing and being. As one community member said "one day I hope to find someone who can tell me how to say my name in the traditional language." Through the long history of colonization traditional languages were lost. As one teacher lamented, "my grandfather spoke three languages and I speak one." Should I have pushed further, asking for more contacts, more people who might have told me how to express "all my relations" in the traditional language? Should I have looked up that phrase on the Internet and hoped I chose the most correct one? Then, all I would gain is a word, since the description and the embodiment of the illusive phrases I imaged I needed had been given to me already. I thought of all the times I had been impressed by academic writing that refused to translate certain concepts into the English language, using instead traditional words. Yet, if I were to do that, would it be a colonial gaze inciting me to use traditional language and to force authenticity onto my research? My decision was to back away from the idea, to trust that the people I talked to chose their words with integrity and in the way they wanted to be heard.

In talking to First Nations educators for this research, they told me schools have been slow to change but they are trying. The next chapters will take us inside the school to the spaces where the teachers and students learned together in an effort to understand their words and experiences, and how some of them are working to be part of the change within schools and within their communities. The chapters explore themes of reconciliation, discomfort, and the coexistence of worldviews, and the ethics of building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Sharing Findings

As my relationship with the teacher participants developed, I was able to share initial insights with them during our informal conversations. At the time I did not think of these conversations as sharing findings, but when I reflect on one conversation I had with Dena about the absence of land and treaties in some lesson plans that integrate Indigenous perspectives, I see it as an important moment in the way both of us moved forward (her with her unit plan, and later, my analysis).

The board expressed an interest in my research findings but made no specific requirement for sharing findings; they believed the process of being involved was valuable in itself. However, I expressed that I would share the finalized thesis with the school board. To this end I have been fortunate on several occasions to talk at length about the findings of the project with the school board's coordinator for Indigenous initiatives. In addition, for teachers and First Nation community members with whom I continue to be in touch, I have continued to share findings formally at conferences and workshops and informally through our conversations.

Chapter 5: Stories, Experiences and Perspectives Shared

Part 1: Worldviews in Parallel: Possibilities and Pitfalls

No one has a pure worldview that is 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric; rather, everyone has an integrated mind, a fluxing, and ambidextrous consciousness, a precolonized consciousness that flows into a colonized consciousness and back again. (Little Bear, 2000, p. 85)

What I want to talk to you about today to introduce the novel is something called worldview. Worldview refers to the way in which different cultures view the world. It's important for us to talk about worldview so you're not left with a superficial view of First Nation culture.

- Dena, Classroom Observation notes

What is Worldview

This project sets out to trace in detail ways in which colonizing logics are (or are not) creeping into classroom dialogue on topics that are specifically meant to counter and criticize those logics. In other words, is the integration of Indigenous perspectives is decentering Eurocentric curricular discourses? By classroom curriculum I am referring to the formal school curriculum as well as the learning that takes place in and around the classroom apart from the formal curriculum. To answer the question above, this chapter focuses on conversations that took place during the period of classroom observations and in focus groups with students. Tupper (2014) found that colonizing logics by way of historical narratives of settlement found ways into conversations with students who were taking part in a project aimed at disrupting such narratives. In this chapter I make the case it is important to identify and understand colonizing logics in everyday dialogue so engagement with Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing can be substantive, rather than rhetorical.

This chapter will explore several messy, contradictory and often simultaneous moments when colonizing logics were disrupted and/or re-inscribed through classroom curricula and conversations. It begins by focusing on worldview as a lens through which curricula is approached, through which teachers teach, and through which students read texts. Each

classroom is described to set context. Then it looks at three topics: stereotypes, identity and responsibility, and compares the ways conversations on these topics were taken up in different classrooms, how different worldviews framed or intervened in these conversations, and the implications of reproducing colonizing logics in curricula meant to integrate Indigenous perspectives. Through these examples I intend to show that a conscious awareness of worldview has an impact on the ways in which colonizing logics are disrupted and Indigenous perspectives taken up.

Each teacher's approach to Indigenous perspectives was situated within (a) worldview(s). As the analysis of conversations in this chapter unfolds, the worldviews from which the teachers taught and the significance this had on classroom dialogue will become much clearer. Broadly, a worldview includes the epistemological, ontological, and cosmological orientation of a person, group, culture, or society, including philosophical, existential, spiritual, ethical points of view. It is a very encompassing way of seeing the world, in which some elements are easy to articulate and others more difficult to name. Those elements that go unacknowledged or unnamed can have consequences. In an earlier chapter, I talked about colonizing logics as being indicative of a dominant Western worldview. As outlined in the theoretical framework, Dwayne Donald (2009) argues that the fort, as a colonial artifact signifies a colonial frontier logic, through which Euro-Western interpretations of Indigenousness exclude Indigenous people from settler society along the dividing lines of in/out, civilization/wilderness. What makes a Western logic a colonizing logic in this case, is that Indigenous ways of knowing are cast aside or discredited, and a particular set of Euro-Western values and practices are justification for advancing the aims of European settlement and occupation of lands. Thus, colonizing logics are ways of sense making that contribute to the colonization and neo-colonial oppression of (but not limited to) Indigenous peoples. Colonizing logics may draw on linear patterns of thought (i.e. hierarchy) and understanding (i.e. Cartesianism) that cannot be mapped onto more fluid, circular, or cyclical connectivity in Indigenous knowing, and as a result are used to justify settler superiority over Indigenous peoples. Colonizing logics illustrate the tension between Indigenous and Western worldviews, and the lack of will to grapple with incommensurability and misunderstanding between the two. Not all aspects of a Western worldview are necessarily colonizing or at odds with Indigenous worldviews, and as the Venn diagram in the previous chapter (Figure 2) illustrates, there is common ground. Dena also created a Venn diagram with her class to illustrate

the difference between a pre-contact First Nation and a Western worldview. The next section will explore her approach to situating worldviews in parallel in classroom pedagogy.

Worldviews in Parallel: Dena's Class

Sitting in the English office with Dena one day before the beginning of the unit for the novel, *Three Day Road*, she muses:

> This is the first time I've really looked into it in developing this curriculum, so…we're going to talk about postcolonial perspectives, and then we're going to deal with the term postcolonial (*laughs*) because that in itself is problematic. But that is how I'm going to frame the discussion around this novel with the [students]. How do you work through postcolonial, or how do you work through that lens?... I think students are probably more prepared than we think to deal with those higher end issues. And I think you can do that at almost any level, it's just the way in which you do it.

Even for a seasoned educator with years of experience teaching through First Nation perspectives, there is an element of the unknown when trying something for the first time. Dena's decision to approach the novel through a postcolonial lens is intended to give students a framework through which to identify and critique colonizing Western ways of knowing. Her plan is to use the postcolonial lens in combination with a First Nation worldview, which she introduces to students somewhat creatively on the first day of the unit.

To make her point, Dena enters the classroom early one day and asks the students who have already arrived to leave. Then she shuts the door and proceeds (with the help of another teacher and myself) to turn over all the desks so they are upside down, backwards, and on their sides. Then she opens the door. Students walk back in and stare. Some wait for instructions. Others sit on the sideways desks. The following exchange took place[4]:

> *MS*: She's trying to make us think.
> *FS*: I don't get why she would do this.
> *MS*: What happened to my books?
> *MS*: (*flipping a desk upright*) I think she's making us try to think critically about the book so I'm just going to sit here.

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[4] MS: Male Student.
FS: Female Student.
FNMS: First Nation Male Student.
FNFS: First Nation Female Student.
MS1: A male student whose remarks are noteworthy in subsequent discussions.

Dena: Just come on in I want to have a conversation… How did you feel when you came into class today?
FS: Confused.
MS: Strong! Cause I got to flip a desk.
MS: Annoyed.
MS (*sitting on the floor*): Defeated.
MS: A sense of disarray.
Dena: What kind of questions did you ask when you came in?
MS: What? Why? What did we do?
MS: I thought someone got angry at us.
MS: Does this have a deeper meaning?
Dena: Probably. Let's have a discussion. Not in rows but I'll let you actually sit in the desks. (*They form a loose circle with the desks that looks like a blob).* My goal in this unit is to put you in a position where you're forced to see the world a different way. There is value in that. We don't do it enough for students… First, I want to close this space so there are no gaps… (*Students shuffle the desks into a tighter circle. Dena gestures toward the circle speaking slowly now.)* This circle loosely represents a worldview that First Nation people have that may be very different from a western worldview. What do you think I mean by that?

Through this activity Dena introduces the concept 'worldview' and sets the expectation that they will all try to see the world differently. For the duration of the unit students always sit in a tight circle, so engaging Indigenous worldviews, for Dena it seems, is more than a mental exercise. The desks are arranged side by side with no empty spaces so each person is connected to the people beside them and facing inward toward the class as a whole.

Learning quickly becomes a multi-sensory experience in Dena's classroom requiring more of the body than just the mind. The next day she brings the four sacred medicines to class on her rolling cart. She keeps them at school and notices that she will need more sage. Students see, touch, and smell the medicines, inhaling the same sweet and pungent tonic scent of smoke as the characters in the novel. Dena remarks wryly, "You don't know how often I burn them at school and people think its weed. I've had a colleague who literally thought I was smoking it." There's truth in her humour and students chuckle at the ridiculous the misconception of burning sweetgrass, and the idea of their petite, well put together teacher smoking weed. Being present during this moment, my journal reads:

> *Dena lights the tip of the braided sweetgrass and walks around the circle for all to smell, explaining that a braid represents community; it is stronger than individual strands of grass. She explains that people often burn and smudge with a combination of the*

medicines. Dena then passes the sage around for everyone to smell but leaves the other medicines on the table saying they can be looked at later because women don't touch them if they're on their moon time. (There is some nervous laughter and some reluctance from students who speculate what that means.) When she lights the sage and the flame catches it easily. She explains this particular classroom hasn't been smudged before. In her classroom where she regularly teaches and has smudged many times, the flame often goes out. A First Nation student is happy to demonstrate smudging.

Throughout, the lesson Dena reminds students that different nations have slightly different ways of interpreting their beliefs, and that what she is showing them is what she has learned from her community. When the bell goes there's calmness in the class and a few students thank her on the way out.

Learning through doing becomes a key way for students to understand the material consequences of a worldview (or clash of worldviews). In this manner, Dena moves between philosophical and material aspects of worldview by drawing attention to key beliefs and assumptions or practices that are fundamental to either First Nation or a (colonial) Western worldview. For example, she says *anisheek* and *meeguetch* (thank you in Lenape and Ojibwe/Anishinaabe languages) as a way of beginning each class rather than ending it. She doesn't explain why she begins with a thank you, but a few days when the class is preparing for a visitor to come who will explain the significance of dance in a traditional First Nation (Lenape) worldview, she explains the meaning of thanking someone in advance.

> *Dena*: When people do something for you, you traditionally ask them in person and thank them in advance – you give them tobacco when you're asking. Realistically, in this modern age I texted rather than asking in person, but I feel it's important to give our guest tobacco when he arrives here. (*She holds up a small pouch*.) This is a tobacco bundle. It's what is given, and it's important that you know *how* it's given. *You* have to make the tobacco tie. Why do you think you have to make it rather than me giving it to you already made?
> *MS*: So it's personal and meaningful, coming from us.

Dena goes on to explain the materials she uses to make the pouch and distributes these to students who have volunteered to tie a tobacco bundle. She also explains that the tobacco you buy in stores is perfectly acceptable although it's not exactly the same as traditional tobacco. The class is so attentive while she demonstrates the preparation of tobacco, and the students who are working on their own bundle are wholly focused.

Preparing for visitors continues the multi-sensory experience for students, and a way of teaching respectful protocols at the same time. An important moment that I will talk about several times during the next chapters is a consultation with First Nation community members that Dena's class arranged as they were preparing for a project on reconciliation. To prepare for the visiting community members, Dena announces, "We need to prepare for tomorrow when the panel of community members is here. Get up and stand in circle. Join hands." They are all nervous and worried about saying the wrong thing. She leads everyone through a Haudenosaunee round dance, explaining Iroquois is no longer the term used. The movements are a bit jerky at first, students bodies joined at the hands but awkwardly out of sync. The dance continues until there was unison in the circle and flow is created by each person anticipating the movement of the next. When Dena is satisfied by the energy in the room and the smiles on people's faces she praised students for having the courage to do what they are doing, and dismisses class.

Every other day Dena's class takes place in a different location in and around the school (i.e. outside, the library, a conference room, the drama room, etc.). She uses different materials that activate the senses, her wooden box with the items for burning sweetgrass and sage is never far away.

> *Dena*: I think learning space in itself encompasses so very much, from the atmosphere that's created to the physical space… The physical space that we ask students to learn in... more often than not it's set up to put the teacher above the student, right? Desks in a row and the teacher up in front of the classroom. So that's one thing that you can kind of deal with. I've definitely requested to have a classroom without desks. Just get rid of them...We'll see if that ever happens (*laughs*).

To cultivate an awareness of the learning space, she makes a point to ask students about it so they're conscious of the difference a learning space makes.

> *Dena*: Yesterday we went outside to recognize and cherish the land. Did you enjoy being outside?
> (*Unanimous yes.*)
> *MS*: It was easier to learn.
> *Dena*: I noticed that being outside in the different environment prompted different types of interaction. You were more free and the guys couldn't sit still. How was being outside connected to First Nation culture?
> (*No response. She lets them think.*)
> *MS*: They connect to the land.
> *Dena*: That could be an interesting point of comparison about schools. With residential school children were boxed in. It's so common for us to live within the school structure,

we aren't used to leaving it. For me, coming from a First Nation worldview, it's kind of strange. It's common in First Nation cultures that if I have to attend a meeting and I need to bring my kids, it's okay. Children are not expected to be off to the side and quiet, they're expected to be active members even at an important meeting. There isn't that hierarchy – children are a very important part of community and they are allowed to just be. That can make non-First Nation people uncomfortable. When you were outside, that is how I saw you were allowed to be.

Debriefing with her class is an opportunity to explore connectedness in a First Nation worldview, and to link ideas of order and hierarchy, particularly as students experience it in school, to a Western worldview. If we look at the types of statements that make up this dialogue, they are not only comparing worldviews, but connecting students' subjective experiences (i.e. feeling free and unable to sit still) to normative patterns of behaviour (i.e. being boxed in within the school structure and not used to leaving it) that reflect key values within those worldviews (i.e. hierarchy versus being "allowed to just be"). It is a brief dialogue, but an important one in that students are learning how their experiences of the world and of schooling are profoundly affected by worldview.

Keeping her explanation local and relevant to the *Three Day Road*, Dena continues to explore connectivity through the significance of the circle and the *Orenda* in First Nation, and more specifically Mohawk (Haudenausonee) culture.

> *Dena*: The *Orenda* is a concept where everything has a soul.
> *MS*: Everything? Or every *living* thing?
> *Dena*: (*Smirks*.) Everything. Like rocks. Some First Nation cultures differentiate – there are over 300 nations in Canada - they differentiate between living and non-living, but they all have a soul. If your dog, and the tree outside all have souls, how does that shape your relationship with the world?
> *FS*: You feel connected to them.
> *MS*: I don't understand. What about a desk?
> *Dena*: This is how its been explained to me. The desk came from wood – a natural resource – and that's where its soul comes from. It carries its soul with it.

Dena provides her students with a foundation before they moved on to discuss the novel and current issues involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The First Nation worldview is the first building block in this foundation, which is significant because it is allowed to stand on its own, rather than being evaluated against a non-Indigenous worldview.

Introducing a Postcolonial Lens

At this point, Dena's students have been introduced to the concept of worldview, and they have experienced some sense of connectivity and sensory learning. However, the dominant Western worldview that likely shapes much of their experience of the world, at least their experience with the education system as Dena has hinted, remains unchallenged. To start forming connections between colonialism, a Western worldview and the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, Dena introduces a postcolonial lens.

> *Dena*: We talked about worldview and how First Nations have different way of looking at things than the dominant culture. A postcolonial lens helps us to look at poetry, literature, or novels from a non-dominant lens.
> (*Silence*.)
> *Dena*: What if I said *Three Day Road* is written from a postcolonial perspective.
> *MS*: The post means after, so the novel is written after people were colonized?
> *Dena*: Colonialism can be seen as European empires coming over and inhabiting new lands.
> *FS*: They also bring traditions, values.
> *FS*: Politics.
> *Dena*: Yes, political systems, beliefs, and economic system… If you think of colonization that way, as more than just coming to new lands, what does it mean for the people who were already here?
> *MS*: They're going to have to change their ways to some extent.
> *Dena*: Yes. So, First Nation political structures that are built upon a circle cause a clash. The vibrant trade economy, which for the most part didn't use currency, was far more complex than I think Europeans realized. That's turned on its head after colonialism. Postcolonial criticism…is the attempt to: 1) Look at literature produced by colonial powers and analyze it from a different perspective, such as from outside the culture. 2) Look at literature from people who are colonized; 3) Look at power, economics, religion, politics, and culture.

In pairs, the students read the poem "History Lesson" by Jeanette C. Armstrong with the guiding question: How is her history lesson different than the lessons you learned in school? Students respond right away, "It gives a First Nation point of view", then more critically, "We never learned anything in history" and "her history lesson as a First Nation woman is more negative. We learned that we helped them." As students analyze the poem Dena has them look closely at the language used, the verbs in particular, to describe First Nation people and Europeans and their relationship to one another. They notice the Europeans "burst" and "ran" from the ship, that "First Nation people are described as "uneducated," or "basic." A male student sums up his take on the poem from a postcolonial perspective saying, "[The Europeans'] beliefs are skewed."

In their introduction to worldview Dena asks students to consider a specifically pre-contact context. This creates the perception of a temporal distance from the colonial Western worldview they are critiquing their own experience of the world (from a Western lens). Although this temporal distance would close over the course of the unit with projects that connect history to present through issues of land, treaties, and the contemporary relationship between First Nation and non-First Nation people, as an strategy, it may have helped students to not feel as though their own values and beliefs were shattered immediately from the beginning of the unit of study.

Dena begins to complicate the relationship between First Nation and (colonial) Western worldviews by pointing out key organizational patterns and their consequences. She paces back and forth around the circle of desks, surveying students.

> *Dena*: What is an organizational pattern from a Eurocentric view?
> *MS*: One person in charge like a Prime Minister.
> *MS*: Hierarchy.
> *Dena*: What am I doing right now? (*She continues to stand and watch them from above, looking down as they sit in the desks. It's a little more intimidating than her usual demeanour and no one answers.*) A First Nation worldview is more based on this circle kind of structure? What do you think of it?
> *MS*: Like knights at a round table – we're all equal.
> *FS*: I don't like the hierarchy because like we talked about before there are issues of power.

Dena is explicitly drawing attention to the way organizational patterns reflect worldviews as well as who holds power. The student who notes they are more equal in a circle gets her point, but he describes a circle by quickly citing the Western point of reference "knights at a round table." Dena goes on to explain that organizational differences impact the way people live and interact with each other and with all that is around them.

> *Dena*: When Europeans came here, the idea of land ownership was completely different for First Nation people.
> *MS*: They shared.
> *MS*: They treated animals as brothers and sisters.
> *Dena*: Good. So if you can't own land, and trees and rivers and lakes have a soul. What kind of problem does that immediately cause when First Nation and non-First Nation people meet.
> *MS*: Cultural differences.
> Dena: What kind of cultural differences?
> *MS*: One might think they're better.
> *Dena*: Let's take land. I don't own the land, I am only a caretaker. I have to pass the land

on to my children and my children's children. My community makes decisions based on the impact those decisions will have 7 generations down the road. When you think of land ownership, what is the problem when Europeans arrive?

MS: Developing it.

MS: Destroying it.

Dena: Doing what ever you want – it's yours. You can see the kind of clash that creates. If we do a comparison (not that you experienced what First Nation experienced) but when you walked in and the desks were upside down, on a small scale that is the kind of confusion, disarray and unknown that the First Nation felt when they came in contact with European culture. To be fair, it's probably how the first settlers felt. The two worldviews were so different that both were turned on their head.

Making a simple Venn diagram allows students the opportunity to come up with some (complicated) core differences between and Indigenous and Western worldviews. Dena reminds them there are many variations of both worldviews, but for their purpose they will consider a pre-contact First Nation worldview and a colonial Western worldview. Students suggest that some main aspects include: how different cultures see each other, religion, beliefs, appearance, politics, governance, policy, and spirituality. They go on to unpack each one which helps to avoid the generalization that can come from working with broad terminology. For example:

MS: First Nations had tribal councils and Western societies had monarchs.

MS: Government makes decisions.

Dena: Interesting! A misconception is that tribal councils were the same. Bands and tribal councils are a Western import – it's a hierarchy. (*She compares it to a city council*). From a Mohawk perspective – the Haudenosaunee people - do you know who would have run those societies?

FNFS: The clan mothers.

Dena: All decisions had to be run past the clan mothers, and it was more collectively based decision making.

When they are finished, the Venn diagram (Figure 3) looks like this:

Figure 3.

Indigenous worldview:

- spirit in all things
- trade based economy
- more gender equality
- music for spiritual purposes
- land can't be owned
- governance through collective decision-making

Western worldview (at the time of contact):

- spirit in humans and God
- money and trade based economy
- social status defined opportunity
- music for religious or cultural purposes
- land ownership
- hierarchy in decision making and government

The center, Dena explains, will be filled in later.

Dena doesn't give her students a history lesson about the time of contact. There is no Christopher Columbus myth, and no explorer's bravado. In her classroom, understanding the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is not about those celebrated details. It is about worldviews, values, and patterns of organization. Moreover, Dena shows her students the consequences of a clash between two worldviews at a philosophical level, by explaining beliefs and practices such as the *Orenda* and giving tobacco, and also a material level by physically moving her students outdoors to a learning environment where they can be more free and connected to the land, and then by bringing them indoors again, only to tower above them, using her teacher's authority a symbol of Western hierarchy. As an observer (and participant), watching the intensity of the class, the focus or the surprise of students as they make connections in their minds, I note the parallel approach to Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews allows two key things to happen: 1) the a postcolonial lens allows Dena to situate power relations, politics, traditions, values, and economic systems within a colonial context. She illustrates abstract concepts with words and examples students were familiar with and could connect to their own experience of the world. These connections are useful for generating critique

but on their own have limits because it can be hard to imagine alternative patterns of organization. Thus, 2) teaching through a First Nation lens gives students an alternative framework through which to view the world. They could use their understanding of a colonial Western worldview to consider impact of Western and Indigenous worldviews colliding, and the consequences for the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. With worldviews at the forefront I contemplated: once the class starts reading historical texts, researching treaties, residential schools, unpacking stereotypes and cultural appropriation, they are going to be approaching these texts with two strong frameworks through which to read them, and what kind of possibilities will this create?

Reading Parallel Stories in <u>Three Day Road</u>

The next excerpts of classroom dialogue show Dena's students moving between postcolonial and Indigenous lenses. Here, the class is responding to discussion questions related to *Three Day Road* (Boyden, 2006).

> *Dena*: What do Elijah and Xavier pull from their traditional culture to help them when they're fighting in France?
> *MS*: Hunting, living off the land.
> *MS*: Being a sniper is related to their hunting tactics; they move after each shot.
> *MS1*: That's not how I hunt. I stay in the same place.
> *FNFS*: But that's not how they hunt; they hunt like their culture.
> *FS*: (*irritated by MS1*) But how many times have you gone hunting?
> *Dena*: We're talking about two different types of hunting. (*To MS1*) You're talking about duck hunting, right? (*He nods.*)
> *MS*: If Xavier and Elijah had stayed in one place the Germans would have caught them.
>
> *...*
> *Dena*: There is a passage where Xavier and Elijah have lost each other in the bush. Xavier says, 'I aimed my rifle at a tree two hundred yards in the distance toward where I could best figure Elijah was headed. I fired it and listened carefully for a couple of minutes until the thin pop of a rifle answering far away came back. In this way we located one another and at the same time learned the sound of the rifle and how to track it through the distance and time. To simply aim a rifle in the air when lost in the bush will not help. The sound travels up and around and seems to come from everywhere.' In war, Xavier listens for the sound of the different guns to learn them. From my experiences in talking to an Elder, he told me, when you stop and listen to your own surroundings you're much more connected to your environment. That's also an important skill in the trenches. Xavier is consciously using this skill.

In being contrary, the student MS1 considers hunting from a Western lens and through his own experience. In doing so he diminishes traditional hunting tactics by implying they are not connected to the skills needed to be a good WWI sniper. The other students don't let him get away with these comments, and their responses "they hunt like their culture" and "the Germans would have caught them" encourage everyone to consider hunting from a Cree perspective. Dena is strategic in the way she supports students in this conversation: stepping in to validate MS1 while not necessarily agreeing with him.

Next, Dena reads a passage from *Three Day Road* about a sentry who fell asleep at his position and was rumoured to have been taken away and shot. She points out that no one dares ask anyone up the chain of command if that is indeed what happened to the sentry. Then she asks students to compare this event with a second passage in the book. In the second passage, Niska tells Xavier a story she remembers from her youth, when rumours that her father murdered someone began to spread from her community, and eventually to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who come and take her father away as winter is setting in. Students discuss the two scenarios:

> *FS*: The sentry put everyone at risk and no one questioned shooting him.
> *FS*: Niska's father was protecting his community from the *windigo*.
> *MS1:* He was doing what he had to and he was condemned for it.
> *Dena*: Do you see how the colonizer tried to interpret that situation through the colonizer's lens? (*She really emphasizes this point, rephrases it, and then returns to it for further clarification*.)
> *MS*: With the sentry they were in a culture of war.
> *MS*: But it's racial or rather, and cultural misunderstanding. You've got an Indian killing an Indian out in the bush for no apparent reason, versus an officer killing a subordinate.
> *Dena*: It highlights the colonizer not understanding First Nation culture because both situations are essentially the same thing: killing one person to protect the rest.

Dena says, "there's power in connecting similar stories" and indeed there was. Students were moved by what they perceived to be a great unfairness: Niska's father, killed the *windigo* – a threat to his community - with the consent of his community, and in the way his father had taught him. In this instance it was a woman whose desperate madness threatened the survival of the community in a time of isolation and near starvation. When the RCMP takes him to administer justice for murder, it jeopardizes the family's chance of survival through the winter. Though the class didn't pursue an analysis of *justice* as a colonizing logic, upheld impartially and

administered uniformly according to the rule of law, it was implicit that notions of justice are at the heart of this clash between worldviews.

In addition to reading the novel as a series parallel stories, Dena uses the significance of stories in First Nation culture as a non-Western framework for understanding what happens in the novel. Students discuss the question: Is there deeper significance in Niska telling Xavier stories? The context is Niska and Xavier traveling home by canoe after his return from France, and while his pain from his injuries is amplified by morphine withdrawals. Students immediately recognize the stories are "to heal him", "to remind him who he was and to try to get him back," to "connect back to Xavier's experiences and problems" and that "stories are therapeutic for Niska as well as Xavier; she understands the desperation of war."

> *Dena*: In First Nation culture people tell stories, lots of them – whether it's an Elder, or during a craft, there's a story that goes with everyone. You're bang on that stories have healing power, not just traditional stories, but also stories from the news.

The next day students work on discussion questions in small groups, trying to draw parallels between two chapters that appear in sequence in the novel. In one chapter, Xavier, then fighting in France, makes his first kill as a sniper and it literally makes him ill. In the following chapter, which is a flashback, Niska narrates some details surrounding her sexual encounter with a womanizing Frenchman. She later curses him, and he soon succumbs to deranged madness. Some students have a hard time understanding why these two chapters appear in sequence. Two male students suggest the chapter about Niska, now an older woman recounting her sexual escapades, is for "shock value." I see a First Nation female student shake her head in disagreement, saying it's "not shocking."

> *MS*: So Niska tells Xavier how she meets the guy but when things escalate between them she just stops the story. Does she not want to expose him to that side of her? The reader knows the rest of her story even though she doesn't say it.
> *FS*: Maybe she was lonely, naïve.
> *MS*: After, she curses him (her French ex-lover) and he goes mad.
> *FS*: It seems uncharacteristic of her – maybe she's naïve on purpose because she can see and understand people but then later she feels responsible.

Analyzing parallel stories from *parallel lenses* is a challenge, and here students project their own ideas about sharing intimate moments and seeking companionship onto Niska. Unfortunately, this line of analysis does not prove fruitful. While the class is discussing Dena writes "all in

balance" on the chalkboard and draws a circle with four parts labeled: mental, emotional, physical and spiritual. As she moves from group to group she tells them to think of the medicine wheel as a way to understand what's happening in the novel. She says "Niska's quote, 'I try to feed Xavier, but he still doesn't eat… I feed him with my story instead'" relates to the idea of healing and a person being in balance. With a framework outside of their own 'Western' way of reading the text I can almost hear students reminding themselves to see things from the characters' First Nations point of view. For example, a male student observes, "The Frenchman cursed her culture in his way if you think about it" referring to demeaning behaviour toward Niska. Another student adds, "stories are knowledge to [First Nation] cultures, so there has to be a reason why she's telling Xavier." Then finally beginning to see the parallel stories through parallel lenses, a male student notes, "Xavier gets his first kill and then so does Niska!... She was hunting him the same way she hunts in the bush – she talks about stalking and capturing the French man as if he's an animal." They ask Dena if they're on the right track and she tells them to think of the "complexity of those relationships." They come to understand the parallel stories as a flipping of the colonial relationship, wherein Xavier and Niska hold power over those who would participate in their colonial oppression, and recognizing this gives both characters mixed feelings about their own desires and actions.

The parallel lens approach continues to be a useful way to recognize and disrupt colonial Western ways of thinking. In talking about the ways Xavier maintains his Cree culture:

> *Dena*: He keeps medicine bag of tobacco in his shirt (*she takes one from around her neck and shows it*) but he also thanks the bodies in the trenches when they're used as reinforcement. Do you see the connection?
> *MS1*: So gross.
> *Dena*: Yes, gross, but you can either just throw it into the trench wall and cover it up or you can thank it for the protection it offers.

This student's response shows that he's not accustomed to a culture that honours the dead in this way, and Dena's response is clever: she validates his opinion that it is gross but at the same time shows that his comment trivializes Cree cultural traditions. In this way she subtly pulls the student out of his comfort zone. Other times, Dena is more direct. During a contentious exchange, which I will continue to refer to as the *genocide conversation,* students try to agree on a definition of genocide. With their opinions divided, some students seek a definition that exonerates Canada, while others seek a definition that implicates Canada:

> *Dena*: I'm not going to tell you what to think but let's work through it. What are some commonly agreed upon genocides?
> *(Various students suggest the Holocaust, Rwanda, Somalia, Armenia.)*
> *MS*: 9/11? Would that be wrong? It's a deliberate killing.
> *MS*: I don't really think it would be a genocide – it's more of a terror attack.
> *Dena*: With genocide we're talking really large groups.
> *MS*: Somalia was like 300 000.
> *MS*: Does it happen over time?
> *MS*: Terror is an attack. Genocide is systematic over time. So the definition of terror could apply in genocide, I guess.
> *MS*: Terror doesn't have as big an end goal as genocide.
> *Dena*: That could also be a very Western/colonial lens – the way we view terror. For some people, terrorism has been ongoing for centuries.

The role of worldviews in this dialogue is noteworthy, and it presents a good opportunity to summarize the section thus far. As we have seen, Dena's pedagogy explicitly engages with a First Nation and a (colonial) Western worldview, and situates these worldviews in parallel. Subsequent activities have students analyze the novel *Three Day Road* as a series of parallel stories. The dialogue illustrates the ongoing struggle of students to position worldviews in relation rather than in comparison. We see this struggle in the students' small group conversations when they tried to understand why the characters in the book did the things they did. Their first instinct was to pass off certain decisions as bizarre or attention seeking. However, having worldviews at the forefront means that students cocanuld question themselves or other students when it seems their reading of a text reflects their own experience of the world rather than the experience of the First Nation characters in the book. In this sense, interventions are key in disrupting status quo readings that would impress dominant (contemporary, non-Indigenous) understandings on a historical text depicting a First Nation worldview.

Kate's Class

In Kate's class Indigenous perspectives are part of a larger unit on literary theory. Kate introduces a critical Indigenous lens as one of several lenses for analyzing texts. Her approach and time duration are different from Dena's, as well as her classroom context. Recall, Kate teaches at Greenwood HS. She describes her students as quiet. It is Kate's first time integrating an Indigenous lens into her unit on literary theory, but she feels it is important to include given that a number of her students were from a nearby First Nation community. Kate has allocated

three days for covering the Indigenous perspective, and explains she will revisit it at the end of the unit in preparation for a summative task.

Kate introduces an "Indigenous lens" on the first day of my observations in her class and right away a student asks, "What's that?" Despite the close physical proximity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and communities, some students have littler prior knowledge. She is careful and articulate in explaining that an Indigenous lens includes, "the views of people who traditionally lived on the land before Europeans, for example Indigenous people in Canada, or First people of Australia, and it also includes their response to the way literature and film have misrepresented and stereotyping them."

Kate clearly positions Indigenous perspectives as one of several, prompting students with questions, "Why use a feminist lens, why use a Marxist lens?"

> *Kate*: What do you think an Indigenous theory looks at and why is it important?
> (*Some students have no idea. Others are trying to figure it out. Two First Nation male students chuckle with amusement and one of them answers.*)
> *FNMS*: How colonization affected Indigenous literature.
> *MS*: It could include the loss of Aboriginal language, culture, and traditions.

The main topics of the respective lessons were stereotypes, historical inaccuracies and contemporary media representations. Kate's questions to students asked how Indigenous peoples were "represented", what "impact" this representation had, and how it "shaped identity and beliefs" about Indigenous peoples. Students found "simplistic characterizations" to be a problem in films. Though the questions prompt students to be critical, they do so by asking students to think *about* Indigenous perspectives in relation to their own observations of the world.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Kate's pedagogy is teacher-centered in a number of ways. She determines the topic of the lessons, the content, the assessments, called on students for answers in discussions, and determined how much time would be allocated to each component of the lesson in order to keep things moving on time. In this sense, she takes the universality of her own non-Indigenous pedagogy for granted and does not explore, much less centre, pedagogies that reflect an Indigenous worldview. Students are mainly involved in seatwork that involves completing handouts during my classroom observations. Her pedagogy - combined with limited time allocated to exploring Indigenous perspectives, and in addition to her

limited background knowledge and the lack of knowledge most of her students expressed – has implications for the way Indigenous worldviews are allowed to exist in her class. For example, there is limited time/space, which indicates Indigenous perspectives are included on Kate's non-Indigenous terms and categorized alongside a variety of other perspectives. Moreover, the possibilities are foreclosed for learning *through* an Indigenous worldview as opposed to learning *about* it. I will illustrate this point in more detail in a forthcoming section of this chapter, which compares the way stereotypes were taken up as a topic of discussion in several classes.

Kim's Class

The first day I spent in Kim's class was the first day students were discussing the novel *Three Day Road*. Students had read the first half of the novel on their own and each person came prepared with a question to guide discussion. For discussions, Kim's students sit with their desks in a circle. To ensure that everyone contributes, students take two poker chips at the beginning of class, and by the end, they must have participated to the discussion twice – or more. Because students prepare and ask the questions, students guide the direction of discussion. While nothing about this classroom set up is specifically Indigenous, it bears some similarities to Dena's classroom which consciously models a First Nation worldview.

Kim explains to me in an interview that students approach texts critically in her class. This is the expectation she sets from the beginning of the semester. They practice most days by briefly discussing current events, as I explained in the previous chapter. Kim tries to "sometimes throw out the opposite view…to at least get [students] thinking about an unbiased view, or as unbiased as you can be, and at least be aware of the biases you hold." She models this critical interrogation of her own biases saying:

> I think we're more and more aware of what we say and the kinds of things that we say. Like one of the things that I think I've realized is until I really started [integrating Indigenous perspectives], one of the phrases in my head that I would have said is 'the natives are restless,' referring to the [students]. And I try very much not to say that type of thing anymore, to be aware of what that might mean or why that would have come into speech patterns, and that sort of thing... Why would you say a whole group of people are natives and they're restless. What's the historical context for that? Should you be still saying that?

This interview excerpt shows that Kim's critical lens is aware of worldviews in a couple of ways. First, it is conscious of the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples based on misunderstanding and misrepresenting Indigenous values and belief systems. Second, it is reflexive as Kim tries to understand which ideas shape the limits of her own thinking. In these ways, I suggest that her critical approach is disruptive to (colonial) Western thinking but not decentering (and re-centering an Indigenous lens).

The topics Kim's students pose to each other are an interesting way to understand the lens(es) from which they read the novel *Three Day Road*. For example, several students ask questions that begin with "What is the significance of" and they chose aspects of the book that have great significance in an Indigenous worldview. The question below is illustrative of the discussion. When a student asks, "What is the significance of using the Cree language throughout the novel?" some students suggest it "makes the character's dialogue more authentic" and "it pulls the reader in and they have to figure out the significance of the words." This analysis centers a non-Indigenous lens because it presumes a non-Indigenous audience who would imagine authenticity associated with a language they do not understand. Other students suggest the Cree language "prevents the book from having a White man's perspective," that "use of Cree words is the character staying connected to his Cree language, culture, and beliefs while he is in France during WW1" and shows his "culture remains in him." These responses differ from the previous because students see the Cree language portraying the character's worldview. While the students do not explicitly say so, I read their responses as an attempt to understand the character's experiences through the lens the author created, rather than through their own life experience. A similar pattern emerges in the classroom dialogue as students pose and answer questions. In asking "What is the significance of the introduction" one student suggests it is to show "how the friendship changed" between the two main characters throughout the novel, while another student suggests the introduction "emphasize[s] traditional cultural values and how far [the main characters] move away from [those values]." In the introduction of the novel *Three Day Road* the main characters Xavier and Elijah are hunting. Xavier who has lived with his grandmother in a traditional way proceeds to hunt in the way he was taught. Elijah who attended residential school and lived apart from his family is surprised and horrified to kill an animal. Both characters later become snipers in WWI. Xavier struggles with taking human life, while Elijah, who once struggled to kill an animal, now thrives as a sniper. The introduction to the novel may

have intended to do as both students suggested, setting up the relationship between characters, and between the characters and their cultural identities. However, only the latter response reads an Indigenous worldview as significant.

In Kim's class we see Kim modeling a critical and reflexive approach to analyzing texts. In discussion, some analyze the text based on their own values and experience, and later in this chapter we will visit more conversations that make a strong case for this contention. Other students acknowledging the significance of an Indigenous worldview by referring to "beliefs" and "values" but the discussion remains largely abstract.

Cristine's Class

Cristine's class reads the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2000). As already explained, Christine's pedagogy is teacher centered, similar to Kate, in that she chooses the assignments and lesson, but also in the way she maintains control with, for example, meticulously timed lessons, which allocated time to respond to the discussion questions she posed, but not enough time to pursue a lengthy conversation. As a result, when looking at the dialogue from Cristine's class it is overwhelmingly the teacher's voice we hear. Desks are arranged in a 'U' shape that is two and sometimes three rows deep. And at the top of you 'U' Cristine has a podium where she keeps her materials organized. The organization of the room gives the teacher an air of authority with the positioning of the central podium, the quiet obedience of students as they commenced silent work (e.g. reading) at the beginning of class, and the teacher's voice subsequently facilitating a lesson.

Cristine tells anecdotal stories throughout her lesson to illustrate various concepts and to help her students connect to the material. Many of these stories are taken from her own life experience. Some stories have nothing to do with Indigenous perspectives but they illustrate the struggles of the main character in the novel (who identifies as a Native American), such as being unfairly stereotyped, or acting differently around one group of friends versus another. Cristine also tells anecdotal stories to specifically demonstrate different ways of seeing the world and valuing relationships in it. For example, Cristine shared a time when she was working at a part-time job and complimented two customers on their great suntans, only to be mortified when they

told her "We're Native American. It's the colour of our skin." The point is that Cristine was embarrassed when she realized her ignorance, and much like the ignorant use of mascots by non-Indigenous peoples, there are various responses: some who recognize the ignorance can cause offense and stop, and others who insist there is no offense, even though they are not speaking as the offended person. In another story, Cristine recalls the relationship she had with her grandparents and asks students what type of relationship they have with their grandparents. A student muses, "I've learned pretty much everything I know from my grandpa." She uses this to tell students something about values in an Indigenous worldview, that being "respect for Elders is a very strong idea in native communities and they tend to stay in closer proximity [to their grandparents and Elders] than in other communities." This story is as far as Cristine ventured toward exploring an Indigenous worldview, which on the one hand is very limited, especially if we consider Lowe and Yunkaporta's (2013) criteria of exploring land, language, culture, time, place, relationship and overlaying these with values, protocols, processes, and systems. On the other hand, for teaching *about* and not *through* an Indigenous lens, Cristine is careful not to read her own values onto the experience of Indigenous peoples. Cristine's stories illustrate the fact that there are limits to one's thinking based on their own experiences and the relationships they value. Although the overarching perspective from which Cristine taught was non-Indigenous, which I have shown to be reflected in the way the classroom was organized and the types of learning tasks students engaged in, her use of stories implicitly touched upon differences in worldview and tensions that can arise.

Julie's Class

In Julie's class desks are arranged in a large 'U' shape, similar to Cristine's class. Julie tends to move all over the room when teaching, but more often stands near the centre of the room. Her students are energetic and not particularly focused on English as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, and keeping them engaged requires Julie's energy and creativity. The lessons I observe focus on identity and dreams (hopes and aspirations) in relation to the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. As we will see later in this chapter, Dena and Julie co-teach a lesson to introduce Julie's students to stereotypes.

Classroom dialogue in Julie's class is revealing about the ways in which worldview shapes conversations. Julie does not explicitly introduce her students to the concept, and in the following example, we will see how they struggle not to read the novel through the lens of their own experience. There is a chapter in *Diary* in which Arnold summarizes all the things going on in his life. It ranges from being bullied at school, to being poor, to losing loved ones. Julie draws a T-chart on the black board and labels the columns "Related to being Native American" and "Just life in general." The point is for students to understand that bullying can be related to life in general, but in Arnold's case it is because he is Native American that he is bullied, and so on. One after another, students categorize Arnold's life experiences as "Just life in general." For example, one student suggests tension between Arnold and his best friend from the "rez" is a problem that could happen to anyone; she doesn't consider the fact that Arnold has just left school on the "rez" to attend high school in a nearly all "white" town. In other words, students fail to see experience connected to identity. As a class of primarily non-Indigenous students, this disposition sets them at a disadvantage for seeing the world through a lens other than their own.

This section has given an overview of how the pedagogy in each classroom is grounded in a worldview. For each of the five participating classrooms I considered organization, teaching approaches, and dialogue. Because this was only an overview, the next section delves further into the ways in which worldview is a lens through which students (and teachers) approach texts. It unpacks longer excerpts of dialogue from different classrooms and compares common themes of stereotypes, identity, and responsibility.

Comparing Conversations: Stereotypes

Stereotypes are the central focus of at least one lesson in the classes of Kate, Julie, and Dena (Julie and Dena co-teach the lesson). This section analyzes what happened in each class and how stereotypes were examined in relation to worldviews. It will look at the critical mindset examining stereotypes prompted which, in some cases led to further critique of colonizing logics and curricular discourses, and it will also look at instances where stereotypes were engaged from a predominantly non-Indigenous lens.

Kate's class. For Kate, stereotypes are an entry point for Indigenous perspectives because students can easily identify common misperceptions, and point out why they are wrong. Kate's classroom context has some unique challenges. As she explained in an interview, there are some students unsuited to academic English, placed there mainly due to limited English course offerings and timetable issues. As I observed, the relationship between Kate and her students is not as easy as the relationship between some of the other teachers and their students. For example, Kate's students insinuate that she is old (from the 1920s) and, awkwardly, no one laughs at the joke. Also, as students themselves express, they had vastly different background knowledge about Indigenous ways of knowing and First Nations cultures. Adding to this it is Kate's first time presenting this lesson – with a researcher watching.

In this atmosphere Kate tries to highlight an Indigenous lens. For this three-day lesson, her students analyze an article from mediasmarts.ca (2015), "Common Portrayals of Aboriginal People." The article itself is sufficiently critical, quoting Indigenous filmmakers, debunking a number of stereotypes and Hollywood tropes, and finally, pointing to newer films with more genuine portrayals. The first day discusses stereotypes, the second day, broader historical inaccuracies and implications, and the last day features a guest presentation by an internationally renown First Nation film actor who talked about Indigenous people in the entertainment industry and staying grounded in cultural teachings. Due to local media publicizing the event, I cannot reveal the name of the actor.

As Kate's class analyzes the article, alternating between work in pairs and full class discussions, a number of First Nation students are engaged. Their postures may have been slouching or lounging across their desks, but in my observation their eyes are alive and attentive.

> *Kate's students read an article from mediasmarts.ca that discusses representation in the media. No one volunteers to start reading the article aloud, in fact, 2 male students actually decline when Kate asks them, so she ends up reading it instead. I see a First Nation male student shaking his fist with a smile to another First Nation student when she reads the beginning of the article.*

While students are in pairs discussing the section of the article that talks about stereotypes and highlighting the parts they find interesting:

> *A First Nation student comments "it's all interesting because it's talking about our descendants and stuff." [I think he means ancestors.] He continues to pour over the text*

with his partner highlighting and commenting on everything. I hear the word "emotions." Kate calls the class back together to discuss. Another First Nation student comments that it's weird that the article thinks many people have never met a native person. A third First Nation student points out with a laugh that his buddy has highlighted the entire article. (This is happening as non-First Nation students are for the most part quiet or trying to find words.)

First Nation students immediately engage with the text, highlighting and pointing out more nuanced examples, such as historical inaccuracies that overlook the Iroquois Confederacy's five centuries of peace and instead play up the stereotype of violence, rather than obvious stereotypes i.e. bare chested warriors. Encountering a text that unapologetically debunked a number of stereotypes and misrepresentations offers an important counter colonial discourse. However, not all students read the text the same way. For example, a non-Indigenous female student points out that with respect to the "Indian princess" stereotype, feminist and Indigenous lenses apply in the sense that princesses often have to leave their home and their life. It was a great connection until she added "but Pocahontas didn't really have to give up her culture so it's not quite the same."

I see a First Nation student start with surprise and then look away, brushing her comment off with his hand like it's way off base but he wasn't going to get into it. Someone asks "What about Aztec kings" and there's some discussion about the extent to which "Aztec kings", and "Chiefs" are "like royalty." Even though the article said Aboriginal peoples did not have royalty in the same way Europeans did, they try to map that type of hierarchy onto their (mis)understanding of Pocahontas. Their assumption (that Pocahontas is some kind of princess) is based on a myth weaved by Disney rather than on historical fact and a tradition of story.

The class continues to view Pocahontas through a (colonizing Western lens) evident from the historical inaccuracy on which their assumption is based, and a colonizing logic of hierarchy. This is obvious to the First Nation student, but not to the female student, and maybe not even to Kate. Kate does not interject and the Pocahontas misconception goes unpacked and unchallenged, perhaps because the material was new and she hadn't yet built the background knowledge or confidence. In Cristine's class, by contrast, her seven years of experience talking about stereotypical representations are an asset as she pre-emptively brings up the historical inaccuracy of Disney's Pocahontas story noting, "She actually died of smallpox or tuberculosis. The story we know is very 'Disnied up' and not even remotely close to the actual story."

For part of their summative evaluation in Kate's class four students choose to analyze the poem *3740166701* by John Adrian McDonald, which explores themes of identity, living true to

oneself and one's culture, and being associated with negative stereotypes. Three students praised the poem and found that it "shed light on the darkness that is Native American stereotypes" and both "Indigenous or not should celebrate" its message. Two of these students self-identified as "Native American" and suggested this was a reason they "identified" strongly with the poem. (Some local First Nations traditionally lived on do so on both sides of what is now the Canada-United States border, so First Nation or Native American are both applicable, and ongoing markers of colonization.) Still, another student reads the poem at face value and finding it full of "problematic" stereotyping, which "suggests that Indigenous people are powerless when it comes to changing their self-image." She misses the fact that it is a critique because she fails to see the author's point of view or the colonial context he is speaking against.

These examples illustrate a number of factors that weaken Kate's approach to teaching an Indigenous lens. First, limited time is allocated in a unit that takes a snapshot approach to various lenses for literary critique, and given this, the students' exposure to Indigenous perspectives is limited to a few texts and one guest presentation. Second, some students have (and due to time constraints continued to have) very limited background knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and cultures. Finally, it is Kate's first time presenting this material and she admits her historical knowledge of Indigenous histories is limited. A critical literary lens highlighting Indigenous perspectives is important in a class like Kate's, but given these factors, the possibilities are limited from the beginning for a critique of colonialism that actually engages an Indigenous worldview.

For Kate, having broader background knowledge may have bolstered her confidence. However, a lack of knowledge is no excuse for avoiding and letting misconceptions prevail. Dena makes this point in an earlier chapter when she says, a lack of knowledge might mean looking something up "on the fly" or telling students you would have to look into it before you have can respond. The next section looks at Kim's class for comparison to see how misconceptions and lack of background knowledge are handled.

Kim's class. In Kim's class, we see an instance where misconceptions are allowed to stand due to a lack of knowledge:

> *Kim*: What native groups actually did scalp people? (*There's talk. Did Ojibwa, Cree, or Iroquois peoples practice scalping?*)

MS: Tecumseh. He was Shawnee.

MS: I read that Tecumseh actually wanted his people to respect enemies more than to scalp them.

Kim: No one has ever researched Tecumseh for their final project; you could tell us once and for all how to say his name. He died in this area – where we live.

MS: I was just looking up the Wikipedia Iroquois page, which is not horribly accurate but it has a subheading for cannibalism.

Kim: It's more symbolic to get the goodness out of your enemy. Google Joseph Boyden. His latest book *The Orenda* about first contact. I highly recommend it. It talks about religious aspects from both groups European and Iroquois.

To their credit, they admit they don't know what is historically and culturally accurate with regard to scalping and cannibalism, but at the same time they dare to speculate without looking into the topics further, which allows misconceptions to stand. Kim's approach does not engage directly with misconceptions or stereotypes.

Julie and Dena (co-teaching) in Julie's class. Misconceptions and stereotypes also come up in Julie's class, and as we will see, there are key differences in the way it is handled. Julie is the teacher who worries about her student's willingness to connect with the material on an emotional or empathetic level. She and Dena co-teach a lesson on stereotypes, which paired an Indigenous worldview with a critical lens. Dena introduces stereotypes saying, "they're out there and we need to talk about them or else things will never change." Julie passes around a handout and gives instructions for each student to write down four aspects of their identity. The teachers circulate, throwing out suggestions for students who are stuck.

Dena: Star 1 or 2 aspects of identity you're especially proud of. Now think of a time it was difficult, embarrassing, or awkward for this to be part of your identity. For example, in high school I was at a party with White kids and one of them said something racist about First Nation people and everyone laughed. He didn't know I was [First Nation]. But I found it really disrespectful, so I got up and left, and as I did a few people in the room realized and I heard, 'Oh, shit.' A friend followed me out and instead of asking if I was okay, she asked why I had to react like that – which made it even worse.

Students are captivated and most write furiously about their own experience. Next, she has them write a stereotype associated with their identity. Pens write furiously again and many students are happy to share stereotypes associated with their identity. Then Dena asks if students can name other stereotypes, those ascribed to First Nation people specifically.

Students come up a list: drunk, sketchy, not trustworthy, sell smokes. Keeping it light, Dena remarks, "I promise you we didn't go around the prairie like -" she stomps around tapping her open mouth and everyone dies laughing. More importantly, she explains that it comes from a misunderstanding of Pow wow dances, prompting a student to regale the class momentarily with his rendition of "hey-ya-hi-ya." The guys think it's a riot. Dena laughs good-naturedly but *always* with an explanation that illustrates how ridiculous the stereotype is and what's actually more accurate. For example, when someone says feathers and costumes she explains the difference between traditional dress (which reflects the cultural group) and Pow wow dress (which is more elaborate in modern celebration).

> Dena: Tobacco today is…
> MS: Nasty! Disgusting!
> Dena: Yes, that's how it's used today. We try to teach that tobacco is not a habit. Traditionally it's not used in that way…. Ever seen a rez car[5]?
> MS: Yeah, I've seen a couple of those down my street (*there is acknowledgement by way of laughter as he refers to his street as 'the ghetto'*).

The comments about tobacco being "Nasty! Disgusting!" shows that students are very familiar with non-Indigenous uses of tobacco. In this normative statement, the student draws on social values that discourage the use of tobacco. Dena steps in to make sure the student doesn't form his understanding based on a colonizing logic – that all uses of tobacco are negative. The lesson so far is engaging the easily distracted students, who are writing when asked to and

Dena's class lists First Nation stereotypes:

- They hunt for their food
- Drunks
- Drugs
- Sell smokes
- Live in tipis
- Dance around fire
- Dumb, not school smart
- Free school
- Free everything
- No taxes
- Traditional clothing
- Feathers
- Jean jackets
- Leather
- Face paint
- Moccasins
- Bows
- Arrows
- Tomahawks
- Long hair
- Poor conditions
- Poverty
- No housing
- The rez is dangerous (especially for non-natives)

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[5] Rez car: a well aged vehicle, often found on the rez with many dents, an unmentionable amount of rust and odor, as well as missing numerous key elements such as, but not limited to side view mirrors, functioning engine parts, either bumper, any or all four hubcaps etc. any of the aforementioned parts may also be fastened by an adhesive such as gorilla glue, scotch, duct or any other various form of tape.
http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=rez+car

focusing on the teacher when she speaks. Having a knowledgeable First Nation teacher helps things to go smoothly. However, as Dena said in an interview, many non-Indigenous teachers could also do a wonderful job debunking stereotypes and offering counter examples.

The lesson in Julie's class was so powerful, that before moving on I will share what happened. Things started to take a turn. As I wrote in my journal:

> *Dena brings up some really uncomfortable stereotypes including violence and abusive parents. While students cast awkward glances around Dena pushes onward, asking students to name one thing a family gives you, and one thing a family teaches you. They go around the whole class, getting responses from each student and Julie writes these on the chalkboard: respect, love, food, affection, manners, money, appreciation, skills, opportunity, discipline, a house, a home, family, loyalty, relation, language, beliefs, values. Looking around the room I think most students don't see where this lesson is going. "Family is the core of where we learn a ton of things. Now each of you come up and take the chalk brush and take one swipe across the board" says Dena. With some reluctance, students go up one by one taking a swipe with the chalk brush until the writing is almost completely erased. As the last student sits down he says incredulously, "I'd be really pissed if I'd just written all that and then someone came along and destroyed it."*

Julie and Dena lock eyes. The moment is golden, but her emotion is spilling. Walking across the room to close the door, Dena finds a moment of composure. The class is silent. With the click of a button a picture of a residential school in southern Ontario appears on the Smartboard. "This is the school where two of my auntie's went. Everything their family might have given them was erased by that school." She begins to tell stories of family, stories of friends, stories of pain, separation, rape, *daily* rape of children not yet teens, of emotionally crippled and closed off adults, of intergenerational abuse. None of these are stories she read in books. They are *her* stories to tell as a survivor. "What do you turn to when your life gets destroyed?" The stereotypes click into place for students: "alcoholism", "drug abuse", they murmur. This lesson made it real for Julie's students. It was so full of unguarded emotion that I would have to sketch very personal pictures of the people involved in order to capture the atmosphere in the room.

There is a very practical reason for unpacking stereotypes. As Dena says, "without frank discussion … we'll never know why we have them and why they're not true. This is nothing I would share with someone out of context." After her class lists about 30 First Nation stereotypes she explains the point of the lesson is not to get a good laugh but to "debunk a lot of these

stereotypes…It's going to give you… a practical toolkit that will allow you to talk about these issues" and when "you hear other people saying these stereotypes." She is careful to add that even colleagues she respects sometimes repeat stereotypes, and rather than judging them, she reminds herself they probably don't know what lies at the root of the misconception.

This section has compared conversations about stereotypes and misconceptions in three classrooms. All teachers drew attention to stereotypes and misconceptions, but not all of the teachers unpacked why the stereotypes were false, and as we saw with Kate and Kim, the conversation ended when no one had the background knowledge to unpack a certain misconception.

Comparing conversations: Identity

This section compares conversations about identity that happened in the classrooms of Dena and Kim.

Dena's class. In a conversation about *Three Day* Road that focuses on identity, Dena and her students discuss the absurdity of the character Elijah's decision to scalp his victims during WWI. He justifies his actions as proof to his number of kills as a sniper, but students read deeper into Elijah's inner conflict with himself.

> *Dena*: What else is going on? Not everyone reacts to war like Elijah.
> *MS*: He's treating the corpses as less than him – dehumanizing them.
> *MS*: He's proving himself to White people.
> *MS*: He wants to have power over White people as result of his residential school experience.
> *MS*: Xavier is the opposite; he's still embracing his culture.
> …
> *Dena*: There's a poignant part where Elijah tries to dominate something that could represent the residential school experience. (*Students flip through their books.*) There's a religious connection. What happened to Elijah at residential school?
> *FS*: He was sexually abused by that nun…p 223.
> …
> *Dena*: We know sexual abuse happened to Elijah. What happened with the statue?
> *FS*: I totally forgot that.
> *MS*: I tried to forget about that.
> *Dena*: This is a potentially disturbing scene.

The class reads this scene where Elijah defiles a statue of the Virgin Mary and there's a moment of uncomfortable understanding. To be sure, Dena reads the scene verbatim. For context, I will quote the passage Dena read here, where Elijah climbs atop the statue, "rides her back like she is a great horse threatens to knock her down, smash her into a thousand pieces" (Boyden, 2001, p. 180). Dena continues reading, right down to the detail where Elijah "pulls out a cigarette, lights it and inhales" (p. 181) afterward.

> *Dena*: The first time I read this scene I thought of the First Nation stereotype of men being violent and overpowering…but what's going on there?
> *MS*: The nuns were dominant in residential school, and now it's reversed, Elijah is dominating the statue.
> *FS*: Statues can't move or resist what is happening just like a child in in residential school couldn't resist.
> *Dena*: It's a difficult scene from a religious perspective.

The conversation continues about the contentious relationship between religion and First Nation people with Dena drawing a comparison to imagery used in the writing of First Nation playwright Tomson Highway.

> *MS*: What do you mean raped with a cross?
> *Dena*: Literally.
> *(There is some uncomfortable shifting of students in their seats. Dena speaks slowly and measuredly throughout.)*
> *Dena*: Its about the impact religion has had on First Nation people. Every church that helped run residential schools – Anglican, United, Presbyterian, has apologized - except the Catholic church. *You don't have to agree with it.* But what is the symbolism of the imagery in Boyden and Highway's work? What is the purpose of that symbolism?

Dena is careful to emphasize the difference between *agreeing* and *understanding*. She gives religious students in the class a way to think through what is happening in the novel by telling them the story of a former student who was very upset when he learned about residential schools because, as he said, none of it is what his religion teaches him.

> *Dena*: It's not an attack on you or the way you uphold your beliefs. Those residential school survivors who have gone through healing have found their own ways to balance both cultures. Some still practice First Nation culture and go to church. What most people want is recognition – to have it truly recognized the harm that was done by certain people within religious communities in the past… The relationship between First Nations and churches, First Nations and Canada is very complex.

Despite the graphic and sensitive topic, students are wholly focused, taking in the idea that Elijah's defilation of the Virgin Mary was to Christians what the abuses of residential schools were to First Nation people. With this historical context in mind, no one passes judgment. As one male student who I note is wearing a crucifix on a chain around his neck says, "it's not a huge surprise to me that Elijah did something like this."

Kim's class. For comparison, Kim's class was also reading *Three Day Road* and having class discussions in a similar format. Kim and her students have many insightful and critical discussions about the novel and about a number of related issues. They do not, however, take a parallel approach to worldviews and students react very differently to the Virgin Mary scene.

> *Kim*: What about the Virgin Mary statue?
> *FS*: It was so wrong! He literally and metaphorically got off on that statue!
> *MS*: If he had knocked it over, the allies would have lost hope.
> *Kim*: Metaphorically, why is that important? Who impregnated the Virgin Mary? (*silence*) God.

Kim's class analyzes this scene from a predominantly Western lens. The student's strong reaction that Elijah's actions were "so wrong!" is a normative statement that reflects a set of Western Judeo-Christian values. Kim hints to these values when she insinuates that Elijah wishes to ascribe to himself the power and status of the Christian God, or a perversion thereof. They do not ask why Elijah might put himself in this position, and they do not consider what the imagery of the statue or the church might mean to Elijah, a survivor of sexual and psychological abuse at residential school and estranged from much of his family and culture. However, these experiences factor heavily into the discussion of Elijah in Dena's class:

> *Dena*: Elijah rebels against the church, military officials, and his own culture. Think about the complexity of that. He struggles with what about himself?
> *MS*: His identity.
> *MS*: No moral compass; no identity.
> *MS*: I wonder who he'd say he is?
> *Dena*: What about Xavier's identity?
> *MS*: He knows who he is.
> *FS*: His culture grounds him.
> *MS*: Residential schools took away Elijah's identity.
> *MS*: You're a product of your environment.
> *Dena*: Adults and young people who struggle with their identity struggle in other ways too. I think Boyden wanted to show how messed up Elijah really is – how messed up people are when they're not grounded in their identity – and it connects across all

> religions and cultures.
> *MS*: It connects to the guest speaker who was here on Monday when he said First Nation people value their hair because it comes from the brain and represents knowledge. Elijah scalping his victims in the war is like stripping them of their knowledge.

The student refers to Elijah's European victims and their particular Western cultural knowledges, but the broader class discussion of identity is used to highlight cultural connectedness in an Indigenous worldview. For comparison, Kim's class has a similar discussion about Elijah but they miss the importance of the identity piece and go on to attribute his struggles and less savoury actions to a number of other factors.

> *Kim*: Was Elijah abused at residential school?
> *FS*: Yes. He tried to tell his mom in a dream that he was physically abused. Also, he was sexually abused by the nun who liked to bathe him.
> *Kim*: Do those issues from his early childhood colour anything he did later in life?
> *FS*: Is Elijah suffering from any mental illness or PTSD?
> *MS*: I think it's safe to say that both Elijah and Xavier had it. It increased all of Elijah's emotions as war went on. Brought out the worst in them.
> *Kim*: Back then it was called shell shock.
> *MS*: But it was not something diagnosed and treated. It was left to fade away.
> *MS*: So if he had PTSD from the nun's abuse that wouldn't be recognized?
> *MS*: I never really saw any foreshadowing until the war came and opened the floodgates on Elijah's built up anger.
> *FS*: I think anyone in Elijah's position is going to come out mentally scarred. It pushed him off the edge.
> *FS*: I think the morphine addiction was a big factor in pushing him over the edge – the side effects of morphine exacerbated it.

Kim and her students continued to have a conversation that explores abuse, mental health, and addiction - themes are relevant to the novel but they do not necessarily centre an Indigenous worldview. Instead, their discussion links these themes to character traits rather than the cultural and historical context that is so critical in shaping Elijah's traits and experiences. My point is illustrated by a student focus group participant from Kim's class who summarizes his take on Elijah as follows: "When he committed all the atrocities he did - he did it all because he wanted the attention." By contrast, the motivations behind Elijah's behaviour are unpacked in more nuanced ways by Dena's students who note, "The nun raped First Nation culture and spirit, now Elijah is doing it to the nun's religion" and "It is kind of a connection to real life when you find out later how [Elijah] was abused in residential school; its like how a lot of people look down on First Nations but it's because they don't know their backgrounds and experiences."

The main point to take away from the comparison of conversations in Kim's and Dena's classrooms is that Kim's class integrates Indigenous perspectives through a *critical* but a primarily *Western* lens. There are limitations to this approach, namely her students' ability to recognize and understand the significance of a First Nation worldview to the novel, but it also leaves her students less able to recognize instances in which their own critique of the novel is coloured by a Western and potentially colonizing lens.

Comparing conversations: Responsibility

This section considers the theme of responsibility by looking at conversations in which students tried to exempt themselves from critique, or which reproduced or critiqued a narrative of Canadians as saviours. The conversations and interactions are drawn from the classes of Dena and Kim, as well as from focus groups with students from these classes. Thus, it shows conversations that were going on in classrooms, and also how students were making sense of the difficult knowledge they encountered surrounding colonization and residential schools.

Exemptions from critique. Whereas Dion (2007) finds that participants in her study situate themselves within a narrative of the perfect stranger relative to Indigenous people, some of the students who I observed during class discussions, and whom I spoke with in focus groups do not see themselves as strangers to First Nation people. Instead, they draw upon a personal connection they had to First Nation people to position themselves as more benevolent and understanding than most non-Indigenous settler Canadians.

> *Dena*: [Justice Sinclair] says education has mis-taught First Nation and non-First Nation children for generations. Do you have any thoughts? Experiences?
> *MS*: That's not the case in my family.
> *Dena*: Given who your [close relative] is, that's not the case...But if you've been taught differently, you're fortunate to know differently.
> *MS*: The First Nation students would go hunting and bring back duck and meat for him all the time.
> *Dena*: He had a good relationship with First Nation students, but it's not the same for everyone.

At the time of this observation, I did not realize this student's close relative was a teacher who had taught at a nearby high school with a sizeable First Nation student population. Later, in an unrelated conversation Dena explains that the student's relative *believed* he always got along well

with the First Nation students because they would bring him some duck when they missed school to go hunting. However, she adds that most First Nation people are nice to people who treat them with respect even if they can see respect doesn't go beyond your face to face interactions. Then being purposefully vague, she makes a point to say that having a great relationship with First Nations people is all a matter of perception and it is contradictory for a teacher to believe they have a great relationship with First Nation students and then turn around and vocalize their resistance to including Indigenous perspectives. The point in this observation is to understand the student's words as a *personal exemption* through which he sought to excuse himself from both ignorance and the position of colonizer. He refuses to acknowledge his personal bias because it extends beyond him – to his family. Ironically, this student is not even reading the novel *Three Day Road* due to an objection about the sexual content of the novel. He's reading a separate novel that does not have an Indigenous focus.

Ben, a student from Kim's class, used a similar strategy of *personal exemption* during a focus group. I asked students how integrating First Nation, Métis, & Inuit perspectives and issues through *Three Day Road* impacts the way they think about their own identity.

> *Ben*: I've grown up with an uncle whose not actually related by blood, just a really close friend of my dad's who is First Nation… and he tells me stories of what his father went through and kind of the discrimination he's had to deal with in the [workplace], and I respect him so much because he doesn't hold a grudge. He makes jokes about it. He can laugh about it and he's done incredibly well for himself considering what he's gone through and what his dad has gone through. So in that sense, … I already had a pretty open view towards [First Nations], and I have a lot of respect for people like that.

Ben's personal connection to explain why he's not like everybody else, reflect a values system, that includes ideas about what is respectable, for example, "doing well for himself" and "not holding a grudge" when facing discrimination in the workplace. On the one hand these values align with work ethics and a positive attitude, but on the other hand they have colonizing logics imbedded within: doing well for oneself can imply coming ahead in the face of adversity – but what adversity? Ben mentions discrimination, a word that describes vastly different experiences (pertaining to gender, ability, race, sexual orientation, etc.). In this case, the broadness of the word discrimination glosses over the deep and complex intergenerational impacts of colonization in Canada. I doubt this is Ben's intent, and as I will point out later, some of Ben's well-intended contributions to the focus group indicated important gaps in his knowledge about the extent to

which colonialism continues to shape the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Instead Ben's words, it seems, can be situated within a narrative that draws upon certain national myths of settling Canada that celebrate hard work while simultaneously erasing (the struggles of) Indigenous peoples.

In a similar but slightly different vein, a conversation in Kim's class seeks to exempt Canada from the worst colonial atrocities by making a comparison with the United States. Kim's students read sections of a chapter 'The truth about the first Thanksgiving' in the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (Loewen, 2007), which offers a counter history to (peaceful and morally justified) colonial settlement.

> *Kim*: What's the difference between what happened to native Canadians and Native Americans?
> *MS*: European settlers wanted land – they wanted everything.
> *FS*: They set up reservations that essentially trap natives there.
> *MS*: Even the land given to Native people in the US was bad. Have you heard of the trail of tears? I was just reading about this, and they basically said there was land in Oklahoma and forced them to relocate there but it was inaccessible and less desirable land. So really, relocation was to kill them off – no one actually expected them to endure a two-month walk…
> *Kim*: The big difference is that the US had Indian wars to wipe people out and Canada has treaties. Whether Canada has met its treaty obligations is another debate.

Comparing Canada in a favourable light to its American neighbour, whether justified or not, offers a bit of redemption from the worst colonial injustices. In both conversations the claims made are not substantiated by evidence. In fact, Kim's statement that "the US had Indian wars… and Canada has treaties" is actually false, as the United States negotiated treaties with many Native American nations (Harjo, 2014). Neither teacher nor students digs deeper into the policies of forced relocation, treaty making, or media representation. The sweeping claim that the reservation "traps natives" leaves a very complex issue unpacked. These are issues at the heart of understanding the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and they speak to knowledge gaps (i.e. the treaty obligations Kim brushed aside as another debate) I will address later in this chapter.

Canadian saviours. A question I asked students in focus groups after we had established some comfort talking was how to move forward as a country and build a more positive relationship with Indigenous peoples. Ben shared the following story:

> *Ben*: I worked at a hockey camp in the summer and there were quite a few First Nation kids… from a reserve on Hudson Bay. A very secluded reserve and what not. One of the kids was 6 years old and another was 14 years old. And the 14 year old had already started smoking, had already started drinking because he thought that was cool because his dad was a drinker and a smoker… So he came to this camp and he wanted to chew tobacco and he wanted to drink and smoke because when we said, 'you're too young for that, you shouldn't be doing that' he was like, 'well, I've done it before because no one cares on the reserve if I do that.' And then at the same time there was a 6 year old, who at the same time he was very scared – he was scared of other people because he'd never seen anyone other than First Nation people his entire life. It was his first time off the reserve. And so we were trying to be the best influence we could on him because he was going to be growing up with those influences when he went back and by the time it was done he'd become so close with me and the rest of the counselors because when he left he was crying because he didn't want to go back to being just on the reserve by himself with his family. He wanted all of us to come with him because he'd become so close, and I felt bad for him because he – he was never going to get an opportunity like that again until the next time he went back to the camp. And so I don't think the concept of reserves – it's a good concept but it's being poorly executed because you just situations like this one where you continually get negativity every year because they don't go off the reserve. The concept is they grow up on there and they can leave and integrate into society when they're old enough but they stay there their entire life.

There is a lot to unpack in Ben's statement, and I will preface with Dena's words: "you don't know what you don't know." Ben makes two main contentions: 1) the reserve system isolates First Nation people who group together and stay there for their entire life, and 2) in their isolation they have a lack of positive influences and role models. Beginning with the second contention, Ben employs a colonizing logic that I refer to as the 'saviour complex' in which he is positioned as the White saviour that parachutes into the First Nation kids' lives for a week via hockey camp. Implicit in the saviour complex is an assumption that the compassionate White settler shows the wayward native population a better way to live and models a better set of values and morals to abide by. For example, Ben's choice of words about the 6 year old describes the role of a White saviour as someone who eases the fear in a "scared" child, who tries "to be the best influence," and who becomes "close" to the person in need of saving. He contrasts his influence with the reserve, where the child will "go back to being just on the reserve by himself with his family" and can expect to "continually get negativity every year *because* [emphasis added] they don't go

off the reserve." Consistent with the 'us' and 'them' language, it is our (the saviour's) role to: 1) show them (the children) a better path, such as not drinking or smoking as they (the 14-year-old's father and other members of his community) do, and 2) to have the child form an attachment to the saviour and his ways. In making his assumptions Ben draws on his personal, subjective experience to justify normative claims about how adults and children should conduct themselves.

The moral superiority of the saviour complex emboldens Ben to exercise an intellectual superiority and critique the reserve problem as an outside expert. In his first contention, that the reserve isolates First Nation people, an important oversight on his part is his own lack of knowledge about the reservation system. He assumes that First Nation people choose "sticking together" rather than leaving the reserve and this is a reason for their "problems" that "continue for generations," and an indicator that they do not "integrate into society." Ben's generalization about never leaving the reserve implies First Nation people are in a sense, agents of their own isolation, where isolation is a deficit relative to integration into the rest of society. His ability to know this and speak on behalf of them couples the saviour complex with a colonizing logic wherein there is one (general) truth, or one right way of doing things. Finally, Ben's quote shows a misunderstanding of the reservation system and land treaties in Canada, which I will return to later in this chapter when I explain how despite invaluable learning about and through Indigenous perspectives, certain knowledge gaps around treaties and the significance of land to Indigenous people were at the core of the students' continued misunderstanding.

As I have argued above, Ben positions himself as a saviour. Taking a step back from saviour, we find a similar positioning with Canadians as mediator. In a focus group with students from Dena's class I asked students how we might move forward with reconciliation as people, and as a country. In responding, Jess explained Canadians and First Nations must be able to speak constructively across difference.

> *Jess*: I think we need people like that aren't First Nation to understand those issues because we kind of need like an intermediary between the two. Like that's what we need moving forward in order to make any progress because we can't have two sides that don't really understand the other side trying to negotiate. You need someone who understands both sides I think. We just need, like, as Canadian citizens, to be that intermediary between the two.

Jess makes this statement after seeing firsthand the contentious disconnect between a local Chief and the Mayor on the issue of water quality. Jess had previously interviewed both the Chief and the Mayor separately and remarked on how dismissive the Mayor was of the Chief's concerns. For her, it highlights the need to build a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people centered on communication and respectful understanding. However, she reverts to a colonizing logic of neutrality, which positions Canadians as mediators who are able to see both perspectives fairly. In my observation, Jess is an articulate student, quick to point out contradictions like the one she makes here. I continue to wonder how she would have revised her statement if I had pointed this out. Positioning Canadians as neutral problem solvers is not reflective of her critical mindset, but it is indicative of the challenges in a learning journey that asks us to think outside of our own worldview.

Students from Dena's class who participated in the second focus group understood that if non-Indigenous Canadians were going to take responsibility for their role in forging a new relationship with Indigenous peoples, they cannot do it from a place of begrudging ignorance, or with a view of the world that acknowledged only their own experience. These students are more in line with Donald (2009) and Ermine's (2007) notions of ethical relationality.

> *Eric*: I think it's just kind of acknowledging… the government issued a written apology but people don't really understand the apology… they just know…'oh, we took their land.'
> *Fay*: The apology is for residential schools it's not for everything that's happened either. … But there hasn't been the relationship like we talked about so, you're just going to have to learn everything and start something new.
> *Gen*: The government apologized… but that doesn't make anything better. That doesn't change people. It's just what the government did because they were bothered into doing it…That part bugged me the most when [Dena] said people had to go … behind the scenes who were working. And, why would you have to bother someone for an apology. Then it's not even genuine, really, right?...
> *Fay*: It still doesn't solve the issue at all…People have opinions and people do actually believe things against these issues so it would be a matter of everyone getting on the same page but that's really hard to do.
> *Gen*: Be open minded to educate yourself. That's so important. Be open and understanding and having empathy because just think, some people are stuck in their ways… there's people who don't even think that it's an issue because it doesn't effect them… they're like, 'oh, I don't see any First Nation people being treated badly so it must not be happening'…And then they say… things like feminism, 'well that's a woman's issue.' No, it's not because we're talking to men right now. So, why would you say that?

This is the only focus group in which students don't prescribe a solution when I asked how to move the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples forward. By that I mean they don't define a role for non-Indigenous peoples the way Ben and Jess do. Instead, they outline a mindset, or a position of ethical relationality that depends on willingness to see the relationship and the history of colonialism from Indigenous points of view. For example, Eric sees acknowledgement as reciprocity rather than as requirement. Gen goes farther in her last comments, touching on issues of denial, privilege and domination. Here, the ability and willingness to turn a blind eye or outright denying someone else's struggle is an exercise of privilege in a relationship of domination, where rather than seeing struggle relationally, it is a point of division. Fay echoes Gen, speaking from experience about the hurt of divisive rather than relational thinking:

> It affected people so hard - like if you survive that trauma - that killed people down as a person and completely changed the way they are.... When people don't take the time to open it up or try to think of it in another way, it's frustrating. It brings up a lot of emotion.

I read Fay's comment as the crucial importance of learning *through* rather than *about* Indigenous perspectives, but there is much to unpack in her quote about being open and willing to listen. I will explore this theme in the next chapter.

So far, chapter illustrated many examples of students learning *about* Indigenous perspectives, acknowledging these perspectives, but doing so from the lens of their own experience. In the first section, it outlined the overarching worldview from which all of the teacher participants taught. In the second section, it compared and contrasted conversations that happened in different classrooms but on similar topics. Students who drew upon an Indigenous lens thought differently of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. These students: 1) had a toolkit for confronting stereotypes, 2) they saw First Nation identities as complex and marked by personal and collective histories, and 3) they saw the responsibilities of all Canadians through a position of ethical relationality. Importantly, throughout this chapter we have seen the way Dena's pedagogy diverges from simply a critical (non-Indigenous) approach to a parallel approach, which situated First Nation and postcolonial worldviews side by side. She consciously worked with her students to see these diverse knowledge systems relationally, rather than in comparison. With this orientation to the way worldviews framed classroom dialogue and

learning experiences, Part 2 of this chapter, focuses on troubling colonizing logics by looking at ways students and teachers confronted the challenge of interrupting a Eurocentric curriculum.

Part 2: Interrupting a Eurocentric curriculum

> *FS: We learn about holocaust and all that – [residential schools] is Canadian history so why don't we learn about this?*
> *MS: I hardly remember it being mentioned in Grade 7 and 8.*
> *FNFS: I remember in elementary history it mentions residential schools and then says their ways changed and they no longer chased bison.*
> *FS: My teacher in Grade 8 would pick up a history textbook, slam it down, then pick up a math textbook and say 'this is more important'.*
>
> (Classroom observations, Dena's class)

Student voices are an important part of this study, and this section highlights student voices in two ways. First, it draws on focus group and classroom observations that include student perceptions of learning about Indigenous perspectives, and specifically how this learning has shaped the way they see schooling and how they see the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Second, through student voices, I explore some of the ways colonizing logics are both interrupted and perpetuated in the integration of Indigenous perspectives. The topics students discuss will be explored as exclusions, sanitizing, and gaps in knowledge. This section recounts student experiences as they become aware of historical exclusions, sanitizing narratives, and gaps in their knowledge after encountering counternarratives that interrupted the generally coherent and seamless the (settler colonial) narratives they had come to expect. However, it will also take a critical look at the potentially re-colonizing ways students engaged these counternarratives.

Pegamega… Pegamegamabo….Pegahmagabow! And Myths of Multiculturalism

During a *Three Day Road* book talk:

> *Dena*: It's almost contradictory that such high numbers of First Nation people enlisted to protect the colonizer's homeland.
> *MS*: Do you think they fully realized it?
> *Dena*: Probably not.

In classroom discussion and in focus groups, students bring up frustration about historical omissions. In a focus group with Kim's students, for example, students identify the involvement of First Nations peoples in WWI as an important exclusion of factual information from the history curriculum. In Dena's class as well, one of the students' biggest complaints is that "[history] is basically all war" in the high school curriculum. Jess and Ian, two students from Dena's class humourously summarize history class thus:

> *Ian*: In Grade 10 history, we spend a good 2.5 months on WWI and then WWII, is summed up in about the rest of that –
> *Jess*: No – no! It's WW1 for like 2.5 months, and then it goes Roaring 20s and Dirty 30s for like a month –
> *Ian*: Okay.
> *Jess*: - and then you do WWII in like a week and post-war in like a day.
> *Ian*: In a day. A good 60-70 years in a day.

As *Three Day Road* prompted students to reflect on what they do and do not learn in history class one student observes, "we learned about WWI but not about First Nation involvement." Dena's students were ready to "pay a visit to [the history teacher's] classroom right now" to air their grievances about the history curriculum. What's more, one of the history teachers is a close relative of a student in this class (who was quiet during this conversation, I observed). To this day I wonder if that emboldened students to express their opinions or if they were simply too focused on their passionate critique.

Despite history being too much about war, Kim and Dena's students do not criticize the fact that they were reading yet another text set in WWI for English class. Instead, they are delighted to be "actually learning" and feel they are "learning more about history in [English] class" than in history. As the preceding section outlined, Kim's class approached the novel with a critical lens, and Dena's class approached it through a combination of postcolonial and Indigenous lenses. These approaches gained favour with the students because they identified and challenged key exclusions from history as told from a dominant (Eurocentric) perspective.

> *Kim*: Who is the actual real life hero that Boyden bases *Three Day Road* on? (*Silence.*) Peggy.
> *MS*: Pegamegabo. Pegamegamabo. (*A student tries to say Pegahmagabow and fails miserably. There is laughter.*)

For convenience they use an Anglicized short form, Peggy.

> *Kim*: Raise your hand if you read about Francis Pegahmagabow in your history textbook.
> *MS*: Yes! There was a little square on one of the pages! (*Another male student remembers this obscure reference, thus two students have heard of Pegahmagabow.*)
> *Kim*: Now how many of you have heard of Billy Bishop? (*Everyone's hand goes up*). How come everyone has heard of Bishop but not Pegahmagabow?
> *...*
> *FS*: All the White people who do anything great in anything music, war, etc. are always celebrated. But native people, or black people, are a side note…
> *MS*: When I did history research Brock got so much credit, but Tecumseh didn't get as much credit. If you're White you get the credit.
> *FS*: (*awkwardly*). It's the White people making the textbooks and so they're probably more enthusiastic to put their own people in.

That Francis Pegahmagabow "was barely recognized before 2003 in book citations" shows a lack of respect in Cam's opinion. Cam is a Vietnamese-Canadian student from Kim's class, and in a focus group he contends:

> I think it's really important to get the respect needed… We know that he killed a lot of people, Billy Bishop killed a lot of people too, and he got that credit but Peggy doesn't. Apparently he's in our textbooks right? And he was added recently. But I didn't even know about that.

In the same focus group, Danika explains that token inclusions are as bad as omissions because they lack genuineness:

> When First Nation perspectives are put into say English class… it [isn't] looked at as 'you're reading a book and [an Indigenous perspective] happens to be something that you take away from it' it's 'okay you got two books: you got the token black people book and the token First Nation book…we had to throw it in there just for culture.'

Taking a less "textbook" approach to history, Kim invites a local historian to speak to her class about the cultural make up of local WWI veterans and to share with them some stories of veterans who were are recognized in the cenotaph. He shares one story with the class of a local First Nation man who was a sniper in WWI. His stories illustrate that even in military service Indigenous peoples faced racism. Hearing murmurs of "he deserves the credit" and seeing disapproval that ripple through the class indicate to me that students are surprised to hear that hierarchy in the military could be used as something other than an honourable chain of command, and instead might bear resemblance to patterns of racial discrimination in broader society. As one First Nation community member explained to me during an informal conversation:

If you ask a war veteran they will tell you First Nation soldiers were placed on the front line. They were literally used as human shields blocking the men in the lines behind them. Like they were worthless than the other men – one way or another they were going to get rid of the Indian.

For a student in Kim's class who echoed the comments of some of her peers, racism in the military – the organization that asked Indigenous peoples to give their life as a sacrifice compounded by the exclusion of their contributions from history - is inexcusable:

FS: Telling a story about WW1 is an easier history to tell because it is more recent, well documented, celebrated, accurate, seen in monuments, holidays, etc. Cree history or slave history are darker histories, farther back. Slave history is buried because it's undesirable. Same with racism toward black people. The history of First Nations is even more suppressed than black history.

In this critique of dominant versions of history the student sees no reason to omit Indigenous peoples from the history of war or to hide the fact that their contributions are not rewarded and celebrated in the same way as those of their non-Indigenous counterparts. As one student remarked during discussion in Dena's class, "this is Canadian history – you have to wonder if our teachers are oblivious."

Students begin to hold up the racially and culturally based exclusion of Indigenous peoples with the unproblematic notions of multiculturalism they distinctly remember learning in school. Dena supports her students in their critique, asking them to "be critical of the way we do things at this school" and asking if they think, "cultural diversity day…might be problematic."

FS: everyone can go from booth to booth and just pretend to be that culture for a few minutes.
Dena: What's that called when you take on someone else's culture?
FS: Cultural appropriation.
Dena does a web search for 'First Nation stereotypes." When one of the first images is Johnny Depp in *The Lone Ranger*, she points out, wryly, there's a crow on his head. But the image she is looking for is Victoria Secret model wearing a large feather headdress on runway.
Dena: Its cultural appropriation at is worst, and over sexualizing of women and First Nation women. There's another example that happens on a daily basis – can you think what it is?
FS: Redskins.
MS: Cleveland Indians.
MS: It would be like the Chicago black people.
FS: Chicago Africans – they would never have that!
MS: The Minnesota Whites.

…
        Dena: A mascot is supposed to be fun and a student once told me to get over it. But I am a culture, I am not a mascot.

There was a silent "ah-ha" that rippled across faces in the class after Dena's words. The classroom dialogue illustrates to students how shallow cultural learning can happen in and out of school. When I met with students in a focus group, they had a clear idea of the way school had given them a shallow understanding of cultural diversity. In that focus group I ask students how integrating Indigenous perspectives had impacted the way they think of their own identity as Canadians. Jess answers with a reflection that revealed how the school curriculum taught her to see Canada as a multicultural nation:

> *Jess*: In Grade 9 you learn about how Canada is supposed to have this cultural mosaic and we're all accepting… Then in Grade 10 you learn about the wars and how Canada helped with the wars, like, 'wow, Canada is so awesome, best country ever!' Then when you learn about what happened with First Nations and the whole relationship and it's kind of like, you kind of start to question some stuff that you've learned and think, maybe we're not all perfect and happy and smiles. So I think it kind of makes me question our past.

In another focus group, Gen also responds when I asked students how integrating Indigenous perspectives had impacted the way they think of their own identity as Canadians:

> *Gen*: It didn't change how I think about me. It did change how I think about Canada because like, I remember the words we used to describe Canada was a 'cultural mosaic' and they said the United States was a melting pot. And I remember those two, but when I think about it it's not really true. It's made me think differently about Canada, and like, how we have this reputation for acceptance but not really, it's not true.

Critiquing multiculturalism put students deep in a place of struggle because they could point to a specific story they've been told about who they are as Canadians: part of an "accepting" and "awesome" "cultural mosaic." Now they re-read the celebratory story of multiculturalism as a dominant version of (colonial) history, contradicted by (objective) factual information i.e. their research on Native American genocide, but also by the testimony of their teacher, and of First Nation community members. For one student, the critique of multiculturalism is a doorway rethinking roles and ethical responsibilities of a settler society in relation to Indigenous peoples:

> *MS*: First Nation people need to be at the table as equal partners if Canada is to move forward. [But] if Canada is multicultural then why do we deny them as partners? If we fail to restore the relationship, we're not going to progress.

Dena: (*to the rest of* class) What's interesting is that he's commenting on the health of all of Canada moving forward.

The student's claim is normative in that it challenges a set of settler society's values (being superior instead of equal partners), norms (First Nation people being denied as partners) and rhetoric (of multiculturalism). In seeking a different set of values that will "restore the relationship" there is an important shift in his settler consciousness and it happens when he links critique to ethical responsibilities.

From Sanitized to Scandalized: What Students Find in Their Own Back Yard

Through discussions about residential schools and genocide, students begin to see the ways in which dominant narratives of Canadian history and of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are heavily sanitized. In other words, the way they understand the world is sanitized. The implication is that uncomfortable truths hit much closer to home than students previously realized. Students literally come to this realization by considering local geography. When Julie initially asks her class if they knew what residential schools were, students wonder: "do you mean home-school?" and "does that mean a school on the rez?" Julie's explanation ends with "it was supposed to make them civilized" and student next to me mutters "White people are not civilized for that."

Similarly, Dena asks her students if they knew where the nearest residential schools had been located. One student knows the towns in which the two nearest schools had been and he names them, and another student chimes in, evidently surprised and disgusted by his own ignorance, "If I was to say Auschwitz we'd recognize those names, but we don't even recognize the residential schools in the area where we live." Holding out one hand and then the other in balance (but conveying the irony of imbalance), another student says "Europe. Five minutes away." He is exaggerating slightly but it would not be an exaggeration to say there were residential schools within commuting distance of River HS.

"It's so hard for us to deal with what's in our own backyard" Dena tells students as she began to share stories about the Mohawk Institute, a residential school, which had operated in Brampton from 1828-1970. Her stories do not come from books; they come from people she knows and people who attended school there, illustrating how widely First Nation people in the

area are connected to the "mush hole." By extension, she gives non-Indigenous students a way to understand the continuing impact of having attended these residential schools.

> *Dena*: Even if it didn't happen to you, what you see stays with you. What happens when people are that broken?
> *FNFS*: Drugs and alcohol.
> *MS*: Mental health problems.
> *FNFS*: Violence.
> *Dena*: Remember the stereotypes we started with? Do you see where some of those stereotypes come from? … You can't heal unless you understand where the problems come from. It's the same for Canadian society – its as much about you – we all don't heal as a collective if we don't understand.

As one First Nation community member told Dena's students about residential school survivors:

> People want to block out the shame and trauma of sexual abuse – push it out of their minds. Even people who say they had a good time at residential schools block it out. You can see from the outside they carry it with them, treat their children differently.

These are important words for students to hear because they not only draw attention to the deep psychological effects of dealing with residential schools, but they offer a counter narrative to sources that *make an example of the outlier* by claiming that not all students had bad experiences at residential schools (Furo, 2015). For example, as I have mentioned elsewhere (Furo, 2011) the Canadian Museum of History (then Canadian Museum of Civilization) for many years devoted one panel of text in its entire First Peoples Hall exhibition to residential schools, and this panel of text began with the well intended vision of residential schools, acknowledged some abuse, and then emphasized positive experiences. A compliment sandwich, if you will.

Kim's students find the same narrative within minutes of researching online sources: a priest who disagrees with the term 'survivor' because there were some positive experiences at residential schools. Reading some testimonies from Catholic nuns who were formerly residential school teachers, a male student exclaims, "they're ridiculous…bias accounts of their compassion" and another declares they were "covering up for sure" with these sanitized statements. It is helpful for students to unpack a specific example of a sanitized way of thinking about history and about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples because narratives that make an example of the outlier can also be used as a settler's defense mechanism. In the case of residential schools, one can discredit or avoid confronting a pattern of abuse by praising exceptional cases. Moreover, reading a passage about residential schools that balances the good

and the bad appeals to an ethics where fairness is hearing *both sides* of a story. This can be a colonizing ethics when we are talking about the history of colonialism because it can have the effect of casting doubt on the testimony of Indigenous peoples who reveal difficult and hidden accounts of history.

If we turn to a conversation from Dena's class, we see students struggle with terminology as they cling to and resist sanitized versions of history. Students were responding to the question: was what happened to Indigenous peoples a holocaust?

> *MS*: With Jews it was systematic killing, with First Nations it was more constant bad oppression with lots of killing, but not systematic.
> *FS*: But wasn't that forced, systematic killing of culture?
> *MS*: But one group being killed in most brutal way, the other group just their cult being killed – which is still bad.
> *FNFS*: But if the culture is killed won't the race be gone?

The first thing to notice in this dialogue is that "constant bad oppression with lots of killing" is not a Holocaust if it is not "systematic." The student who does not believe Canada had a Holocaust begins by making the definition of Holocaust very specific. In other words, everything he knows about Canadian history (by dominant accounts that emphasize settlement through peaceful rather than violent means) would not fit such a definition. However, some of his peers are not convinced that policies designed to "kill culture" such as forced relocation, starvation and assimilation through schooling, were anything but systematic.

> *MS*: I just looked up top 10 genocides in history and the Native American genocide is #5.
> (*Dead silence, then sounds of surprise.*)
> *Dena*: In other countries, the Native American genocide ranks as high as #5. Why would look at what happened in North America this way, yet we would not want to acknowledge it?
> (*There's talk among students.*)
> *MS*: Why would we deny it?
> *Dena*: Listen to what you're saying: I can't believe people want to deny that we tried to systematically eradicate people. Imagine a First Nation person saying that – you can turn it on its head.
> *MS*: Its hard to see the whole picture if you're on the inside.
> *MS*: I'm thinking of people who say the Holocaust is a hoax. Is it the same not acknowledging genocide of Native Americans – like it's in the background.
> *MS*: Like it didn't matter.
> *Dena*: You're almost left asking is one worse than the other: denying outright versus ignoring and not acknowledging.
> (*Some students agree.*)

This is a crucial moment for students. Some literally shrink in their seats from the thought "other people think this about us?" Speaking to students later, they agreed it was one of the most eye opening conversations in their entire unit of study and a game changer in how they saw a need for non-Indigenous peoples to urgently support reconciliation. In that sense, colonizing logics of a peaceful frontier were interrupted. As Eric notes, in a focus group, when I asked what had the most impact in this unit of study:

> *Eric*: We talked about it being a genocide… It's not something you think about when you think about genocide. You think about the Holocaust and anything less than the Holocaust you kind of discredit. But when you actually look at the United Nations definition of genocide you see it qualifies as genocide.
> *Annette*: Ok. And 'less' is something like less known or less people?
> *Eric*: Less systematic, of physical killing.
> *Gen*: Less important. Like, 'oh, it wasn't as bad' so it's okay... you can't compare them.

The conversations about genocide are interesting because they both take up and resist genocide as a *colonial* discourse. Genocide becomes a colonial discourse in a number of ways. First, there is assumed to be one North American genocide that spans the continent, diverse Indigenous cultures, and colonial contexts over a period of time, forcing many unique cases of genocide to fit under one blanket narrative (Woolford & Benvenuto, 2015). Illustratively, all the conversations around genocide in this research spoke of genocide in one cohesive narrative. Second, it's difficult to pinpoint the facts around a North American genocide so it is thrown into question: when did it begin? What are the numbers? For example, Dena's students compared fatalities among several different genocides, and were conflicted about whether "less" bodies meant "less important." In a focus group, Helene tries to resist genocide as a colonial discourse by criticizing the way some of her peers are "stuck on the numbers… It matters what happened. It's not the amount of people it happens to." In the same focus group Eric agrees that ranking genocide by numbers is a way to "justify it… like, well, it wasn't as bad…could have been worse" Third, were its methods sufficiently genocidal? Michael Mann, as quoted in Woolford & Benvenuto (2015) casts doubt about "forced assimilation as a mode of genocidal destruction. He refers to it as a 'lesser' form of 'cleansing,' adding further that assimilation cleanses 'culture, not lives' (p. 376). By contrast, a First Nation student in Dena's class challenged one of her peers who questioned whether Canada was "systematic" enough in eliminating Indigenous peoples: "but if

the culture is killed won't the race be gone?" Similarly, a First Nation community member makes the point to students "It's not your body. It's the spirit that counts."

Given this perspective, a fourth consideration is who gets to decide what counts as a genocide against Indigenous peoples? Further to Mann's point, Daschuk (2013) suggests that genocide can be carried out over time through policies intended to eliminate a people (i.e. starvation). As such, could genocide be *systemic* rather than *systematic* in the way it is built into colonial policies that were carried out over time? And if so, does genocide continue through these colonial policies today having become normalized in settler consciousness through sanitized (colonial) discourse? I wish I could answer these questions based on the experiences and stories shared with me during this project, but I can only raise them. The point of concern being, Dena's students disrupt the myth of the peaceful Canadian frontier but they replace it with a potentially colonizing narrative of genocide. These students are largely non-Indigenous peoples debating genocide from a temporal and cultural distance. While it was one of the most rich, complex and memorable learning experiences it is also re-colonizing for them to debate if genocide happened to Indigenous peoples. I will draw out some ethical implications of the *genocide conversation* in the next chapter.

Gaps in Knowledge: What About Land?

> *Natives were not only fighting for the land so they could live but so the animals could live. They believed they were no better than anything or anyone out there.*
>
> *- First Nation community member speaking to students.*

The biggest knowledge gap that I observed with students had to do with land, in understanding the significance of land in Indigenous worldviews, and in understanding how the history of treaties continues to shape the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. This section helps to answer the research questions: does classroom dialogue reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics, and what narratives and normative assumptions do students and teachers draw upon when integrating Indigenous perspectives? In this section I illustrate how the absence of land contributes to a re-colonizing discourse that students draw upon in which Indigenous sovereignty and the presence of non-Indigenous peoples on their traditional lands are absent from conceptions of the colonial/(and) present day relationship.

I have already shown that Kim's class was critical of dominant versions of history, of historical omissions, and the intergenerational legacy of residential schools in First Nation communities. However, I have also shown that the class approached Indigenous perspectives from a non-Indigenous position of critique. In other words, they continued to operate from various (colonial) Western assumptions. This comes at the expense of engaging with and building an understanding of Indigenous worldviews. When I sat down with students from Kim's class for a focus group, all of the participants were adamant that colonial history required acknowledgement and that present day social issues had an intergenerational impact but they never mentioned land or treaties in their assessment of Indigenous issues. This is a problematic oversight because, as this section explains, without an understanding of the land and treaty relationship present day social issues were reduced to problems that could be solved - using a Western lens. The conversation is full of best intentions but the gaps in their knowledge pose some serious problems about how they assume Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (should) relate to each other. This section unpacks some of the assumptions in the contradictory language used by participants in this focus group and talk about the implications when land and treaty relationships are a blind spot.

I posed this question to students: We can't undo what happened, but how do we go forward, like as a country, and neighbours, and peers? Ben responds first, "Treat [Indigenous peoples] like you would any other citizen, treat them fairly, treat them with respect." The problem, is he equates 'fairly' with 'any other citizen', saying don't "signal them out… Don't put them to the side in their own group giving them all this stuff, making them different than other people. Make them part of this." Ben's version of inclusion is based on inclusion into mainstream society, which actually makes it a requirement for sameness. He envisions a society so open and accepting that it effectively contradicts itself by policing difference or prohibiting special treatment for particular groups. We can situate his ideas in a flawed discourse of multiculturalism that by championing acceptance excludes difference (Kirova, 2008) and in which special rights for Indigenous peoples perpetuate their negative treatment when they are misperceived as an unfair advantage or reverse discrimination (Ramos, 2007). Ben justifies his position through personal experience knowing a First Nation person.

> *Ben*: My uncle, whose dad was in residential school told me about the atrocities he went
> through… and I have incredible respect for him because… he raised his son – my uncle –

> to be more…I hate to use this – he's more White than a traditional First Nation person because… he was raised with a White culture instead of a traditional culture. And he doesn't regret that because um, he disagrees with the way our country has tried to go forward.

Ben "hate[s]" to say it, but "White culture" is better. He couches this claim in 'respect' and personal experience, is quick to reiterate that "traditional culture" is not to blame but "our country" is to blame for:

> giving them free reign to do whatever they want… giving them discounts on this and that…trying to make up for what they've done by just giving them all this stuff, by giving them no tax, by giving them free schooling…

In terms of knowledge gaps, Ben does not seem to be aware that the limitations imposed on Indigenous peoples by the Indian Act interfere greatly with 'free reign to do whatever they want' nor that exercising treaty rights (such as rights to hunting and fishing) do not constitute 'free reign to do whatever.' He recognizes that bandage solutions do not work to solve a complicated legacy of discrimination: "It's like giving a little kid toys because you missed his birthday. He's not going to realize that you made a mistake, he's just going to hold it against you and want more and more." In a sweeping generalization Ben infantilizes Indigenous peoples by comparing them to spoiled children who lack the maturity to make good decisions with the resources "given" to them. He makes this generalization not knowing exactly where to place the blame: on Indigenous peoples who have "abused…all this stuff" or on the system for its poor attempts to "fix" the past. Moreover, he doesn't realize that when he infantilizes Indigenous peoples (i.e. special rights are like giving a kid candy) he is contradicting himself: "it bothers me when people say" things like "'you know [he] is gay right?' … because they're judging" from a "deficit" perspective, based on what, not "who they are."

Cam, on the other hand, has mixed feelings about embracing "White" culture, and he attempts to contrast Ben's words with more nuanced understanding:

> I don't have a Vietnamese accent. I'm very fluent in English. Even to my parents I don't really always fit in just because I can understand them but I can't talk back fluently enough. And it's sort of depressing because even though I know I'm Vietnamese I'm more likely to say "I'm White" cause I just don't fit in.

Cam connects his experience and the experience of his parents to Elijah and Xavier in *Three Day Road* and the complex inner conflict between "learning the White culture" and "staying true to who [they are]."

If Ben has any knowledge of the treaty relationship, and treaty rights and responsibilities he has separated it from present day social problems, or what he calls the "Dirty Indian" stereotype: "They're alcoholics they're – all they do is smoke and drink and stuff like that. The problem is in a lot of cases its not true, but at the same time there are a lot of cases like that." Again drawing on personal experience, he considers a conversation he had with a First Nation person to be a voice of authority on the matter:

> He's the chief of his village and… he finally got his degree and he's working for the city, and he's trying to make like a good living for himself. And, so he lives on his reserve but he likes to travel… he doesn't like staying on his reserve because he was telling me the people on his reserve, they have all these opportunities, they have free schooling if they wanna go, but the problem is most kids will drop out of high school… and they'll just, they'll work as construction workers, or they'll work on the reserve for variety stores and make minimum wage. And they'll just spend all their money on their housing, food, and then alcohol and smokes and stuff like that. They won't do anything productive with their life because that's – they haven't been taught to do anything else.

Contradicting himself, Ben not only reproduces the "Dirty Indian" stereotype he just criticized, he frames his comments through a colonizing discourse that expects Indigenous peoples to abide by White middle class values where getting a degree, working, making a living, and traveling are respectable and productive. Whereas, dropping out of school, working for minimum wage, and spending money on alcohol and smokes are what First Nations do, and this is who they are. He phrases the stereotypical claims as though they are objectively knowable facts, however, when read as normative claims, they illustrate that Indigenous peoples' lack the correct set of values as evident by their poor life choices.

Danika picks up on some of Ben's points. Her voice quivers with passion when she speaks from personal experience about socio-economic struggles and the stereotypes that come with it. Her impression of the nearby First Nation community is that it is "very sanctioned off, very closed in together" which is a problem because the community is also "not thriving." There are "very broken down homes…issues with the roads not being kept very well" and generally poor conditions "leading to stereotypes" of "laziness." Danika believes "getting the help needed"

and "integrating businesses in" is crucial for ending "a cycle" of isolation. She recognizes it is important for Indigenous peoples to "be a part of the community and be with their friends and their family," however, "there should be a balance of integration into society to help them realize their full potential, while continuing to grow the communities within themselves to be better and close, and helping each other out." Though she uses some of Ben's problematic language (i.e. integrate, full potential), it is her idea of balance that is important. Coming from someone who understands the isolation created by financial hardship, she sees 'integration' as a way to mediate that struggle without sacrificing ties to one's community.

The importance of land to Indigenous peoples has been absent from the conversation so far, and it has important implications. Ben and Danika want to be open-minded, "respectful", and not pass judgment on people due to their circumstances (i.e. low income). As Ben says, "nobody is born racist, nobody's born sexist, nobody's born discriminatory, and this is good for us because everyone should be able to formulate their own ideas." However, not understanding the significance of land in the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples allows them to reduce the complexities of ongoing colonization to (fixable) social problems. Reserves, as Danika explained in the paragraph above, and as Ben explained earlier in talking about his experience with First Nation kids at a hockey camp, are at the heart of social problems. Here is what Ben proposes to fix "the concept of reserves" where "the problems you might have in a small group will continue on for generations":

> [The reserve], it shouldn't be considered a reserve it should be considered a town that anyone can move to... it might have a very large First Nation influence on it but if you have those people integrating into society, [our larger municipality] will become more accepting of other people, and other people will become more accepting of them and you'll see friendships build.

In Ben's perception reserves cause isolation and isolation allows misunderstanding and inequality to flourish. For example, First Nation kids from a nearby town are "outcasts" among high school students. Unless they're "playing sports" they pretty much stay on the reserve, which is "unfortunate because they're never going to integrate." He continues to reason that First Nation kids should be "treated as just another one of the group" but due to isolation, they "don't have the same opportunity." In his reasoning access is the key barrier to overcoming exclusion. Although access is important in many types of exclusion, Ben is unaware of the treaty relationship and the

importance of community in preserving cultural identity and providing community members with the tools to access mainstream culture. He would do away with the remaining unceded lands where many Indigenous peoples continue to live. Further, the authoritative tone Ben takes when coupled with his prescriptive approach to changing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people precludes the relationship from moving to one of non-domination.

While Ben and Danika discussed at length the need for Indigenous peoples to "integrate", Cam was quiet. He did not overtly disagree with Ben and Danika, rather, he tried to shift the narrative subtly:

> It's really depressing that back then we forced them to integrate cause we wanted to change them or 'cleanse the beast' as they put it and they just wanted to be on their own right? But now that we're more accepting we're not trying to force who we are…

I read this as Cam trying to differentiate himself from Ben, almost enticing Ben to notice the contradiction in what he was saying. Ben doesn't notice, and continues to assert himself strongly. Despite this dynamic in the focus group, there is still no talk of land. There are many implications to land and treaties representing a gap in the students' knowledge. First, without an understanding of the significance of land and the purpose and meaning of treaties, problems become social, cultural, and from a *non-Indigenous* perspective, fixable. Second, the past and present become separated, and when that happens present day responsibilities become unclear. For example, because they don't understand the Crown's responsibility to uphold treaties, students do not recognize when the Crown is failing in that responsibility. Instead, as Ben says, "we haven't really done anything to try to fix [the past]; instead we've kind of given them all this stuff." Changing that problematic perception is at the heart of changing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Finally, for non-Indigenous peoples, like Ben, not understanding the significance of land to Indigenous peoples or the treaty relationship, risks the continuation of a relationship of colonial domination. His most well intended ideas were rooted in his own worldview.

Although I have highlighted one focus group to show the omission of land, it is an omission consistent across each classroom. Neither 'land,' 'Indigenous sovereignty', or 'treaties' were discussed as topics in and of themselves (i.e. a lesson or entire period was devoted to the topic) or often enough to form a subtheme, whereas 'genocide' and 'stories as truth' were. In

some transcripts and observation notes, land is only mentioned in passing, and in no transcripts does the word sovereignty appear with reference to Indigenous nations. Dena and one guest speaker talk about importance of land in an Indigenous worldview, but these conversations are more intended to share core beliefs and differences between worldviews, and do not take up the issue of land by looking at the treaty relationship, and it do not invite students to reflect on their presence on the land.

Even in Dena's class, it is only near the end of the classroom observation period and after students had been encouraged by First Nation community members to consider land and treaties together that students began to give this topic deeper critical consideration. As they are deciding how to start the documentary:

> *Dena*: What did [the panel of First Nation community members] say about land ownership?
> *MS*: There was no ownership.
> *MS*: They were there to take care of it.
> *MS1*: The creator put it there for them.
> *Dena*: Do you see land as a starting point?
> (*Silence.*)
> *MS*: Maybe one of our stronger points.
> *Dena*: I must be seeing it differently. Do you think a lot of people don't understand that?
> *MS*: It's the beginning of the timeline.
> *Dena*: Within that timeline you talk about Royal Proclamation, treaties…
> *MS*: We should mention how treaties are being broken and not followed.

For Dena, land is where understanding the relationship starts, but her students are not sure.

Based on the dialogue in classroom observations and in focus group conversations, students knew a lot more about residential schools, and the loss of language and culture than they did about land and treaties, and the loss of land. This raises the question: why isn't the loss of land being questioned and unpacked as well? I want to suggest a couple of reasons. First, it is less problematic to say, "they lost their language and culture" from a Western worldview because there is some relationality between those concepts, a level of cross-cultural understanding and empathy, even though I want to make clear that I am by no means equating the meanings of language and culture for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Land, however, is different. To illustrate, in a focus group with students from Dena's class, Eric contemplated the role of non-Indigenous Canadians in moving forward toward a new relationship with Indigenous peoples his

thinking is illustrative: "I think like the main thing is just acknowledgement… It's not really anything we can give [Indigenous peoples] in like a money value or land, or anything." Here, Eric mentions land in the context of compensation through the lens of a non-Indigenous worldview – it is a possession with monetary value.

By comparison, language and culture cannot be owned in the same way land can. A non-Indigenous person may be more aware of the ways language and culture shape their identity than the way land does. From a Western worldview saying "they lost their land" may seem a little redundant because Indigenous peoples technically still live on land. Everyone does. And that brings me to the second point. Not understanding land from an Indigenous worldview is a convenient settler strategy of avoidance. As soon the Indigenous loss of land is problematized settler legitimacy on that land in the *present* is thrown into question. With land, settlers have to confront the fact that they are on it, do not plan to leave, probably invest their retirement savings in companies whose use of traditional Indigenous land is contested, and thus, continue to be complicit in ongoing colonization. With residential schools the complicit parties can be nameless priests, teachers or bureaucrats (problematically) from the *past*. The emotional impact of acknowledging the intergenerational effects of residential schools can be eased for the settler consciousness when it comes with talk of healing. A settler can then be hopeful they might be part of the solution, part of righting a wrong, allowing them to feel some consolation. Consider the dominant media imagery: when we see residential schools, we see victims, images of children, abuse that is recognizable across cultural difference. It is gut wrenching on an emotional level that land may not be – for a non-Indigenous person. As Cristine recalls of discussing residential schools with her students, "there was not a single person who vocalized anything other than sympathy and empathy." When land receives media attention we see adult protestors, road blockades and potential violence, not to mention editorial cartoons, and rarely innocent victims. The challenge of land is twofold: it has to be understood from an Indigenous perspective as sacred, spiritual and animate, and the frames with which land is talked about have to be more vigorously interrupted.

This section highlights the students' commitment to being critical of dominant versions of history and a Eurocentric focused curriculum. Even while they maintained this commitment and explored counternarratives that genuinely transformed their thinking about the relationship

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, they were limited by specific gaps in knowledge that allowed (re)colonizing discourses of genocide and cultural inclusion to creep into their conversations. However, it also shows that, despite their commitments, students continued to draw upon colonizing and re-colonizing ways of thinking that crept into conversations through gaps in their knowledge.

Chapter Synthesis

All of the teachers who contribute in this project encourage their students to approach the subject matter relating to Indigenous perspectives critically. In this sense they are following the formal curriculum, or the curriculum-as-plan (Aoki, 2005). The critique addresses mainstream stereotypes and misconceptions, and seeks to build empathy and understanding, particularly in relation to issues of identity. For example, in reading the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* Julie and Cristine encourage their students to critically explore issues of identity and belonging to various communities, and they analyze mascots to encourage their students to think critically about the ethics of cultural appropriation. Likewise, Kim encourages her students to examine the political motivations of apologizing when it comes to the intergenerational impact of residential schools. Kate's students consider how decades of misrepresentation in film impacted Indigenous peoples identity. Finally, Dena's students critically reconsider the way sanitized notions of multiculturalism avoided the difficult history of colonialism when portraying a unified Canadian identity. The critical learning in each of these examples is rich, but does not necessarily challenge students to see the world differently – through an Indigenous worldview. With the exception of Dena, the concept of worldview (and the implications when worldviews collide) do not come up. In this sense, it is taken for granted that critique and awareness of Indigenous perspectives is enough. However, critical approaches are not fully equipped to understand Indigenous perspectives and histories. The two most common limitations I noted in this chapter are: 1) that a critical but non-Indigenous lens forms the basis of critiquing colonial history in Canada and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and 2) the actual teaching strategies, learning tasks, and organization of classrooms reflect non-Indigenous pedagogical approaches. These two limitations speak directly to the research questions, which asked how teachers were integrating Indigenous perspectives (here, they did so critically but often through a non-Indigenous lens), and what strategies and resources were they

using (as the chapter shows, they used strategies they were comfortable with from seat work, to guest speakers, to inquiry and discussion). Moreover, these limitations resonate with the literature in Chapter 2 that argues students need to learn *through* Indigenous perspectives, rather than learn *about* Indigenous perspectives. The metaphors of the bridge (Aoki, 2005) and the abyss (Andreotti et al., 2010) from Chapter 3 is also apt here. In an approach to curriculum that is epistemologically open like the bridge, which is a meeting place to respectfully learn and co-exist, Dena and her students attempt to be consciously aware of worldview. They consider how it encompasses values and assumptions, and how (the clash of) different sets of values and assumptions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews could help to understand the colonial relationship in what is now Canada. I opened this chapter with an explanation of her parallel approach to worldviews, in which she outlined a First Nations worldview and a non-Indigenous (postcolonial) worldview. These worldviews served as frameworks through which her students read texts. Worldviews are positioned relationally, rather than in competition, which I see as a promising approach, because it encourages students not to evaluate an Indigenous perspective through their own experience. Further, by paying attention to the way their classroom and their school is organized Dena's students become aware of how their experience of schooling is a type of Eurocentric curriculum. At the same time, students from all classes show a lack of awareness of land from an Indigenous perspective. Understanding land from a non-Indigenous or dominant Western point of view as we saw in the focus group with Ben and Danika represents the abyss, a shifting line that is hard to anticipate where mutual respect and understanding break away, and dominant notions of land become the default. In this case, the line of the abyss is the colonizing logic of land as the rightful possession of non-Indigenous settlers, colonizers, and governments.

The absence of land as discussed in the final section of this chapter, provides some insight into the research questions: does classroom dialogue reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics, and what narratives do students and teachers draw upon when integrating Indigenous perspectives? As long as the significance of land to Indigenous peoples is omitted from discussions of history students lack a crucial understanding of where the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples has come from and where it needs to go. The omission of land and sovereignty affirms the work of Tupper (2014, 2011), which advocates that students learn the history of treaties in Canada and what treaty meant/means to the different

parties involved. As we move forward to the next chapter, Dena and her students will take part in projects for reconciliation. She and her students will do wonderful work together disrupting dominant narratives in history, making their peers aware of the legacy of residential schools, consulting First Nation community members, and with their assistance re-storying the past. However, as we read on, we must keep in mind the omission of land and Indigenous sovereignty that I have discussed in this chapter and consider what the implications of that omission are for engagements in reconciliation.

Chapter 6: Stories, Experiences and Perspectives Shared

To Build a New Relationship: Pedagogies for Living in Relation on Parallel Paths

The focus of this chapter is classroom pedagogy. It discusses the pedagogical rationales and approaches of each teacher participant for integrating Indigenous perspectives into their teaching, and it juxtaposes these approaches with student perceptions. Beginning with a brief section on *integration*, teacher participants share their understandings of what it means to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching. Then I look at the pedagogical approaches of each teacher in relation to the theme dis/comfort. I use the "/" in dis/comfort because, as we will see, *comfort* is a crucial pedagogical and human response to *discomfort*. The various teachers, students and First Nation community members who had a role in this project responded to discomfort in various ways. This chapter will not only look at strategies the teachers (and students) used to work through their discomfort when integrating Indigenous perspectives, but also the ways in which discomfort shaped relationships in the learning space. The final section of this chapter offers a four-part pedagogical praxis for reconciliation. Three teachers and their classes were taking part in projects for reconciliation through independent and collaborative work. The pedagogical praxis not only helps us understand their journey through a pedagogical framework, but it also gives a snapshot on how these particular teachers and students are engaging in reconciliation activities at a grassroots level.

Integration to Build a New Relationship

Integrate, from the Latin word *integrat*, means "to make whole." Each teacher participant in this study has a different interpretation of what it means, "to make whole" the classroom curriculum. When I asked teachers in one on one interviews what the word *integration* meant to them, they all had a slightly different way of explaining it, as I will discuss. However, integration is a tricky word, as we saw from a focus group discussion in the previous chapter. Consider it in the context of Indigenous people whom, if asked to "integrate" into society, for example, could be expected to quietly assimilate.

When it comes to integrating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom curriculum, Julie's understanding of integration is far from assimilation. She says integration is "not just an

addition" but rather "a very necessary part *of*, so if it's not there the whole flavour changes." Julie continues, explaining Indigenous perspectives are "integral" for all "Canadians" to understand their history. For her, integration should be a "seamless" way of "making what you're trying to integrate… seem like its just another topic… and not making it stand out as being different or unusual or problematic" but rather to "weave it into what's already there."

Cristine says a classroom has to be "open" where "making everybody feel comfortable and welcome is probably the most important thing." Kim agrees with Cristine saying students should feel they can "research or investigate anything they want to… and tell their colleagues about it." She adds that integrating Indigenous perspectives has to be done consistently, "more than just two weeks while we discuss this unit." Kate notes, "making sure that there are FNMI selections, various voices being heard."

Indeed, integrating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom curriculum is about many things, but crucially, as I have argued throughout, it is about building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. It is pedagogy oriented toward responsibility, reconciling, repairing, and reimagining a fragmented relationship, and making that relationship whole. As Dena explains:

> There are certain levels of so-called integration. And for me it's ideally that level where the student understands the issue and is almost at that point where you understand the issue well enough that they want to reach out to the [First Nation] community and that they want to do something about it, right? So not… costumes and food… I really want us to get to a spot where students either feel like they're making some kind of change, whether that's "well let me know teach someone else about this or let me create a documentary that explores this issue, or let me, in the case of my students last year, let me make a PSA (public service announcement) where I can convince someone this is not the proper environmental decision to make because I went out and talked to these people and I understand how it's truly effecting this community… *Integration is when you empower the student to do something about the issue they now understand* (emphasis added).

Empowering students, she continues, is "a fine balancing act"; they need to understand the issues "without them feeling they are the White saviour." It has even taken time for Dena as a teacher and First Nation woman to deeply understand what it means to "be there *with* [First Nation] people] not *for* us" (as she put it). Dena's understanding of integration is experiential, where

students "reach out," "do something," and will have "talked to" people. It blends the formal curriculum into the lived curriculum.

Students who contribute to focus groups echo Dena when I ask them how teachers should teach Indigenous perspectives. As Fay, a First Nation student from Dena's class explains, "[students] need the actual experience with native people. Or if they actually went out and did things and learned about the culture, instead of just reading about it, but actually doing it. You get so much more insight from going places and learning." According to Jess, a White female student from Dena's class, a teacher "can't be just like, 'oh yeah, do this worksheet' or 'read this' or whatever." In her experience, the most meaningful learning comes from "getting to meet with First Nation people one on one…[It] has a huge impact." Danika, a White female student from Kim's class could see right through being asked to read "the token First Nation people book" that had to be "thrown in for culture." Thus, Fay, Jess, and Danika express a preference for experiential learning in genuine contexts rather than from books. They agreed with Cam, a Vietnamese Canadian from Kim's class, who said First Nation perspectives and issues "should be built into your subjects" much like "when you learn about the wars" Canada's involvement in the war of 1812, WWI, and WWII is "spread across [at least] three classes" in the history and civics curricula.

However, the formal curriculum provides little guidance when it comes to integration. For example, the Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12 English has no specific requirement for literature by Indigenous authors, suggesting Tomson Highway as one choice buried among several diverse perspectives. Instead, the document explains broadly, "literature is fundamental to identity and culture" (p. 2) and students will read a variety of literature from various cultures, perspectives and time periods "that reflect the diversity of Canada" (p. 8). Absorbing Indigenous "literature" into Canadian literature betrays the formal curriculum's linkages to a colonial Canada that aimed for all "Indians" to be "absorbed into the body politic," a quote attributed to Duncan Campbell Scott during his time as Superintendent of Indian Affairs (see TRC, 2015). Moreover, omitting the "philosophy" of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing betrays the formal curriculum's linkages Euro-Western ideas of learning, by situating Indigenous material as content rather than as philosophy.

As we move into the next section of this chapter, a pedagogy of dis/comfort, we see a number of ways teachers navigate the tension between the formal curriculum-as-plan and the curriculum-as-lived as they integrate Indigenous perspectives. In some instances, the two blend seamlessly together, and at other times the formal curriculum is a safety net from the unpredictability of life experience. Both approaches will be significant as we look at the pedagogical journeys of teachers and students.

Pedagogy of Dis/comfort

> *This is a saying I share with students all the time "being comfortable in your discomfort is so important," is so important when you're tackling any sort of issue around culture and race or religion or gender issues. And you have to know there will be moments when you're not comfortable but those are moments when we're all learning more than we can imagine, more than the curriculum expects us to learn.*

> *-An interview with Dena*

Can we ever become comfortable in our discomfort? Throughout this project, the word *discomfort* came up almost daily. Teachers, students, First Nation community members, and myself, all grappled with tension between our discomfort and the importance of the work we were doing – as learners, educators, policy makers, curriculum developers and community members. As I listened to teacher participants, I wondered, how can we work through discomfort to engage each other ethically, instead of focusing inward and wrapping ourselves in the protection of what feels familiar? This section is organized around the theme dis/comfort. It explores the ways dis/comfort plays an important role in classroom pedagogy, first, by discussing the way(s) each teacher works through her discomfort, and second, by exploring various teaching strategies that each teacher used to engage and integrate Indigenous perspectives.

As I unpack dis/comfort as a pedagogical theme that emerged in this research, it is useful to refer to Boler (2014, 1999) who explains a pedagogy of discomfort as an approach to understanding difference that engages teachers and students in collective critical inquiry through which they make sense of the emotional attachments they hold to particular worldviews. These attachments are *comfortable* because they are familiar and provide a framework through which to make sense of and simplify complexity in the world around them. She and Zembylas (2003) explain that a pedagogy of discomfort:

emphasizes the need for both the educator and students to move outside of their comfort zones…The comfort zone reflects emotional investments that by and large remain unexamined because they have been woven into the everyday fabric of what is considered common sense. A pedagogy of discomfort recognizes and problematizes the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines, and unconscious complicity with hegemony (p. 109).

When one's views and beliefs are challenged it is an emotional experience that affects people differently and can bring on feelings such as surprise, disgust, denial, and anger. For example, when Dena explains to her students that in a First Nation worldview everything has a soul, there is surprise, skepticism, and an exaggerated yawn from a student who time and again (as we will see) struggles to be serious during these conversations.

> *Dena*: You look confused.
> *Male student #1 (MS1)*[6]: Baffled.
> *Dena*: That's okay. My goal is to put you in a position where you're forced to see the world a different way. There is value in that. We don't do it enough for students... There's so much to learn from your discomfort.
> *MS1*: (*yawns loudly*).
> *Dena*: (*ignoring MS1 and addressing the class*) Your discomfort is a learning point… When you're uncomfortable you have to stop and ask why you're uncomfortable and learn from it.

With this encouragement students reconsider the proposition that all things have a soul. They acknowledge that people and animals have a soul but there is some doubt about plants and other "non-living" entities.

As the opening quote to this section and the example above illustrate, learning from a place of discomfort is an important pedagogical goal for Dena. She wants students (and teachers) to challenge themselves to think outside of their comfort zones, and intentionally engage the curriculum from a place of discomfort. From her teacher's point of view, you can "plan" to follow the curriculum, but you have to be "open to what may come up" and allow yourself to "experience" the unexpected or the unfamiliar as you go along: "If you're constantly worried about what's going to happen, if the wrong thing is going to be said, you're fearful of speaking to

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[6] Recall that excerpts from classroom observations identify students as MS (male student) or FS (female student) with two exceptions: 1) to acknowledge a student who identifies as First Nation (FNFS) and 2) to attribute a number of comments that are spread throughout the chapter to a the same male student, Male Student #1 (MS1) so the analysis can go on to unpack patterns that emerge in his behaviour.

First Nation people, then you're going to limit breadth of experience that is welcomed into the learning space." Put differently, dis/comfort is navigating the curriculum-as-plan with the curriculum-as-lived.

She continues to explains why, in a broader sense, it is important for teachers to be willing to embrace their discomfort to learn:

> It's difficult because if [teachers] don't know the history and make the attempt to break that complete lack of understanding then that whole cycle will just continue and it's not going to get any better for our kids. For all of our [First Nation and non-First Nation] kids.

Moving forward, I will discuss thematically, various ways each teacher worked through their own feelings of discomfort when it came to integrating Indigenous perspectives. While teachers are the focus, I cannot talk about them in isolation from students, particularly when teachers and students worked together through shared discomfort, or when students responded directly to the topic of discomfort in focus groups. Therefore, I will discuss the teachers first in each section and then draw on student contributions where applicable.

Teacher confidence. The teacher contributors all explain in their interviews they have experienced some form of discomfort when it comes to integrating Indigenous perspectives. Dena believes teachers feel discomfort because "teachers are comfortable with what they know and if teachers don't get to a spot - and I know we're being pushed in that direction anyway – but if we don't get to a spot where we're also comfortable teaching what we're not comfortable with, then…that would scare me." To get to that comfortable spot, each teacher can describe strategies they use. For Kim and Cristine time and experience are factors. Kim who has been teaching *Three Day* Road for the past seven years in a grade 12 academic course explains, "we've had lots of conversations about residential school….[I've become] more and more comfortable as I've gone on." Similarly, Cristine, who has been integrating Indigenous perspectives for 5 years using the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* with Grade 10 applied students says: "I'm getting better. Yep. And I think that probably having had taught at [another local high school] made me a little more comfortable than some people might be." The high school she's referring to, it is worth noting, serves a local First Nations community and has a significant First Nation student population.

Teachers also attribute their discomfort to a lack of familiarity with or knowledge of the content. As Kate explains, "I don't want to do something wrong or say something that could offend somebody or have misinformation." As I noted in my journal of Kate's demeanour during classroom observations:

> Kate keeps going over her plan for the day at her desk… glancing around the room, waiting for the moment when she will stand up and begin the lesson. She smiles in my direction and I hope my presence isn't making her self-conscious.

Kate later explained the need to be "really conscious and fair about the delivery of the lesson" weighs on her mind.

Julie, who has been integrating Indigenous perspectives through novels for about 7 years wonders if she does justice to the topics:

> Initially anyway, I guess a lot of discomfort, just because of maybe unfamiliarity, other than maybe text book stuff, and I don't know, sometimes its just – especially with listening to Dena talk of experiences, and I mean, cause it's so heartfelt, and then like I said, just the lack of knowledge, the lack of understanding, the lack of any experience with it other than reading it out of a book… like how authentic is it? And so I even wonder sometimes if I do justice to dealing with the issues… Discomfort, I guess, is maybe my biggest thing.

Julie realizes she cannot find the answers in a textbook to compensate for her lack of knowledge and experience. Instead, she is mindful that emotion and lived experience, especially as shared by First Nation people is "not cliché, kind of like 'here's the facts'." For Julie, presenting Indigenous perspectives as factual textbook content is disingenuous if not inaccurate, and strips away much of the meaning, emotion, and experience that is bound to the legacy of colonialism in Canada. Moreover, it has to "be real to the kids so they understand sort of the importance of actually learning about it." The thought that her students will come to see themselves differently in relation to Indigenous people and their experiences comforts Julie in her discomfort. She persists, knowing she has an ethical responsibility to do justice to the topic.

Willingness to learn. In a conversation I had with Susie Jones, a First Nation educator who has spent the last ten years speaking to educators and church groups about the impact of residential schools on First Nation communities, she explained: teachers have to be sincere and diligent in finding out Indigenous histories and experiences of colonization, because the

information – people's stories - won't just appear in a text book. Kate, recalls her search for resources and information:

> I feel like I've done some things on my own…About 5 years ago I taught a [Grade 11] English class that was a pilot project for our board that had all First Nation, Métis, & Inuit [FNMI] literature in the course…we had novels, plays, poetry. Everything was FNMI. But that was a little bit harder for me because I didn't have any professional development on it, and it was just "hey, can you do this?" with a little bit of support form somebody in board level saying "hey, this is a good book, try that." But in terms of the historical pieces that helped to make the connections for kids, I didn't have that so I had to do a lot of research on my own.

Likewise, Kim explains:

> I've had to learn a few things as I went on, and I've read more, and now I think I'm fairly comfortable at bringing things up. I know the first time we did Part-time Indian, I just asked kids to write to me what they knew about native people and I was quite stunned by what I got back because I got a lot of "they're all drunks". There were a whole lot of stereotypes, and I was like – wow! So then we sort of tackled it from that point on working through all the stereotypes and why, and that sort of stuff. But now I'm fairly comfortable talking about all those sorts of things.

Being willing to learn helped Kim become more comfortable. Her willingness to work through difficulty and not avoid the topic is not only part of the task, but also a part that helps build confidence as she goes along.

Setting expectations. The groundwork teachers set at the beginning of their units or lessons goes a long way toward creating an atmosphere that allows space for dis/comfort. Cristine finds, "if you tell kids that sometimes what you're going to talk about might be a little uncomfortable, um, then it makes it a little easier." She is referring specifically to chapters from *Diary* that have caused controversy in some school boards for including racist profanity or the main character's candid description being a hormonal teenager.

> As an adult talking to kids that are not your own kids…you kind of think, "Yikes, how am I going to deal with this situation?" But if you just treat it kind of in the funny way that [the book] intended [students] pretty much take it that way.

And that is exactly what Cristine did as I observed her Grade 10 applied class. When she came to a place in the book containing a few lines of sexual innuendo I notice confused looks on some of her students' faces. Cristine is not fazed by the fact she needs to explain to a group of fifteen-year-old boys that a "metaphorical boner" is simply a way of describing the excitement one might

feel from reading a good book. She works through the discomfort these moments bring by telling her students what to expect in advance. This also helps her to stay in control. I observed:

> Cristine prepares to read a chapter aloud by asking students to turn to a page in their books and there is some talk about where the story left off in the chapter before. In this chapter, however, she disclaimers there are two words she won't say out loud - the N word or the F word – those are boundaries she won't cross. She's matter-of-fact and her tone invites no discussion.

Sure enough, a few moments later she read, "Did you know Indians are living proof that *blanks blank* buffalo?" I watched closely for student reactions and in my observations wrote: "A Black male student chuckles "whoa." Everyone pays closely attention and it doesn't seem to phase anyone because it comes in context." Then things continued on smoothly.

> *Cristine*: They understand that, you know, we might be talking about things that some people could get offended about but that's not what we intend and we're just trying to teach them about what offense is and how to not be offensive. Like that's probably key… And to talk about it from a historical point of view too.

To summarize thus far, in acknowledging their discomfort teachers are able to respond to it. Kim and Kate are willing to learn and research the topics, Julie is mindful to avoid a fact-based approach to the material, and Cristine always sets expectations with her students. Despite their discomfort, all the teachers are unanimous that it is more important to persist through the difficulty. The students whom I spoke to in focus groups are quick to agree.

> *Annette*: What would you say to a teacher who is hesitating to teach First Nation, Métis, & Inuit perspectives and issues because he or she is afraid of the controversy or the opinions that might come up?
> *Ian*: You don't think we're afraid too? But we're doing it anyway.
> *Jess*: (*laughs*) Yeah exactly. I think like, there's so many things we teach in school that are controversial though, like a biology teacher who teaches evolution… I just think it's part of your job that you have to do that, and it needs to be said because if you don't teach it then it's always going to remain a touchy subject.

Likewise:

> *Eric*: Just ask them why.
> *Helene*: Yeah same.
> *Annette*: Why are you afraid?
> *Eric*: There's no reason to be afraid.
> *Gen*: I'd just say 'well, that's the important part'.

Fay: That's [the teacher's] own fear that they have to try to conquer cause other people might be okay talking about it and [the teachers are] the ones restricting themselves and their students...

Gen: As a teacher that's how you're going to help [students] learn, like having them take notes and stuff won't help. Doing these discussions and stuff has actually helped me learn about like different people and different perspectives and stuff…

Eric: Plus its not like there's a grey area. There's facts. Like you're just providing them with true facts. It's not really an opinion for you to teach.

Fay: They're not taking anything away from them, or like, you're just providing them with more stuff to learn.

Eric and Helene: yeah.

Annette: I like that. You're not taking anything away. Because it seems like when people resist it or try to deny it so much, it's like 'are you afraid someone's gonna take something away?' But if you think about it: have you lost anything?

Student laughter.

Eric: Exactly. No.

The final exchange in which Fay, Eric and myself talk about First Nation perspectives and issues in the curriculum "not taking anything away" is an interesting way for the students to look back on their experience. Boler (2014, 1999) notes that in their discomfort students sometimes resist for fear of losing something like the security of their identity and uninterrogated privilege. The students I spoke to were quick to insist the opposite - that they had gained valuable perspective and understanding. Their insistence came with the hindsight of already having experienced some very difficult moments in class where disagreement ran deep and emotions ran high.

Supportive Colleagues and Administrators. The teachers were unanimous that having a First Nation colleague was their biggest source of support. Cristine says, Dena is "probably better than a lot of formal training would be" and having her "as a program leader is great because she's a great resource and she just always knows the right thing to do in any given situation." Kim explains:

If I'm ever not sure about something I can just go to Dena and say what's your take on this, or do you have anybody I could contact? So that's been huge. I don't think I would know half the stuff that I do know, or know half the stuff of where to go and look up the stuff I need to know if it wasn't for her.

Cristine and Kim feel they've become more knowledgeable and more confident in their teaching. Though she is humble with the praise, Dena is realistic: "I don't know what teachers at other schools do who don't have a First Nation person to go to." Moreover, Dena recognizes she too relies on supportive colleagues:

Dena: For a First Nation woman it is far more difficult to deal with [resistance] when it comes from your peers, right? Because – and I've been lucky that hasn't happened too much to me here – which is probably why I've stayed here at this school… If you're a curriculum leader, which I am, you're trying to make [First Nation issues] an embedded part of your department's way of being and you come up against someone who simply says "I don't want to teach Part-time Indian" because it's…too negative, or it's a portrayal of First Nations people that I can't teach. That's really difficult. Because … probably that person shouldn't be teaching it. That's the first obstacle that comes up. And the second is that now this means that our students aren't going to get what we were hoping they would get from a departmental perspective.

Dis/comfort thus illustrates the way curriculum is about relationships, and being willing to place trust in one another. It is a piece of relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The teachers who work with Dena have accepted a level of discomfort in order to advance their department wide vision for curriculum. Although Dena is the leader, understands how ineffective her leadership is when colleagues allow their discomfort to block that relationship.

The teachers also shared good and bad experiences regarding support from higher level administrators. Dena goes on to share "a bad experience" where, at a meeting of school administrators, her suggestion to hire more First Nation educators was openly shunned.

I brought up hiring practices and if we really wanted to make things better for our [First Nation students] we just simply had to hire more First Nation people. And the room got quiet. There were First Nation and non-First Nation people there. The room got really quiet. And for me it was just – let's talk about this…And after that happened one of the women who represented the First Nation community came up to me and said "I wanted to say you were really brave to say that" … After the meeting there was a group of [administrators] who met, and one of those [administrators] was a very good friend of mine, and he said to me afterward "I was so disgusted with the comments that occurred after that meeting" you know, he says "its ridiculous". Basically those gentlemen – because they were all men – met and said was, "Dena needs to learn to shut up because Dena could be [promoted]. She's got lots of potential, but she needs to keep her mouth shut." … And just for people to think that is one thing but to verbalize that in a group where it was made clear to me that some were very quiet and some were very vocal. So, to those that were vocal, I'm not going to change your mind, but to those who were quiet – that you didn't speak up too is reflective of our society.

In the context of the above meeting, there is agreement that something has to be done to address Indigenous students' success, but there is also unwillingness to break from the status quo when it comes to who was teaching these students.

Teachers also discussed tensions around course planning in Native Studies and Native Studies English at both Greenwood HS and River HS. Dena has a very specific example of an administrator who decided not to have a native studies course taught by a First Nation teacher and to instead have someone from the history department teach the course. The administrator made this decision despite: 1) a known lack of knowledge of Indigenous perspectives in the history department, 2) this department's previously expressed resistance to teaching native studies, and 3) other more qualified teaching staff in the building who were willing to teach the course. On the one hand, this decision is mind-boggling. But on the other hand, it is a practical decision that prioritizes filling teacher timetables over having qualified and experienced teachers teach Indigenous perspectives. From a priorities perspective, this example illustrates how decision-making can hinder a school from being a more ethical space. However, it also strains relationships within the school.

When I wrote about this conversation in my researcher's journal I noted the *restrained smile* of politeness Dena wore to conceal the fact that *she was seething inside… aghast that [native studies] will be taught by people who either don't know and/or don't take the issues seriously*. When we consider that the relationship between the principle and Dena is one of superior / subordinate, *and* non-Indigenous (White) man / Indigenous female, it mirrors or recreates the colonial relationship on a micro level, which is exactly what ethical engagements aim to disrupt. I wish the principal at River HS had been the only administrator to make such a decision, but over at Greenwood HS, Kate was the non-Indigenous teacher expected to take on a new Native Studies course the following year. Kate does not feel outraged by this decision. She acknowledges she has no formal training or assistance, but will reach out to Indigenous colleagues and staff members. As such, three non-Indigenous educators were largely unaware or indifferent to the importance an Indigenous teacher places on course planning in Native Studies.

Dena recalls that for many years "it was hard to convince some people that it was important not to just have Native Studies in [this town] or [that town], but that it needed to be in all schools." School board leadership changed, and with a new director, Indigenous education became a priority.

> Dena: [The previous] director was really keen on making things better for First Nation students. And she may have had her own misunderstandings about how that could be

done, but it was quite clear that she was genuine…. That was key because that opened the door and… I knew I'd be supported at that point. And indeed I was."

Dena continues to explain, the supportive director appointed a superintendent to the Indigenous education portfolio, who:

> was chosen for that specific reason so that he could take those issues on. And he just tends to be kind of a listener, and very equity minded. And when I say equity minded I mean in all equity issues. And that - there's kind of this reverberation it goes through the principles and to their staff, and also to the partner First Nations because the First Nations are pretty good at gauging how much someone is buying into what they're actually saying. ... So, having genuine concern at the top I think was important.

That superintendent demonstrates his support by attending the panel discussion with Dena's students and First Nation community members. At that consultation he speaks to students, telling them he was "here to learn by listening" to both students and guests, and he acknowledging the way each First Nation educator in the room had been a "teacher" to him. He tells students they were evidence that the board and teachers need to broaden their perspective on teaching Indigenous issues and move away from textbooks. I saw chins lift in surprised approval when the superintendent offered works of support to students, their teacher, and to First Nation community guests. His presence and gesture of genuineness were crucial in making the learning space more ethical. Aware of the authority that comes with being a high level administrator, he sits in the circle as an equal, did not make his presence or words about himself or about "the board" but rather, made students feel as though he was taking them seriously and appreciative of their feedback.

Reaching out to the community. When asked about the best resource they drew upon for integrating Indigenous perspectives, teachers resoundingly said "the community", referring to local First Nation community members. As Dena puts it, "the most important resource that I've ever used is the [First Nation] community, community members." Despite their enthusiasm, discomfort reaching out to the First Nation community was a barrier for teachers and students alike, which is unfortunate because, as Dena notes, "there are so many people within the First Nation communities around here who are so willing to…come in and teach, or show, I mean" and

be supportive in anyway they can. Dena tells me she is often the one to "pick up the phone" to arrange for visitors or to ask questions, even on behalf of colleagues.[7] Dena laments:

> I wish more people felt comfortable …just calling the community and saying to a few key contacts – hey this issue came up in class and I'm unclear about it, let's talk about it… Teacher's need to have those – I feel that I'm at a bit of an advantage. I have my colleagues who are supporting me... But to have those contacts in the community is important. And maybe that's why we're at a bit of an advantage here too, because at least they have me and I can put them, I can connect them with other people….If every school doesn't have someone like that then who do they reach out to?

She considers herself lucky to have community members and relatives to contact so she can "bounce ideas off of people who aren't necessarily teaching colleagues."

Kate, who is lucky to work at a high school where she has several First Nation colleagues, explains why she went directly to her colleagues when she needed support.

> *Kate*: It's nice having guest speakers come in too, who are really knowledgeable about the subject area, having them speak about what they can offer on the topics…When I taught that [Grade 11] course I was talking about I had [a colleague] come in. She teaches at our school and she came in and spoke about … tradition the one time and then she came in and spoke about stereotypes and more of the controversial things. It was nice because she kind of tackled them in a friendly way and then I was like "okay that's good it sets a foundation for us" and then we could just go ahead with the lessons… I brought in [a residential school survivor] a couple times to speak to the [students]. I had it set up for someone to come in and talk about the medicine wheel. …We've gone to the heritage centre. So we've gone and learned about cultural things, but not necessarily how do you teach the FNMI texts... I would just be kind of guessing what this was about – I don't know if it's about residential school, I don't know if it's just about culture in general, or just like, here's a poem: does it have a deeper meaning?

It is not only teachers who struggle with discomfort when reaching out to First Nation community members. Students too were sometimes nervous about their interactions with community members. Below, students from Dena's class explained during a focus group that they were particularly nervous to talk to one residential school survivor.

> *Helene*: I felt like everyone was afraid to talk when we had that speaker there.
> *Gen, Fay, and Eric*: Yeah.

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[7] Not wanting to call a stranger was something I had to overcome in this research as well, when the name of a residential school survivor was given to me as someone I should contact. Not knowing how the person would respond to a researcher worried me. After casting those fears aside, I picked up the phone and had one of the most engaging and informative conversations that took place during this project.

> *Fay*: I just wanted to hear what she had to say.
> *Gen*: Yeah, she was really interesting but I was not about to ask her because I was scared to talk to her.
> *Fay*: …I just wanted to ask her questions.
> *Gen*: …Like about her, about her life and stuff like that.

Nerves aside, however, in Dena's class, reaching out to the community is a key component of student research projects. She helps prepare her students for conversations they would have with First Nation community members by sharing a story.

> *Dena*: Last year Noah from your class had to take a call from the Chief because he was trying to arrange an interview about fracking and when I handed him the phone his voice literally shook with anxiety.
> *Jess*: Noah talked to him on the phone and he agreed to meet us at a Tim Hortons. So he and I were waiting there to meet Chief and when we saw him coming we were so scared because he's a huge guy! Noah wouldn't go up to him so I had to do it, and I awkwardly approached him while he was waiting in line and offered to buy his coffee. He was super nice, and offered to buy me one. Then he sat and chatted with us for like an hour and he was so cool…. He helped us base our whole project on fracking. We were afraid going into it because he's a chief and a big guy to top it off, but he was so nice.
> *Dena*: Noah comes back to class and he was moved – literally transformed – he acknowledged the stereotype he had in his mind of the Chief, and found out he was really a big teddy bear… Noah said that moment changed him; it made him realize people are people.

Beyond the hesitation and awkwardness of being consciously uncomfortable, Noah's experience stirs up previously held beliefs (and stereotypes) about First Nation people - or at least tall, forbidding Chiefs. Importantly, his experience indicates there is something besides lack of knowledge involved in dis/comfort. Dena strategically tells this story to comfort her class, in order to nurture a comforting atmosphere where students can reveal their previous prejudices without being condemned in front of their peers.

As a resource, however, reaching out to a community member became the most rewarding experience of this student's high school learning. In a focus group, Jess explains, "meeting with the Chief was the biggest thing, … cause [he's] so, knowledgeable, and just to be able to sit down and talk with people you learn so much." The impact of her experience speaks to dis/comfort as a relationship, and in the context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, a position from which to build relationships. The students approached the Chief because they wanted to listen and to

learn from his experience and perspective on environmental issues. The active role of reaching out is a crucial distinction from more passive ways the students could have researched their topic online or in books. They may have found similar viewpoints or material that conflicted with their values and beliefs (a cause for discomfort) but they would not have had the opportunity to simultaneously dismantle their preconceived fears of face-to-face interaction with First Nation people.

For example, it would be problematic if the students had come away from their experience with a repertoire of critiques of colonialism in Canada, but the unwillingness to disrupt the ways racial and cultural stereotypes inform impressions of individual people. Similarly, if teachers are willing to study a novel written by an Indigenous author but are not willing to pick up the phone and reach out to a First Nation person, then some of the opportunity for the teacher, students, and the relationship with First Nation communities is lost. A pedagogy of dis/comfort should not encourage the *comfort* of picking and choosing what type of discomforts one is willing to work through. At the same time, I do not mean to prescribe how each person navigates dis/comfort and what resources they draw upon. As residential school survivor Susie Jones explains, "some people would rather learn about it by watching a documentary at home than attend a public information session." Her words remind us that there are limits to dis/comfort; it is not a relentless push to maximize one's discomfort. It must be met with compassion (or comfort) and the acknowledgement that learning through dis/comfort is a journey.

Indigenous education center. In separate interviews with Kim and Cristine, both reflected that some of the best learning experiences they perceived students to have had were the times students were pushed the farthest from their comfort zone. At a local Indigenous education center students take part in day or week long programming that is aligned with the Ontario curriculum and takes place in a genuine learning context. From a teacher's perspective, students "love" the Indigenous education centre where they "try venison, and hear stories about how lacrosse was invented and …they really learn a lot." Part of the appeal is the interactive nature of the experience and participating in learning by doing. In that sense, the Indigenous education center bridges the formal curriculum with a curriculum of life experience grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Kim recounts:

The first time we went [there], the guy who met us walking out to the gate said, 'You guys are so lucky because we just shot two deer this morning and they're hanging in the camp.' And in my head I'm like, 'I'm not sure that's lucky!'… And then four of the girls in my class said right away, 'I'm not going down that pathway, I can't go around the corner if there are deer] and I said, 'We're all just going to have to suck it up, sunshine, cause we're here and we're going to learn about this.'… And then once we talked about everything, everything was fine, and the four students who had said, 'I'm going to throw up, I'm not going to look,' at the end all four of them had bits of the brain and were rubbing it on the hide… and everybody had completely forgotten their worry about it.

Kim's explanation illustrates the discomfort of being confronted with a First Nation worldview, rather than just hearing about it. Students arrive and form their first impressions through their own cultural lens, which views the deer as nausea-inducing dead animals. Listening and learning by doing in a genuine context, however, makes an unfamiliar situation less strange and they are soon able to appreciate and understand the significance of the deer and the way it each part used. Kim says, "If I'd told them in class that this is what happens it just wouldn't have been as impactful." It is the experience that highlights the relational aspects of dis/comfort. Learning in a genuine context broadened the ways students were aware of their connection to the more-than-human beings around them, and it also changed the way they related to each other.

Also at the Indigenous education centre, Cristine saw students who would not normally speak to each other working together as a team:

We had [Grade 10 applied and 12 academic] students who normally would not interact much in the hallway, and we played lacrosse and they just numbered the kids so they didn't get to decide whose team they were going to be on, they were put on a team. And I had a really high flying [Grade 12] kid who um, was a leader in the school, and a girl who was in a [Grade 10] class and sort of not involved in stuff at school, not really well known by many kids...And like, they would never speak to each other until this. And it was just so excellent to see them interacting outside of the school and outside of pencils and books. They learned a lot that day.

In Dena's words, the students became "comfortable in their discomfort."

Teaching Strategies

Until now, most of the discussion in this chapter has been drawn from teacher interviews or focus groups. The next section will also draw on classroom observations to discuss the strategies teachers used to integrate Indigenous perspectives.

Detailed Lesson Plans. In an earlier chapter, I mentioned that some teachers planned detailed lessons in anticipation of my observations in their classroom. This was the case each time I visited the classrooms of Cristine, Julie, and Kate. What is common between the lessons I observed with Cristine, Julie, and Kate, is each lesson engaged students through a combination of discussion, and individual and small group work that involved completing handouts. As this section focuses on how teachers engaged in a particular teaching strategy, I will focus less on the thematic content of lessons as this has already been discussed in the previous chapter.

Cristine and Julie were reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* (*Diary*) by Sherman Alexie with their Grade 10 applied classes. Beginning with Cristine's class, the lessons I observed analyzed a variety of media texts in order to understand how mascots perpetuate Native American racial stereotypes, and to explore how a Native American high school student could have a dual identity where they feel a complicated sense of (not) belonging to (either) their home community and the broader community. On my first visit to Cristine's class she makes a point to tell me she did not create the lesson herself, but rather found it on the Internet. My first observation notes, made while the class was being reminded to do five minutes of silent "bell work," (i.e. reading or doing other English work upon arrival to class) notice:

> [Cristine] is to the point in almost a curt way. Her students sit more or less in a disconnected U shape. She has a podium at the front that she works from – for organizing her lesson notes.

There are fifteen students in class and during "bell work" there is dead silence. She sits at the front beside her podium and continues to sit or stand beside or behind it for most of the lesson. As the lesson gets underway, Cristine alternates between telling anecdotal stories to illustrate key concepts (i.e. the time her daughter was falsely accused of shop lifting because she was a young person, and a stereotype of young people is that they steal), asking students to share similar experiences, and having students respond to questions on a handout. Towards the end of the period, as students quietly refer to their books in order to complete questions on a handout. I observed:

> Cristine goes around and helps explain things as the class works. She also uses this opportunity to keep them on task… Most pairs in the class are chatting quietly. Cristine tells me she likes this class; it's the best [Grade 10 Applied] she's ever taught. I think they're a quiet group, and while this makes it easy for her because they follow instructions, it also means her voice dominates the class. Easily 80%-90% of the talking

in this class is the teacher's. The lessons she uses are interesting but… consist mainly of reading and answering questions. Some of the answers to those questions are creatively drawn on an apple shaped template to represent the tension between having a red identity on the outside and a White identity on the inside but it's been an hour and so far almost no discussion.

Although Cristine poses may questions to students, orally and on a handout, they volunteer answers that were often one sentence long. Cristine acknowledge the answer and move on to another question or anecdote. Here is an example. Students finish watching a video on YouTube called "Proud to Be" which is a montage style public service announcement that shows Native Americans self-identify in a variety of empowering ways:

> *Cristine*: Did you have an 'ah-ha' moment with that one? I heard someone say 'now I get it!'… What's the point of that video?
> *FS*: [Native Americans] call themselves a lot of things besides red skins?
> *Cristine*: They *don't* call themselves redskins.
> *MS*: You should be proud of who you are.
> *Cristine*: There are so many other words that could be complimentary that could be used to call Native Americans, and that's not one of them. That's not a nickname. It's one that White people came up with and it's not positive. 'I get red with anger.' Write a statement whether you agree or disagree with using mascots. Forget about whether it costs money to change them. There are shades of agreement you could have without being 100% yes or 100% no. (*The class spends a few minutes writing.)* We're going to move on and read another chapter.

For an "ah-ha" teaching moment, Cristine does not engage students beyond one question. As she reads aloud to the class, Cristine pauses to address a distracted male student. I wrote about the incident:

> She keeps this class on a short leash. When someone is talking off topic or when she's talking, she asks if they have something to share. A [male student] literally just answered, 'no ma'am'… but it was polite, not snarky.

From these observations about Cristine's style and demeanour, we get a sense that she is strict but not unapproachable, and always (seeming to be) in control. That control translates through her pedagogy. For example, she walks around the room to help students, but also to monitor them and keep them on task much like the way Dena circled her seated students to illustrate the concept of hierarchy. In addition, Cristine has an anecdote or an example ready to illustrate each concept and contradiction that comes up in her lesson whether it relate to stereotypes, mascots,

cultural appropriation or struggles with identity. As I watched Cristine's class, I saw that the familiarity of having taught these lessons before provided her with certainty.

Julie's Grade 10 applied class has a different character than Cristine's. They are more talkative among themselves, and less willing to participate in discussions. Whereas in Cristine's class, I observed, "No one is playing on their phones in this class. They're all – literally all of them following along in their books," Julie is constantly addressing students on their phones:

> *Julie*: (*to four male students*) On your devices?... [Y]ou gotta pay attention because you have to do something with this information after. (*Seconds after saying this 8 people are [looking at] their phones*.)

The lessons I observe in Julie's class discuss themes of hope, opportunity, loneliness, as they relate to the experiences of characters from *Diary,* and particularly the ways those experiences are/are not related to being/not being Native American. These lessons involve Julie reading aloud, students reading silently, students answering questions aloud, and retrieving information from the novel in pairs or small groups. Despite the reluctance of many students to stay on task, there is considerable back and forth dialogue between Julie and her students. She engages them in questions related to the characters, such as how they feel, how they react, and how they respond to one another. Julie does not veer far from her lesson plan even when it becomes apparent there are large gaps in students' background knowledge. For example, as she and the class discuss *Diary* Julie asks what is significant about a teacher's apology to the main character, Arnold who is a Spokane Native American student.

> *Julie*: Very important fact – he comes for the purpose of apologizing to Arnold for the way teachers have tried to kill Indian culture. Tell me what you know about this passage. What is it referring to?
> *MS*: They don't want Indians? I don't know.
> *MS*: They hate Indian culture.
> *MS*: They took Indian kids from their parents and put them in schools.
> *Julie*: Yes, I'm assuming you had this in history at some point? Who is they?
> *MS*: White people, the government.
> There are a lot of blank stares. Some students tell Julie they've never heard of residential schools. One male student asks, 'does that mean home-school?' A female student asks, 'does that mean a school on the rez?' Julie tries to draw out prior knowledge from students about residential schools but the blank stares continue and she looks worried, if not a little flustered. She announces that for now she will try to summarize in 2 minutes because this lesson was not supposed to be about residential schools. They will have to spend a day on that separately.

After a literal two-minute long explanation, Julie moves on with her lesson plan to discuss another passage from the novel.

Kate's lessons, which are part of a unit on literary theory discussed Indigenous stereotypes, historical misconceptions, media and film representation from the past and more empowering media representations of the present day. Her students analyze a variety of texts in a series of seven think-pair-share activities. Each time students pair up with a partner to analyze a text they are asked to respond to two or three discussion questions and later share their responses with the class. Kate has prepared PowerPoint slides with the discussion questions on them and moves through the lesson with the guidance of her notes and PowerPoint. The dialogue I recorded in my observations reflects the closeness to which the lesson-as-plan was followed. For example, Kate asks students to read an article about historically inaccurate portrayals of Indigenous peoples in film, and answer the question: what are historical inaccuracies and can they be prevented?

> *Kate*: What is a point you wrote down for historical inaccuracies? No one volunteers a point so she asks and a male student who says he doesn't know. (*She literally goes from student to student and finally gives an example herself.*)
> *Kate*: (*to a female student*) What about stereotyping by omission?
> *FS*: Indigenous peoples were omitted from media based on the assumption that they didn't survive the cultural transition, or films are not showing life before European contact.
> *Kate*: What about simplistic characterizations?
> *FS*: A lack of complex roles for Indigenous peoples, like putting them in supporting roles.
> *Kate*: Yes, not put in round and dynamic character positions, like we talk about with characters in books.

This dialogue opens and closes the 'share' portion of the think-pair-share. As the class works silently I observe: "Kate sticks to the script. The class doesn't notice. She gives good conceptual explanations but does not offer much depth or detail, or draw on examples to illustrate the points." This observation could reflect her inexperience with this lesson, her self-described lack of historical knowledge about Indigenous perspectives, and also the awkward silences that filled the classroom when students did not engage her in the discussion questions. Toward the end of class Kate begins to glance at the clock. She has completed four of seven think-pair-share activities – just over half the lesson. For the next activity the class would watch a clip from a

documentary about Hollywood stereotypes of Native Americans in film. An online teaching blog had directed her to the link as a resource, and she had previewed the first part of the clip. However, as the video played on, the splicing and compiling of violent and dehumanizing images became rather shocking, so much that I noted in my journal the images seemed to overpower the message of the documentary, which was to deconstruct and critique. Kate felt the same way, and explained to me in an interview that she stopped the video because it was "too much" and there was "so much negativity." Timing amplifies discomfort in this situation: Kate is trying a new lesson that is moving along more slowly than she had planned. As a result the clip came at the end of class and does not leave adequate time, as she acknowledges, to set the context or debrief. At the beginning of the next period, Kate shares her discomfort about the video with students and then moves on with the pervious day's lesson. The tight schedule of her unit plan only had enough flexibility to spend one extra period on Indigenous perspectives. This incident raises a question: is it integration if it has a time limit? In theory, Kate saw integration happening throughout the topics in a course, but in practice there were three days in her unit plan allocated to the lesson that explored an Indigenous lens for critiquing literature and media. Then the class was moving on to examine another of critical lenses that made up the unit. In this sense the examination of each lens could be seen as tokenistic rather than integrative, particularly if it is not carried through into subsequent units and course topics.

For Cristine, Julie, and Kate, following the curriculum through the carefully planned lesson format offers the security of a predictable and contained agenda. In other words, it is comfort in the face of discomfort. Switching between activities every few minutes creates a sense of urgency to keep the lesson moving on time and topic. This means there is less opportunity do be drawn into a controversial and unpredictable tangent, and even if discussion is drawn in an unforeseen direction, the need to complete the lesson in a reasonable time frame could be justification enough for a teacher to close down the discussion and move on. Moreover, the tight lesson schedule means topics are not explored in more detail beyond what is written in the text (i.e. novel or article). For example, I noted while observing Cristine's class:

> *The lessons she uses… don't really take the issues outside of the text. We're talking about Arnold's dual identity, but no one really asks 'why' he has a dual identity beyond the fact that he lives on the reservation and goes to school in town, off the reservation.*

Following the lesson plans closely limits opportunity for discussion, such that dialogue between teachers and students is brief and often punctuated by longer periods of the teacher guiding or explaining, and students reading and writing quietly at their desks. Though I mention the teachers were guiding lessons, it would be more accurate to say they were directing the course of the lesson and the learning. This brings a layer of authority to bear on the teacher-student relationship.

Current events. When I walked into Kim's class on the first day of my observations the class was preparing for a book talk. On her cue, "circle your wagons" students began arranging their desks in a circle while joking good-naturedly with her and with each other. Kim believes her attitude and the atmosphere she creates in the classroom long before introducing the novel *Three Day Road* have a lot to do with the way students respond to the material:

> Most days we start of class talking about the news. I always ask them what's new and exciting in the world, so we often debate and talk about current events. And I try to sometimes throw out the opposite view if everyone's saying "you know, well, these are terrorists so the need to be killed" and I [say] "but they believe strongly in what they're doing" to at least get them thinking about…the biases [they] hold.

Kim is comfortable having students generate topics of discussion and rather than operating from a detailed lesson plan during this portion of the lesson, she discourages the predictable and purposely acts as the instigator of uncertainty. Joining her class about a month after the semester started, students are enthusiastic: they bring up interesting news stories, summarize them in a sentence or two, and then open the floor for discussion. If something is particularly juicy, bizarre, or controversial, they read an excerpt from the article. In this format, students engage each other and work through different viewpoints rather than dismissing them. Regularly discussing current events gives Kim and her students a strategy for working through controversy and dis/comfort.

> With native issues…we start talking about what's happening today, what are the issues [First Nations] are faced with today because so often I find kids will just go "well that was in the past" and "they should really just move on". So then we talk about things and say "if it was your family, would you just move on? How would you feel about that?" So that's to try to get them to think a little more about not just throwing out a blanket statement.... Like, when did the past stop being something that you should be concerned about? And when is the cut off date where you should just get over it?

Current events is Kim's gateway to countering the tendency to divorce the history of colonialism from present day issues and to make her students conscious of the role history plays in shaping the present day.

Writing reflection. A strategy Kim and Dena both use is the writing reflection. Kim, whose students regularly write in journals, says it is always surprising what a student will feel comfortable saying in a journal reflection, especially if they "don't feel comfortable talking in front of their classmates or they think of something later." She finds it to be "a good way of getting more feedback." Likewise, Dena, has had students open up through writing about the impact of their learning.

> I had a student…who wrote a personal narrative and then after certain conversations in the class came back to me and said, "I have a new narrative that I've written," and then the narrative was far more personal and it was about [her] experiences as a Muslim growing up in [our community], which is not particularly easy. And [the student] said, "I feel like I can present this now."

For Dena's former student, writing a personal narrative was initially a task with some discomfort. However, when combined with discussion, the student found the time and support needed to feel more comfortable. That support has a lot to do with the teacher-student relationship, and the ways that teachers create a classroom atmosphere, which can mediate and facilitate learning through dis/comfort. In other words, the pedagogical strategies are intertwined with the relationships they navigate.

Inquiry-based learning. Dena stresses inquiry-based learning requires constant support when it comes to integrating Indigenous perspectives:

> I am a huge proponent of inquiry based learning but when its inquiry based learning where [students] are learning about someone's culture, it's not just facts anymore, it's who I am, it's part of my person, and the stakes I think are a bit higher than if its inquiry based learning about, say, molecules, …There has to be a lot more support. … It's important it has to be done with lots of discussion built into it as well so you can get some of those things ironed out.

As a teacher, she continues, "you have to know what's going on in those small conversations" so when students are actually engaging with materials that reproduce negative stereotypes or discriminatory attitudes you can intervene and make sure those inaccurate representations are not being intentionally or unintentionally associated with a particular student or group of students in

the class. When that happens, you cannot automatically condemn student(s), because in Dena's words, "you don't know what you don't know" meaning it is not always easy to recognize your own biases. That is when the teacher's role is to step in and help students work through the issues.

One day Dena and her students are in the library to use the resources there and engage in inquiry-based research on topics related to the TRC. In a period of no more than half an hour a number of complex topics come up in quick succession:

> *Dena*: Because its inquiry based students are doing all kinds of different things and there were several students watching survivor stories from wherearethechildren.org, from that website. And there was a really uncomfortable moment, but a good moment for two of the boys in the class because I could see – and it wasn't just me – I could see some of the other students who started to watch those boys watch the video. And one of them has been a student that's been quite, how should we say, he's been finding this unit difficult. And he turned at one point during the video, and he took his earphones out and he looked to the other kid who was watching it and he said, 'that is crazy' and he was shaking his head and it's the most serious moment I've kind of seen him have - and it was sincere - with another student. And then I had two students, another two students, who started to watch it and actually – they had to leave because it was, um, it had that impact on them. One of them is a First Nation student and one is a non-First Nation student. It was really interesting because they were watching it together and it was the non-First Nation student who truly did break down when I said to her, 'Okay this is over, you need to get up and you need to move. Don't let that settle within you. You need to get up.' And when I said that to her she looked at me and the tears just started to come. And it was actually the First Nation student that was comforting the non-First Nation student.

The students watched a deeply moving testimony given by a residential school survivor. I cannot speak for the emotions students felt in that moment, maybe anger, sadness, or defeat. Rather than suppressing their discomfort, they respond with simple gestures of comfort. They work through the moment together, as we see below. Dena and I discussed this moment after it happened and I wrote about it in my researcher's journal. As she explains, the affected students barely enough time to compose themselves when:

> *Another student came across an article that called what happened with residential schools genocide and was surprised enough to share this with the peers around him. This sparked some debate, a number of students thinking genocide to be a strong word. A First Nation student pointed out it wasn't just killing people, it was wiping out culture. Moments later, another student saw a reference to 'the Canadian holocaust' that called the assimilation of all native people a 'the final solution'. This sent even more shockwaves through the class given they had studied the Holocaust but were probably*

seeing the comparison for the first time. After class, Dena told me she'd have to pick up this discussion the next day and help students work through some of the big issues they came across.

These discoveries are a lot for students to wrap their heads around, let alone their emotions. Dena's close monitoring of various conversations during inquiry-based learning is crucial in determining how she will proceed the next day with a class discussion. That class discussion marked the beginning of what I refer to as the *genocide conversation.*

Class Discussion. For Dena "discussion has to be a key element in any kind of class where you're bringing First Nation issues in." When two students come across the photo below it sends shock waves among students that Dena knew she could not ignore. To her students, she speaks measuredly and carefully:

> I want to preface the discussion with a story. This can get heated and emotional so lets try to keep emotions in check. Yesterday, Connor found picture of traditionally dressed Salish man holding sign in protest that said, 'we are the Canadian Holocaust'. Connor, your response, if you don't mind me sharing, was that you weren't sure you agreed. It wasn't necessarily disagreement but you just weren't sure.

http://davidpball.com/tag/residential-schools/

Dena pauses here. Students are silent and attentive. Then with her next question, there is some uncomfortable shifting and eyes that settle on the floor in the subtle body language of a student who does not wish to volunteer an answer. The students who do answer, walk a fine line between fact and opinion.

> *Dena*: Is what happened to First Nation people a Holocaust or Genocide? FS you found something.
> *FS*: We found a statement of the final plan – and the way it was worded sounded a lot like final solution.
> *MS*: With Jewish people, it was systematic killing, with First Nations it was more constant bad oppression with lots of killing, but not systematic.
> *FS*: But wasn't that the forced or systematic killing of a culture?
> *MS*: But one group was being killed in most brutal way, the other group just had their culture being killed – which is still bad.

Eyes light up and so does the tension. The male student knows his words just ignited controversy and several students look like they are biting back a sharp response. Then a First Nation student responds evenly, "but if the culture is killed won't the race of people be gone?"

The word *genocide* brings discomfort. For some students it contradicts the story of a "multicultural" Canada that is full of noble, settler colonial values, and as one student described, "all happy and smiles." For other students, including those who came across the term "genocide," having learned a little about residential schools, makes them wonder if there is some truth to it, although they are initially shocked by the strong language. As the conversation unfolds there is a cautious split of opinion. In keeping with her role as mediator of the discussion, Dena speaks slowly, letting her words sink in, which allows time for her to form her thoughts and time students to form theirs. She often responds to negative or potentially inflammatory comments with a question or by addressing the whole group of students, rather than aiming her response at one individual. Responding to "just their culture being killed" Dena ventured:

> This is a brave conversation. You're 16, 17? Most adults can't do this. They don't want to because it's uncomfortable. But to move forward the process of reconciliation, these are the conversations we have to have. Remember, in the moments of discomfort we're about to learn something. Don't run from them – try to embrace the discomfort.

The reverberations of the *genocide conversation* lasted for days, and I will return to it to elaborate in various ways in coming sections and chapters. However, I was able to ask students about the *genocide conversation* in focus groups. They discuss their perception of what transpired:

> *Annette*: How did you feel when genocide came up and that whole topic, like what was going through your mind?
> *Ian*: I think it was good to touch on, to be honest.
> *Jess*: (*laughs*) That was the most awkward class I've ever had in my life.
> *Ian*: It's better that it comes up now than at the very end, in my opinion.
> *Jess*: Yeah…

> *Annette*: Is that cause you have time to work through it?
> *Ian*: Yeah.
> *Jess*: Yeah. I think it's a really controversial thing cause obviously we had one side of the class who were like 'this is obviously a genocide' and the other side of the class who were like 'I don't think it is'. And I think it's important to talk about that because –
> *Ian*: That's how progress is made.
> *Jess*: Yeah, like I think a lot of people… when they think of genocide they just think of the Holocaust and they just compare everything to that, but there are so many other like – you can't compare that. It's like comparing apples to oranges. They're both genocides but they're completely different.
> *Annette*: Which mass killing was worse…
> *Jess*: Right. Exactly. So I think it's important to talk about it. It definitely got kind of tense in the class though. It was awkward, but I think it was good. Needed to be said.

Likewise, Eric and Gen agree they "learned a lot more doing discussions." Their words are important for teachers to hear. Part of the dis/comfort teachers have to face in discussions around Indigenous perspectives is addressing negative comments. Dena is clear that "you have to know it's not going to" go smoothly all the time, and you "wouldn't want it to." If discussion always goes smoothly it can indicate a classroom dialogue that that is reproducing rather than disrupting a hegemonic values system, or as Dena says, it can indicate that students are not engaging with the material, or they are trying to "appease" the teacher. Rather than a source of worry, negative comments are an opportunity to unpack and discredit stereotypes and myths.

Kim and Dena approach discussion, reflection and inquiry based learning in ways that allow for the unexpected of the curriculum-as-lived and they find value in seemingly troubling moments. This approach nurtures teacher-student relationships that are based on reciprocity rather than authority because they place trust in their students and encourage them to speak or research issues without fear or repercussion. In return students open up, sharing personal experiences, opinions, and asking difficult questions. The rest of this section will take a closer look at Dena's pedagogy of dis/comfort.

Classroom Cultures of Openness

Dena's pedagogy of dis/comfort centers teacher-student relationships through a classroom culture of openness that is anchored on four pillars: 1) creating an atmosphere that allows space for tension, 2) mediating and facilitating difficult discussions, 3) letting students know it is alright to say the wrong thing, and 4) making sure students are okay.

Atmospheres That Allow Space for Tension. It can almost sound "cliché" to say "your classroom is a safe space and your [students] know it's a safe space for them to share ideas and for them not to be afraid." What exactly does Dena mean when she says this? In an interview, she unpacks a learning space in which students feel they can participate without being condemned:

> *Dena*: If you don't create the environment… and that's not something you do right before you introduce residential schools, that's something that has to be part of the classroom culture – and if you've created that classroom culture then it makes those [moments of tension] really impactful and it allows [students] the doorway… Too often I hear students say they are so frightened about the reaction from the teacher and from their peers as well, right? And it's a really fine balancing act because you have to… protect those students who have a close [First Nation] connection… but obviously you're protecting all kinds of different [students] in the class who connect with the issue that you're talking about… My perception from a lot of teachers is they don't want to touch it because they're afraid of the repercussions or what it might come into, what it might evolve into. So you have to either be prepared for the questions that could come… or you have to at least be able to say that "I understand what you're saying, it doesn't sit well though, there has to be something else there that causes that to happen, let's research that more and let me talk to some people so that we can dissect that or look at that.

She stresses that teachers don't have to be experts; they can learn "on the run."

> *Dena*: (*laughing*) There's nothing wrong with saying to a [student] "yeah that whole taxation issue is really confusing" And I know that a lot of teachers themselves are not prepared… to say "let's just stop, let me even say that I don't have a good understanding of it but let's try to get to the root of what's going on here." Then you're balancing the student who wants to know and you're balancing the idea that there are [students] in your class who are maybe First Nation and may not like the fact that everyone things they get a free ride.

For Dena, allowing space for tension and trusting students to bring up tensions in the most constructive way they are able to at a given moment is what creates "valuable" learning. Embracing the unpredictable can be a difficult position. As we saw above, Cristine, allows certain points of tension to arise (those written into the lesson plan) and she prepares students for these moments beforehand, but this does not create the kind of space Dena is talking about. There are consequences to allowing such a small space for the unknown to arise. An educator cannot know what preconceived ideas students are holding in their heads. A student's silence or lack of resistance can be their choice *not* to express a negative point of view. In this sense, an omission from classroom dialogue, much like an omission from a textbook or from the curriculum, does

not mean students are prejudice free. Rather, it can indicate the purposeful overlooking or unwillingness to learn from a place of dis/comfort. That goes for both teacher and student. I will illustrate this point in the next section by contrasting the ways Kate and Dena both navigate difficult discussions around stereotypes.

Navigating Difficult Discussions. Stereotypes make a practical entry point for students to critically deconstruct texts, which can be comforting for teachers who feel they're lacking historical background in Indigenous perspectives. At the same time, critically deconstructing the stereotypes in texts can still lead to a sanitized discussion. For example, Kate's class works through an article about media stereotypes of Indigenous peoples. They begin by clarifying key terms such as stereotype and historical inaccuracy, then students read sections of the article silently, and discuss each section afterward. While observing this lesson I noted in my reflective journal:

> *There is no mention of race or colonization from Kate. I think it's because she is being careful as this is the first time she is presenting this material. She uses words like "unfairness", "injustice" and "bias" – which are appropriate, but without explanation they sanitize the critical aspects of an Indigenous perspective.*

Using general (and sanitized) terminology, Kate and her class critique 'what' (i.e. images of a noble savage) represents Indigenous peoples but stop short of making crucial historical connection and asking more uncomfortable questions of 'why' and 'how' these problematic representations of Indigenous peoples have come to circulate. Moreover, her approach to analyzing stereotypes, which asks 'what' rather than 'why' and 'how' does not require the class to share opinions. This allows the teacher and students to maintain a personal distance from the topic and not risk attacking the (Western and settler colonial) value systems that portray Indigenous people and cultures in a negative light. These are serious limitations to a pedagogy of dis/comfort which is supposed to engage and work through the emotional investments people have in particular value systems.

Taking a different approach to stereotypes Dena sets up the first conversation her class will have about stereotypes with strong justification: "without frank discussion, nothing will ever get accomplished. If we don't talk about stereotypes, we'll never know why we have them and why they're not true. *This is nothing I would share with someone out of context.*" In an interview, she justifies her approach:

Everyone has some kind of preconceived opinion of someone or something – that happens, that's human, right. But it's even maybe more human when the student can step back and feel that change within himself or herself... You have to be open to the misconceptions or the stereotypes coming out in your class, and I think once kids realize that you're not just going to shut them down, that you're going to hear them out, then they'll talk about it… I had a student last semester and he'd say – he would always preface things with "this isn't going to sound good, I'm not going to say this right, but can I say it?"… And often he had something to say that was perhaps a little stereotypical but at the same time there was often lots of good in what he said, or at least you can't deal with the stereotype if it's never presented.

Significantly, I wrote about the way she handled difficult comments during class discussion in my journal:

There is one [White male student] in class who is a bit terse. A bit quick to open his mouth and reproduce stereotypes. There is some value in what he says, but sometimes he is borderline racist. Dena never changes her expression or tone when he speaks up. Sometimes other students moderate his comments by offering a counter-point. But when they don't, I've noticed Dena uses this student's moments of ignorance or contrary attitude to delve deeper into the issue. For instance, when talking about mascots, he said, "it's just a mascot". She never missed a beat and asked the class what mascots are for – they're for fun, to make the fans feel good, and to build team spirit. Then she said First Nation people and culture are more than team spirit builders. So she quietly turns his comments upside down and I'm not sure he fully notices! I think some of the others do because they build constructively on what she says or at least, they're open to hearing it.

My journal entry speaks to a classroom atmosphere where students feel safe both causing and mediating tensions. Thus, when Dena introduces stereotypes, students literally dive in to a discussion that untangles an important contradiction about stereotypes. It is worth quoting at length:

FS: It's like when people say they're not racist, but cross street when see a black person coming at night – they say its not the person but they can't get past the stereotype.
Dena: Lets unpack that. Fear is a big motivator subconsciously. Even when people tell a racist joke, they know on some level its wrong. They wouldn't say it to just anyone, and I mean a person of that race. To share a story, I was in Toronto at a conference and the leader of our session had us do a privilege walk where you step forward or backwards depending on how you would answer a question. He presented the question: have you even been hesitant when you've walked up by yourself to a group of black youth? You could see tension visibly settling into the room. People's weight shift forward and then right back like they were hesitating but no one stepped forward.
MS1: Wise.
Dena: These people worked were administrators and equity representatives from various school boards. Would I have needed to step forward? Yes. Is it right to be in that

position? I've found myself in that position and thought – I can't believe I just thought that!
MS: Were there any people of colour there?
Dena: Yes. The woman I was standing beside. The bigger question is: what forces me to step forward?
MS: Fear. Stereotypes
Dena: Where do they come from?
MS: Media, your environment.
FS: What you learn.
Dena: Media yes, not just media … You are the product of your environment. I wouldn't think less of you if you had an experienced feeling fear if a First Nation person approached you.

It is powerful when Dena as a teacher and a First Nation woman, with all of the complexity she embodies through her identity as both an authority figure and racially marginalized women, admits she has racially stereotyped people in the past, only to reprimand herself on the inside. Her admission makes a space for students to make their own admissions, or at least to give pause before they pass judgment on another person. Dena explains:

> [Students] bring those stereotypes or those biases from home and they think, 'no, I'm not buying this' or 'is this true?' But I find once you present things to students, students really are open minded for the most part, and they'll at least listen as long as you present it as 'let me give you my perspective, or at least another perspective?'… Sometimes students don't agree with me, but they're at least willing to listen. And I figure some of that's getting in there so at least they're going to be more critical in the next time someone says 'Oh, those lazy Indians.' They're going to have some frame of reference that will at least make them question, even if it's only to themselves, what's being said.

Even with a teacher's careful navigation of a class discussion, there is always the fear of saying the wrong thing, as we will see in the next section.

Saying the Wrong Thing. Having created a space in which students can speak freely without being condemned, constant reinforcement of that safety (comforting) is needed because, says Dena, "obviously it causes problems" when "you have students who are willing to say unpopular things but they are unpopular things that need to be said… so the class can see this is a microcosm of society and these are some of the opinions that exist." A part of constant reinforcement is reminding students it is okay to be wrong.

> *Dena*: Whose traditional territory are we on?
> *FNFS*: Ojibwe.

> *MS*: I was going to say that but didn't want to be wrong.
> *Dena*: Don't be afraid to be wrong.

Dena's words are counterintuitive for students who are used to an education system that often rewards a correct answer. We can trace the value of being 'right' through the statement by this male student (MS): a) he wishes to be factually (objectively) accurate, b) he does not want to feel (subjectively) ignorant in front of his peers, c) phrased another way, his statement as a response speaks (normatively) of a value system where there is credibility attached to the terms of right and wrong. In response to the dialogue above, Dena offers reassurance, "you don't know what you don't know; you don't know what you've never been taught" as a way to encourage students to speak even when they were unsure. In another instance, when Dena first introduces the concept of a First Nation worldview by asking students to sit in a tight circle, she tells them the circle "may be very different from a Western worldview. What do you think I mean by that?" The only visibly Black male student in the room immediately says, "White people" then quickly laughs at his own words to break any tension. Quickly meeting discomfort with comfort, Dena reassures, "It's okay to say it – White people – you're referring to colonizers. We'll try not to use that term but in honesty – sometimes I use it. If it bothers anyone we'll stop." It never comes up again as students choose instead to say "colonizer" or as another student suggests, "Europeans or settlers."

A part of student discomfort is a fear of saying the wrong thing to a First Nation person out of ignorance. During my classroom observations Dena's class was preparing to consult with a panel of community members from two local First Nations before undertaking a research project. The class had decided to create a documentary to educate their peers about the history of colonialism in Canada, treaties, and residential schools, and to advocate to the school board for mandatory education of Indigenous perspectives. Since the guests would be coming to meet at the school, Dena asks for a student volunteer to open the circle discussion by acknowledging the land.

> *Dena*: Does anyone want to honour traditional territory that we're on? A lot of meetings are starting this way now.
> *MS1*: I think *you* should.
> *FS*: I don't think she should. We have to acknowledge that we've learned, that this wasn't our land before we came here.
> *Dena*: Are you afraid to do that?

MS1: I'm definitely not comfortable.
Dena: Is anyone willing to be okay in your discomfort and try it? Let's have a conversation. Why are you fearful of acknowledging the traditional lands of First Nation people?
MS: We're not used to doing it.
FS/MS: What if we offend them?
Dena: At the conference I recently attended it was clear that most people don't do this because they're afraid. So why not acknowledge your fear, and say "I want to acknowledge that I'm uncomfortable because I don't know how to do this properly but I'm going to try.
FS: What does it mean to First Nation people to have the land acknowledged?
FS: They value the land so much.
Dena: It says you care enough to understand. This is really important traditional territory and there is a lot of power in acknowledging that.

Eventually a student volunteers to acknowledge the land and Dena works with her after class to practice what she will say. Taking the extra time comforts students because they want to show respect but cannot hide the fact they are nervous. Before the community members arrived the next day I noted in my observations:

> *The class is in the library and chairs are in a circle. There are so many extra chairs for the guests that even I am a little intimidated. Some students are practicing the greetings and the thank yous they plan to say. Dena tells a male student that another guest has arrived unexpectedly and asks him if he will give her a tobacco pouch. He agrees but seems nervous. The students pace around. Dena tells them they can sit at the circle, but no one sits down.*

They are so worried they will say the wrong thing because they know how important it is to reach out and build a new relationship with Indigenous peoples. If worry can foreshadow disaster, it certainly does for these students. Once the circle conversation with First Nation community members was underway someone did say the wrong thing.

The male student I have identified throughout as *MS1* addressed the panel: "I had a question about residential school survivors. Why call them *survivors* when the point wasn't to kill them?" Either unable to read the room, or too caught up in his question, the student plows through the awkward silence that instantly takes hold. "Two of us were looking it up the other day and we saw that only a small percent of students were killed – like 4%, I read." The silence continues for a moment, and then, as if thinking the silence was an invitation to keep speaking, the student does so. He reiterates his first point with more certainty. Too much certainty. The

question is now more a challenge than mere wondering. A First Nation student clenches her fists and her stare drives daggers into the floor. After a short eternity of dead silence a First Nation community member whispers, "Not small. A lot." Then a second guest on the panel, a respected educator and residential school survivor explains:

> Don't believe everything you read. When I go to the cemetery where my brother was buried I see so many students who didn't survive. I was walking across the lawn of my old residential school one day and my friend pointed and said "They used to bury the babies over there." I know how babies got to residential school. I know how that worked. Kevin Annett estimates 50% were killed. How many do you think went to residential schools? There was a government estimate of 125 000, but 85 000 survivors are still alive today. I was the fourth generation in my community so many of the survivors before me had already passed. They say survivor because w*e survived the ordeal*. The UN has called it a plan of genocide to "kill the Indian in the child." It's not your body, it's your sprit that counts. They kill your spirit. When you look in someone's eyes and there's no one there it means their spirit is dead.

The space was safe for comments, but was the space safe *from* comments? Just as this moment reverberated among students and teachers, I will come back to 'the survivor question' in later sections to explore its meaning and ethical implications.

Making Sure Students are Okay. Difficult moments like the *survivor question* place students, teachers and guests in a position where everyone is in need of *comforting*, of reassurance that the discomforting work they do is important. "The way you react to students – you can't condemn them you have to support them and you have to protect that other child. It's that fine balance," acknowledges Dena. This can be a pivotal point in the teacher-student relationship as teachers carry their own personal biases and have emotional investments that bear upon their response. One of the biggest responsibilities for a teacher is not letting those biases dictate a harsh or judgmental response, and instead making sure students are okay. It is not always a matter of asking. After class on the day of the *genocide conversation* Dena explains:

> I have students in the class who do self-identify as First Nation, so I always take extra care to make sure that emotionally they are okay. I saw some kids in the hall today and I stopped them and made sure they were okay… Yesterday one of my students was fuming, and I knew she was fuming…she said, 'I'm really worked up right now. I'm fuming. I'm boiling!' And I said, 'that's okay, that's perfectly fine reaction to have' I said, 'I have to keep that reaction in check as the teacher but I understand that you have that. That's okay and you shouldn't be afraid to speak' and she's like, 'but I don't want to stifle conversation cause I'm going to say something that I might not want to say.' She felt like she was going to explode yesterday. I said that's fine too. But then I said, 'I hope you

understand that I'm taking this step by step and letting it unfold and gradually hoping that guiding students to understand the topic better.' And she's like, 'oh, I totally get that. I like what's going on.' It's just – it's been taxing for her.... And she also, you know, she did reveal to me, she said, um, you know it's just so hard because people question us all the time… about her motives… about my whiteness and how much blood I have and, so those have been really good conversations because I can share stories with her and we can talk about some of those things so that her identity is validated.

Reflecting on the difficult conversations their class had, students explain:

Gen: [Teachers] have to find a way to make sure every student feels comfortable talking. That it's an okay place. Because sometimes you know, I'd want to say something but then I'd think 'no I shouldn't' because I just feel like people are going to yell at me.
Fay: Or people don't listen. Those are the two things.
Gen: Sometimes I think the teacher has to stand up for people who are trying to speak and say, "can we listen to them first?" or something like that.
Eric: But they can't not teach it because people feel uncomfortable.
Gen: Yeah.
Eric: … They could help the person through it. But they still have to provide people with like, the learning.

The comments made by Gen and Fay reveal that even in the atmosphere of Dena's class, listening and speaking are not always reciprocal or respected. In this atmosphere, Gen and Fay hesitate to feel safe speaking openly. Their comments indicate that their peers are hearing but not actually listening to them. Here, I mean listening with the intent to understand and engage instead of waiting to speak again and assert an opinion. The breakdown in listening is something I will return to in upcoming sections as it has consequences for ethical engagements in the learning space.

Fay was open enough to share how the discussions affected her on a personal level:

It has made me deal with the issues head on. Like most of the emotional parts and all that I've only talked about with my own family… Most of the time I am not having a good time, honestly. Like, I did get too emotional, but its' good to get through. I feel accomplished after I sit through it. I'm like, 'okay, yeah I can deal with it'… It's mainly opinions and emotions that are brought up. There's not much you can help with it. [You] have to be able to let it go and then everyone has to be able to collect themselves back together and be able to work. The only problem would be if people aren't willing to do that. But we usually get together as a class and then talk again the next day.

What keeps Fay going is knowing that an opinion or a difficult day is not final. Working through dis/comfort is an ongoing emotional process. Though Dena does not always talk about the emotional impact that teaching Indigenous perspectives has on her, it is clear the *survivor*

question hit a nerve. In the days that followed, I could see her attempts to make *all* students understand the impact of residential schools from a survivor's point of view were exhausting to her and began to wear on students. This teacher who normally recognizes everyone is at their own place in the learning journey, could not seem to let it go. As I wrote in my reflective journal:

> *On her third attempt to discuss 'survivors' she wrote the quote, "Survivors have scars; victims have graves" on the chalkboard. No one would engage the quote and revisit the survivor question for a third time, so with a small sigh of defeat, she moved on.*

There are limits to dis/comfort. Dena had found her limit when her emotional investment failed to recognize limits of her students. As for the male student who had asked the 'survivor question,' Dena had a keen sense of his limits. I noted in my journal:

> *As soon as her last student was out the door Dena came over to me almost with an eagerness to talk – with relief. She said it's so tough for the students to confront what's in their own backyards - the discomfort of some students is so apparent. MS1 in particular, she says, has to make everything a joke to ease his discomfort because he's so resistant to showing any emotion. Yesterday he'd come up to her and put his arm on her shoulders to tell her she was "the best", and then he caught himself and quickly made a joke. I said it was effective that when he's not serious she never indulges him, and never lets him get under her skin. She said that's why a lot of other teachers lose him. I'm glad she realizes he's not just a joker for the sake of being in idiot, and that she sees it's a struggle for him to connect with emotion. I may have missed that to an extent. She said… it's a struggle for some [students] to connect the legacy of colonialism and of residential schools to reconciliation and what that requires of everyone.*

In the dis/comfort relationship each person must come part way. The reciprocity is lost if some of those involved carry the most of the weight of an emotional burden while others refuse to be moved. Even an experienced teacher like Dena has moments of struggle. A pedagogy of dis/comfort requires a delicate balance of students, teachers, and community members working together. As they all agree, it is necessary, difficult, and rewarding.

To conclude, dis/comfort is a collective struggle that is experienced differently by teachers, students, community members and researchers alike. We respond by comforting each other, with encouragement, with private conversations that happened after the bell, or simply by asking someone if they were okay. *Discomfort* was met with *comforting*, and as such it was a pedagogy as well as a relationship. Learning from a place of discomfort required continuous reassurance and encouragement – or comforting. To use Dena's word, this is a difficult but necessary "balance" where comfort and discomfort are like two sides of a coin, each of equal

importance acting as a counterweight. Thus, discomfort and comfort are relational, but also a way of relating. In the context of addressing the legacy of colonialism in Canada, it is fitting to think of dis/comfort as a relationship that extends beyond the teacher-student relationship, and to school administrators, families, and broader local communities. Working through dis/comfort requires a relationship of sharing and listening, where engagements are collective and ethicality is paramount. Thus, I see a dis/comfort as a way of responding to the current need for curriculum of reconciliation that is more inclusive of Indigenous worldviews, and for non-Indigenous people to rethink and rebuild their relationship with Indigenous communities.

Part 2: A Pedagogical Praxis for Reconciliation

Reconciliation means many things to many people. Addressing an audience of educators and researchers at the University of Ottawa, Senator Murray Sinclair (2015) recalled that the TRC had heard over 130 definitions of reconciliation from survivors, churches, and lawyers, all of these definitions representing different views. The pedagogical praxis for reconciliation outlined in what follows is not guided by a single definition, rather the belief one's understanding of reconciliation, what it involves, and where their roles and responsibilities lie, is part of a journey. Moreover, it offers a framework for approaching reconciliation rather than a description of content. During my time at River HS the students from Dena, Kim, and Julie's classes took an active role in the process of reconciliation through their respective summative unit projects. Dena's students designed their own project and created a documentary to raise awareness among their peers about the history of treaties, residential schools, and the importance of including Indigenous perspectives in the school curriculum. Kim's students undertook research projects about a locally relevant Indigenous issue and then made a piece of art related to what they learned and presented the art to a local residential school survivor. Julie's students also made art pieces for residential school survivors based on their learning.

For Julie and Dena, a pedagogical praxis for reconciliation goes beyond a content-based integration of Indigenous perspectives. Julie asks reflectively, "we want people to know what happened, but… *what is the purpose of knowing?"* Indeed, being aware of and even acknowledging the history can teach us "what" happened, but it might teach us *about* rather than

through. Something more is needed: what do Indigenous and non-Indigenous people need to know to be able to relate to each other more ethically and more constructively? This question guides Dena in a pedagogical approach where reconciliation and the integration of Indigenous perspectives are intertwined. Her goal is to help students get to "level of understanding" where they are "moved" to reach out in ways that are respectful and appropriate and "take action to make change." She aims to leave students with not only an understanding of the past, but also "a practical lesson" for the future: "understanding that they can work with [First Nation people] but not be the saviour" and "understanding that [their] own humanity is influenced directly by what's happening to me as well." Dena continues to explain why her pedagogical praxis and why schooling must actively take part in the process of reconciliation.

> If we don't make a concerted group effort to understand First Nation issues better, then it seems cliché, but those historical patterns are just going to continue. I mean you're going to continue to have cases like Ipperwash and cases like Caledonia and cases like Oka. And we see them play out in the media all the time… if we don't deal with it now then we're still going to be scratching our heads 10 years from now saying ok now what are we going to do?

For Dena, systemic patterns of ignorance run deep, carrying with them the broken dialogues of dysfunction and misunderstanding. She sees a key role for education in addressing the disconnect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. She continues:

> [Educators]… have to be the vehicle through which students see the history and the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, but how do you do that when the majority of people out there teaching that stuff themselves need so much education?

The gap in educators' knowledge, or learned ignorance, brings us to the beginning of our journey through a pedagogical praxis for reconciliation. I have chosen to move through this pedagogical praxis in a four-part framework drawn from the TRC Executive Summary report (2015), which explains:

> [R]econciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior. (p. 6)

As students developed a deeper understanding they moved through awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action. This rest of this chapter follows their journey.

Beginning the Journey: Awareness

"People don't know about it – they have to know the basics before they can develop a comfort zone and work through the impacts," says residential school survivor Susie Jones. "I never know where to start when speaking to a group because some of them may have no knowledge of residential schools but others may have some, so I always ask them, and start with the beginning." Beginnings are daunting. How do we capture in words the need for reconciliation in Canada? As one First Nation community member and residential school survivor explained:

> It's criminal for Canada not to tell this history – because what happened was criminal. It was genocide, kidnapping, child abuse, and I could go on and name more. That's what it was and that's what we must call it. As people, you must learn your history in order to learn what you're capable of.

Each of the three classes taking part in reconciliation starts from a different place. Julie struggles to "engage" her Grade 10 applied English class and help them find "connections" to their own lives in the material. As I explained earlier, there is a definite lack of awareness of Indigenous perspectives in the room when she asks her students if anyone of them know about residential schools only one student raises his hand. From the almost imperceptible nod of heads I suspect there may have been a couple other students who were somewhat familiar with residential schools. A glance around the room shows many blank faces and shaking heads.

Kim's students, who are taking Grade 12 academic English, have much more awareness of residential schools and are used to approaching literature and the related topics they researched with a critical lens. To enhance their reading of the novel *Three Day Road* the class spends time researching and discussing of the politics of apologizing for residential schools and the treatment of First Nation soldiers and veterans. All of Kim's students undertake research projects related to the novel. For her project, one student decides to gauge her peers' attitudes toward First Nation people. She visits a number of classes around the school and on a post-it note asks students to write the first word that came to mind when she says "First Nation." She creates a poster with the responses. There are responses that acknowledge: culture, diversity, family, environment, dance, residential schools, abuse, showing some students to have a level of understanding. However, to stand back and look at the poster, the most common word is "feathers." In fact, the majority of

words that came to students' minds are linked cultural imagery or stereotypes: feathers, tomahawk, drums, brave, calm, long hair, coloured, drugs, lack of education. Still, the response "waste of space" sends shock waves through students, and remains a topic of conversation among Kim and Dena's students for the space of a week. First impression responses are confidential, but the students all know who wrote "waste of space" - a well-respected "academic student who they would never have expected it from" Dena explains to me. Too many of the first impressions show a lack of attention to substantive issues to which reconciliation seeks to raise awareness. Does it mean students lack awareness? I argue that it does. Continuing to associate First Nation people with stereotypes indicates that students lack the understanding to dispel those stereotypes and lack exposure to more genuine representations. The first impressions are a troubling indication of where the curriculum has failed to cultivate respectful awareness for these students, particularly the one who felt comfortable publicly disrespecting First Nation people.

Dena makes reconciliation a centerpiece of her unit. Students in her Grade 11 academic English who have taken a class with her before have a background in First Nation perspectives. From observing their class discussions there are a number of students in the class who, for a number of reasons such as prior learning or family connections, are well versed on the issues and confident in their opinions. Still that does not mean everyone is familiar with reconciliation.

> *Dena*: What does the word reconciliation mean to you?
> *MS*: No idea.
> *MS*: Never heard it.
> *MS*: To meet with someone again, make amends.
> *Dena*: Reconciliation is an important word when talking about the relationship between First Nation and non-First Nation people (or with Canada in general).

Students are unbothered and matter-of-fact that they have never heard of reconciliation. They are not disbelieving, but rather content in their ignorance. This snapshot of the three classes shows not only the need for awareness but also the reality that everyone joins the conversation from a different place.

Reconciliation is Personal and Collective: Acknowledgement

If willful ignorance is a barrier to awareness, acknowledgement presents its own set of challenges such as resistance and denial. Acknowledgement is the part of reconciliation that prevents you from ignoring what you know. There are times in Julie and Dena's classes when acknowledgement becomes a contentious issue. I wrote in my journal:

Julie told me what happened in her class yesterday. She showed a YouTube video Proud to Be about ceasing to use Native American mascots. Then students looked at a number of mascots, most of which depicted Native American cultures. She asked her students if they thought it was okay. Before anyone could raise a hand to answer, one student spoke out and said, "if people don't like it they're being too sensitive and need to get over it." To Julie, it seemed like the majority of the class took a similar view even if they didn't voice it… She says she tried to make them see how a native person would feel about being (mis)represented as a mascot but no one would listen… Julie says a lot of the negative comments are just things the students have heard before and are now choosing to repeat. They don't think about what it means to say those things.

Julie's students would not acknowledge the connection between the colonial past (and present) and team spirit in the present. This historical disconnect, amplified by glaring gaps in their knowledge of colonial history in Canada and Indigenous perspectives, leading them to believe the grievances of Indigenous peoples were unfounded. Awareness is an important building block towards acknowledgement. Even with a level of awareness that surpassed Julie's students, Dena's class also struggled with acknowledgement in their conversations about genocide.

MS1: I don't think Holocaust is gonna happen again.
Dena: What about genocides that have happened since then? Rwanda…
MS: How many people died there?
MS1: Like, twelve.
Dena: All kinds of genocides have happened since Holocaust where we're culpable and have chosen to watch as nations.
MS: (*seeing at the number of estimated Rwandans killed appear on the phone of the student beside him*) That's crazy!
MS: 800 000 to 2 million.
Dena: What do you know of the Jewish population now? Do we associate drugs and alcoholism with them?
MS: No.
Dena: Does it seem like their healing process is farther along?
MS: Yes.
MS: We teach, we recognize, we talk about the Holocaust, we educate.
Dena: A key point is this: many First Nation people would say this country refuses to acknowledge. The Holocaust been recognized. Think about the social consequences of being a Holocaust denier. It's not looked upon favourably. There's a lot of power in acknowledgement.
MS: To reconcile we need to recognize.

In this range of responses, MS1 struggles to acknowledge anything outside the Holocaust as genocide and dismisses the Rwandan genocide with sarcasm by suggesting only twelve people died. He hears the conversation and participates in it, but from his dismissive comments we see another instance of what Gen and Fay have identified as a refusal or failure to listen to different

opinions and evidence. From the other students there is surprise at their lack of knowledge. As the conversation continues the class began to divide between those convinced genocide did not happen in Canada, those convinced that it did, and those who were still trying to wrap their head around the whole proposition. Then something happens that is pivotal in changing the tone and opinion of the room:

> *MS*: I just looked up genocide and I found a list of the top 10 genocides in history and the Native American genocide is #5.
> *The room goes silent. The student adds that he's quoting a source from the UK.*
> *Dena*: The Human Rights museum in Winnipeg is not called the genocide museum. If countries can rank the Native American higher than many other known genocides, they can acknowledge it. Why would we not want to acknowledge?
> *MS*: Why would we deny it?
> *MS*: It doesn't make sense that people would want to hide it.
> *Dena*: Listen to what you're saying: "I can't believe that people want to deny we tried to systematically eradicate an entire people." Imagine a First Nation person saying that and you can turn it on its head.
> *MS*: It's hard to see the whole picture if you're on the inside.
> *MS*: I'm thinking of people who say the Holocaust is a hoax. It's like the same thing to not acknowledge the genocide in North America. It's like it's in the background.
> *MS*: Like it didn't matter.
> *Dena*: You're almost left asking is one worse than the other: denying outright that it ever happened versus ignoring it and not acknowledging.
> *A MS agrees.*
> *Dena*: I think that's a big thing happening in our country and a grave problem maybe more than you realize. It's really hard to look at yourself and acknowledge you're doing something wrong.
> *A FS agrees.*
> *Dena*: There are also legal and political ramifications for acknowledging the word genocide. It could bury a political party if they acknowledged it and it would cost a lot in litigation.

Of all the moments I witnessed during classroom observations I will never forget the humble silence that fills the room as students realize the rest of the world (or at least part of it) is one giant step ahead of them in terms of acknowledging the bodies buried in their own back yard. After this conversation not everyone is ready to *acknowledge*, but there are definite changes of opinion, and students who are still unsure are interested in learning more. Dena recalls:

> One of my students seemed really focused on understanding what genocide was more precisely. So he um, he did, he Googled… and he found the UN definition of genocide basically. And he started to read through the articles and he said, 'you gotta look at this'… he said, 'genocide is the killing of… but it's also…' and he just went through the

different points and he said, 'it all applies.' So it was – that was a good moment. And then it [helped] some other kids who were kind of struggling.

Some students from Dena's class who contribute in a focus group agree that acknowledgement of the colonial relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must happen on a broad level. In a focus group, Fay, a First Nation student says "[i]f it's not talked about by anybody else then nothing's going to happen, ever. Like it's better to start with something small and try to work your way up to it than to just ignore the whole problem." For Cam, a Vietnamese-Canadian student from Kim's class, acknowledgement is about the details of personal experiences. He explains this point criticizing words such as *genocide* or *abuse* for generalizing, failing to capture the depth of impact and lumping a wide range of traumatic experiences into one word for a sanitizing effect.

> Everyone hears about residential schools being like, 'oh, they go abused, killed' – it's just single one-worded things explained. And it's like, ok they were abused, they died. But when you read about it, they were beaten heavily… and even after they were beaten, they would still get hit. That really kicks in.

For Cam, it is problematic to lump many stories together into a singular narrative of victimhood because it can distance the listener. In contrast, it is much harder not to acknowledge someone's experience when told through a personal story rather than generalized as fact. When introducing the topic of residential schools, Dena tells specific stories about the Mohawk Institute, a former residential school in Southern Ontario.

> *Dena*: If you ever have a chance to go to the Mush hole, go. The guide will tell you that student experiences were diff depending on the time period you attended. When they take you on the tour they will tell you that punishments included being locked in broom closet, tied to pipes and beaten, and if you go down in to the basement there is this long narrow hallway where they used to line up the students on either side and literally force two boys to have basically a human cock fight in the center. You don't leave those situations unbroken. Even if its not happening to you, what you see stays with you.
> *Dena*: What happens when people are that broken?
> *FNFS*: Drugs and alcohol.
> *MS*: Mental health problems.
> *FNFS*: Violence.
> *Dena*: Remember the stereotypes of First Nation people we came up with at the beginning of class today? Do you see where some of those stereotypes come from? If you talk to First Nation people, no one will deny the problems, but you can't heal unless you understand where the problems come from. It is the same for Canadian society. It's as much about you: we all don't heal as a collective if we don't all understand.

It is a powerful moment because she is passing on stories that have been told to her, but they are also specific and they paint a picture of someone's experience.

Grappling with Reconciliation: Atonement

To *atone* is to be "at one." How can we be *at one* on a national (or nation to nation) level, and on a personal level? Kim's students spend part of one period exploring the significance of the government and church apologies for residential schools. As they share excerpts of apologies and (apologist) accounts they find on line are quick to criticize "sanitized" church apologies and "ridiculous" testimonies from priests and nuns who taught in residential schools, which they feel give "bias account of their compassion" and "were covering up for sure."

Dena's students also talk about the official government apology for residential schools:

Dena: Does anyone know what is hanging in the front hallway of the school?
(*Students name a few things but no one can seem to figure out what she is getting at. So we walk down the hall. There, across from the main office and beside display cases of trophies and wall-mounted plaques is a statement of the Government of Canada 2008 apology for residential schools. It is mounted on a place as well and arranged among photos of a former student who does a traditional dance. Dena asks why they think it's there.*)
MS: Was this a former residential school site?
Dena: No.
MS: For any First Nation people in the school.
MS: For everyone.
Dena: Yes. There is one other thing should go with it but that is missing… An acknowledgement of traditional Anishinaabe lands.

Dena and the students talk about what the plaque might signify to a First Nation person who is coming into the school as a guest. It is a small but public act of reparation, and a gesture of welcome, bearing in mind the complex relationship First Nation people have with the education system. It prompts students to consider the meaning and substance of apologies: from the government and churches apologies for residential school are necessary, but a mere token in the larger picture of reconciliation because they lack sincerity and a commitment to change.

Fay: The apology is for residential schools, like it's not for everything that's happened.
Gen: The apology – people who know about it are like, 'oh, well the government apologized for that and so you know, that's ok then.' But that doesn't make anything better. That doesn't change people. It's just what the government did because they were

bothered into doing it (laughs)… And like, why would you have to bother someone for an apology? Then it's not even genuine, right?
Fay: It still doesn't solve the issue at all.
Gen: No. They ruined your whole life and generations after and then its like, 'Oh, sorry. Woops.' It's like if someone punched you in the face was like, 'Oh, I'm sorry.' Like, okay, I still have a black eye.

With the shortcomings of an apology in mind, Dena's students write a letter of reconciliation think through what reconciliation means to each of them on a personal level. The letter could be an open letter to Canadians, to the prime minister, or to a family member or residential school survivor. To understand reconciliation, a lot of research goes into the letters behind the scenes that I couldn't see as a classroom observer. Students would look things up on their phones or outside of school hours and only some of their findings would make it back to class discussions. Dena stresses to students "your letters are a work in progress because there's a lot more you probably feel you need to learn." She offered to give feedback to anyone who wanted it, explaining that feedback would help develop their thinking. Indeed, it did. A few days later the class has a conversation about what needs to happen in Canada to move the process of reconciliation forward. Drawing on their letters:

> *FS*: I talk about how reconciliation doesn't mean just the government; it's the whole population in Canada.
> *FNFS*: My letter addresses Canadians as a whole. Everyone needs to learn and it's going to take a long time because we're still forgetting about it; I don't think reconciliation will never be full because people don't want to change.
> *FS*: Yeah, like, they don't want to give anything up.
> *MS*: I talked about the Holocaust and how there's awareness of that because school actually teaches it. A big thing is awareness. People need to be aware.
> *FNFS*: There's other things people need to be aware of, like what happened to families.
> *FS*: It should be included more in education. It's important for an apology to come from the government, but also from students.
> *FNFS*: That's why if its not taught, those things can happen again.
> *MS*: It can't be forgotten. That's the worst.
> *FS*: Reconciliation has to *become* possible – if students left it up to the education system it would not be taught in some cases, or it would be biased.
> *MS*: And churches too…

There are also moments when atoning seems out of reach. About a week after the 'survivor question,' when the student MS1 asked a panel for First Nation community members including a residential school survivor why they called themselves 'survivors' if the point was not to kill

them, Dena wanted to have a conversation to talk through what was still bothering her. I noted in my journal:

> *Dena reiterated that it's difficult to make MS1 see from everyone else's perspective. She had a chat with him in her office yesterday (with the Vice Principal present – her 'teacher mind' didn't want them to be alone). I think that must have been intimidating. A meeting with your teacher and a VP to address your conduct would be hard-pressed not to send the message you did something wrong. She said MS1 was quite humbled because he realized his classmates were talking about him and not in a nice way – 'they think I'm a mean person' is what he'd said. She keeps asking him to empathize, and for a student who does not like to connect with emotions, I wonder if she would be better off asking him to see the validity in a survivor having their own opinion on whether or not they are a survivor, rather than having someone else decide for them.*

With an emotional connection to the *survivor question* Dena wants her student admit he was wrong, and atone for that wrong. It becomes a normative struggle of what one ought to do after causing harm to another. When he doesn't atone, she calls him into a meeting with the Vice Principal, which perhaps makes him feel sorry for something else - being a "mean person" – but he is made to feel sorry just the same. Hearing about this meeting didn't sit right with me because it seemed that the student's personal readiness to atone was being forced under the watchful eye of school authorities. At the time, we still didn't understand *why* he did it, and why his values could seem so aligned with reconciliation at one moment and so opposed the next. Certainly, he spoke out of turn in class, but we later came to understand that his refusal had more to do with his personal experiences than mere stubbornness. Those ethical implications I discuss in the next chapter.

Reconciliation in Practice: Action

There are two components to "action" in this pedagogical praxis for reconciliation: student led projects and First Nation community consultation, even collaboration. I was able to gather stories and experiences based on two projects for reconciliation that Dena's classes undertook, one while I was there in which they began to research and create a documentary, and another project some students had previously completed in which they made PSAs (public service announcements).

Documentary. How do we as high school students, become active participants in the process of reconciliation? This is the guiding question for the unit assignment that Dena's class produced together during and after the period of my classroom observations. Dena introduces the question about halfway through their unit. By that time, students have read and discussed most of the novel *Three Day Road* and the class has taken part in circle discussions that included the topics: First Nation worldviews, postcolonial critique, stereotypes, residential schools, and genocide. Land and treaties, though largely omitted until now, would become another topic for discussion within reconciliation. Moreover, students are also working on personal letters of reconciliation. The entirety of instructions Dena provides for the unit assignment are:

1. Complete a mini-research project that looks into the work of the TRC.
2. Discover what reconciliation means and apply it to your understanding of First Nation issues.
3. Take action: work as group to decide how to address the guiding question in order to make reconciliation meaningful to you and to First Nation people.

The class works together to design a project. Dena reminds them, "you're only limited by your own imaginations. Think what you can do to move process of reconciliation ahead… it's important we're open to ideas and respectful." Many students seem interested in creating a project, however, more than a couple jaws drop when she explains:

> *Dena*: In First Nation communities, you don't do things without asking permission from the right people, especially important decisions. Those are always done with an Elder's consultation. Likewise, you'll do the same thing. Together as a class, you will come up with a plan for your unit assignment, and you will present your plan to residential school survivors and community members. Aside from the idea of worldviews, and consultation being important in a First Nation worldview, why is this the right thing to do?
> *FNFS*: To not let your own perspective get in the way.
> *FS*: We don't want it to seem like we pity them.
> *MS*: So we don't have misconceptions or display false info.

The students articulate ethical considerations that highlight the importance of consulting First Nation community members, and also show a progression of their understanding of Indigenous perspectives. Not letting their own perspective get in the way reminds us that reconciliation cannot be approached from one's own worldview alone. Not wanting to show pity is mindful that a patronizing attitude or desire to play the saviour is harmful rather than helpful. Not wanting to

carry forward misconceptions is an acknowledgement that participating in reconciliation requires listening and relearning.

The importance of consultation does not ease the dis/comfort of students. In the days that follow, students have a number of circle discussions to decide what kind of project they would undertake for reconciliation. Their consensus is "reconciliation has to be about education somehow," and more specifically, that something needs to be "implemented in education." Dena points out that "changing the curriculum is not going to happen, but changing how it is presented is possible." Students wrestle with the idea of doing something immediate, such as educating their peers at the school. The drawback "is that it would only reach our community. Reaching the education system would have a longer impact" such as pressuring the board to make Indigenous perspectives mandatory in history classes. Their goal becomes twofold: to educate their peers on the history of colonialism in Canada, treaties, and residential schools, and to advocate to the school board for mandatory education of Indigenous perspectives.

As I explained earlier, students invite a panel of First Nation community members to their school where they had a circle discussion about the documentary. Students explain the goals for their documentary and ask for advice on what to include and how to ensure what they produced would be respectful. First Nation community members, including residential school survivors help the students understand their documentary as telling a story. As one community member explains during a circle discussion with students:

> It's important not to take just a small piece, but to show how the bigger picture is connected. Start with the history and keep going through each time period. It might look like a timeline to show how each time period/each piece builds upon the last. You're telling a story. You're all storytellers.

While residential schools are a large part of their research focus, students see that they have to understand residential schools within a larger historical and colonial context. They begin to think of their documentary in chapters and eventually decided to tell the story in five parts: an introduction, misconceptions of First Nation peoples, the Indian Act, treaties, and residential schools.

The same community member also helps students understand how they might be respectful in their story telling:

>When you interview our people keep in mind it's their story. You can't find the facts in the library. It's not government approved. It is our truth, our story and experience. Who is better to tell it than a firsthand person? It means a lot to have someone who wants to listen so we can share our story.

Students embrace the First Nation perspective that one's story is one's truth and set out to create a documentary that weaves the storied truths they will record in interviews with factual historical truths they find through research.

To state the obvious, taking action is not easy. Working together on the documentary was certainly *not* easy. After the *survivor question*, which happens during their consultation with First Nation community members, the class has some heated conversations and they have to decide whether they can continue to work toward their goal for reconciliation. Some students feel it is deeper than a difference of opinion; it is a matter of respect and acknowledgement. It hurts these students to hear one of their peers say that former students of residential schools have no right to call themselves survivors.

>*Dena*: MS1, what was [the panel's] reaction after your question about survivors? How did you feel about it?
>*MS1*: To be honest it was kind of bull crap. They weren't killing them off.
>*MS*: What?!? It's -
>*IMS*: It's not like they were trying to kill them off!
>*FS*: It's not a difference of opinion – it's offensive! Like, you're saying what happened isn't a big deal.
>*IMS*: I didn't say not a big deal.
>*MS*: Dude, back down.
>*MS*: It's like you think you know more about the topic than you actually do.
>*IMS*: Maybe that's true, but nothing is going to change my opinion. I've studied this for 3 years in a row now.
>*FNFS*: But you haven't really gotten into it.
>*(At least 3 FS burry their face in their palm.)*
>…
>*MS1*: Say you survived a shark attack – you're a survivor. Residential school wasn't trying to kill them. It was 96% that survived! 97%!
>*Dena*: Ok, first of all -
>*Her voice is cut off as several MS challenge MS1 with ridiculous examples of what constitutes a survivor.*
>*Dena*: Guys! We can get caught up in technicalities and that's almost preventing you from learning. If you put that wall up – and I see adults do it all the time – it closes you off and then people get angry and say they're not talking about it.

In this less than cordial atmosphere, Dena asks the class to anonymously submit a vote of 'yes,' 'no,' or 'unsure' with a brief explanation of why they do or do not want to continue with the documentary. She explains that it is part of consensus building.

> *Dena asks if the project can go forward. In her conversations with students there was concern about not being on same page. A number of male students feel the class is still on the same page when it comes to wanting to bring awareness to Aboriginal histories and current issues despite the disagreement.*
> MS: We're going to learn so much more by continuing. In life there will be situations where you don't agree but have to work with a group.
> FS: I don't really know if we can go on with the documentary. We have to have same goal, and we have to have empathy and consider people's emotions.
> *Dena*: What if you were to quit?
> FS: Nothing would change.
> *FNFS*: That's what's happening all the time in the bigger picture.
> *Dena*: It's important to work through rather than pretend it's too hard to work through – that's what society has done.
> MS: Disagreements are not all bad.
> *Dena*: Great things can come from conflict and organizations that squash conflict do not grow. However, it's important to be empathetic because of the emotional impact it has on people. We need to be able to talk to each other in order to progress. As you go on from this class, my hope is that you'll be brave enough to work through conflict rather than walk away.

The students do not want their project to be another failed attempt at reconciliation. They realize they will not be able to accomplish all they wish for, and instead decide it is important to do what they can. It is a hard lesson but a valuable one, and in the end they create something they can be proud of.

Public Service Announcement (PSA). Two students sat down with me in a focus group and shared their experience of the PSA project at length. They had completed the project one year earlier, for grade 10 academic English, so our discussion was a combination of the students looking back on their experience and connecting it to the present. The environmental issue Jess decided to address in her PSA was fracking:

> We had got a bunch of different perspectives on it. We interviewed someone from an oil company out of London, and then we interviewed the Mayor and then the Chief from [a local] First Nation to get all the different perspectives on it…. The first one we talked to was the guy from the oil company. And we had a good conversation but it was more like informational, like it wasn't really opinion based that much. So then we met with the Chief … and we talked about how fracking affects the water, and that was the biggest

issue with fracking was that chemicals leak into the water and it effects the water…So we had a really good conversation. It was about 45 min to an hour about all of these issues. And then, the interesting thing was after I met with the Mayor and… I brought up some of the things that the Chief said, and what he said was 'well, First Nation people are *emotional* people, and the Chief is an *emotional* man,' like, 'that's why he has an issue with it.' So he kind of like, just fluffed off all the issues that the Chief raised.

Jess' disapproval of the Mayor's comments comes with a valuable learning experience because she sees firsthand the way political rhetoric and a First Nation worldview are completely at odds when it comes to environmental issues. Ian's PSA looked at:

the Aamjiwnaang gender imbalance. We went and interviewed, [a well known activist]… I noticed very quickly, especially with certain topics pertaining to land um, that she got really emotional. We asked her questions based on, you know, the run off from the chemical facilities getting into the water – cause they swim in that water, right? And you know, she just got really, really emotional. Not like she was offended but just like she was, it was just hard to talk about. And you could even hear that in her voice through her talking over the phone. So that was really – it really jumped out to me.

Learning from a Frist Nation worldview changed how the students see themselves in relation to First Nation people, and how they begin to understand the idea of 'relationships' more broadly. For Ian, the part of the experience that has the most impact is:

the conversation I had with [the environmental activist]…That's when it really became prevalent to me there is that connection… towards that land, and they do get emotionally upset over it when it's being hurt. Cause it's not – land isn't an object… it's part of their spirit in a sense. So if it's getting hurt it's hurting them. And that's when everything just came crashing down on me, like the severity of the situation, because these chemicals were harming the land and in turn they were bring harmed. So that was the biggest surprise.

Understanding the significance of land in a First Nation worldview changes the way the student sees himself in relation to First Nation people, because he understands it is more than just a human to human relationship. It is more than listening to and being respectful to another person. In order to be respectful, he has to take seriously the relationship First Nation people have with land and to honour that relationship in his actions and decision-making. This is the kind of radical shift needed: to see that relationship and from more than just a Western lens. Jess too, reiterates:

When I met with the Chief it was the same thing. He talked about how his ancestors had lived there for so long and the fact of the waters being hurt and the land is also being destroyed is something that really hurts him and to think about the future, like future generations. It was kind of cool to see how connected they are to the land and to the

water. And then also meeting with the Mayor, it kind of instilled that whole thought that people have about First Nations, like to make that kind of comment, especially from someone who is supposed to be professional as the Mayor, it's kind of ridiculous.

In his attempt to "fluff off the issues" the Mayor rapidly loses credibility with the students. They banter back and forth providing me with an entertaining commentary on everything from his quirks to his voter's base.

> Ian: Didn't he give you a pen as a gift?
> Jess: (*laughing*) Yeah, oh my gosh, that was the worst interview of my life…You have people like our mayor who just go around and say stuff like that or different people in Canada who don't really care about [First Nation] opinions and then make decisions.

The students are contemplating a larger ethical debate about whose opinion is considered valid, and how validity is determined. Jess sees firsthand that the Mayor's position discredits "emotion" and is more in line with the language of the corporate oil representative they interviewed whose "information" came across as factual. However, both interviewees overlook intangible factors such as ancestry and tradition that are very important to local First Nation communities, let alone issues such as health and environmental protection. In order for decision makers to take seriously – even listen to – a First Nation perspective, they have to shift to a radically different discourse that drew legitimacy from including a First Nation worldview. Jess feels that more education is needed to equip her generation and future generations with an understanding of the historical and present day issues so they can communicate with First Nation people more constructively: "with our conversation about the whole genocide… you have these two very distinct opinions and its just so hard to get through to the other side." She continues, "we need" a better way to communicate "between the two" because "if we don't ever learn about it then nothing is ever going to change." It sounds cliché but Jess' observation speaks to the way privilege has handed down an intergenerational ignorance that allows many non-Indigenous people to not understand reconciliation as their responsibility at all.

Reflections on Reconciliation

The day her class decides to make a documentary for their final project, Dena was ecstatic. "I thought they were going to make a website or something" and instead they truly "surpassed" her expectations. The final report of the TRC came out the day before a small group

students are scheduled to interview a residential school survivor. "They made a point to read the report before talking to her," says Dena, "they cared enough to be prepared."

Students take their sense of responsibility seriously to learn more First Nation perspectives and issues and to ensure what they do together and individually is genuine. They had come to a place where they wanted to be part of a change in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people because the well-being of everyone depended on it.

> *Jess*: [W]hen you learn about what happened with the First Nations and the whole relationship it's kind of like - you start to question some stuff that you've learned and think, maybe we're not all perfect and happy and smiles... It makes me question that kind of thing, and it also… makes us better citizens because we're more informed and now we can also share our knowledge.
> *Ian*: If I'm able to continue educating myself on [Indigenous issues] even to like my 30s 40s… I'm being a more responsible Canadian… If you're educated on something, you can take action on that. And ultimately that's how something's going to change.

That is a beautiful impact. Both feel a responsibility to learn more, and to share their learning without being a survivor. As Dena tells the students "its good to let people know about these issues and its important for you to understand them well enough to be able to produce these documentaries and PSAs but understand that we don't want you to be the Kevin Costner of the world." That the students could find this balance owes in part to the collaborative nature of the pedagogical praxis for reconciliation. While building ties to the local community it helped to have Dena as a teacher and a bridge to the community, where she was already well known. Community members graciously agree to be interviewed for the documentary, and generously put the students in touch with various community members who are actively involved in education, policy, activism, and history. While community members acknowledge a current of apprehension, they express their gratitude for the initiative students are taking. As one former residential school student, and educator explains to students during a circle conversation:

> I was in the residential school for many years and I want you to know how thrilled I am to be here. I've seen change in schools – more with students than adults. The change is with you and I would like to commend you. I've been asked many times what is reconciliation? I love words. By studying the word 'reconciliation' I believe we need to build a new relationship – there was no real relationship before. What you're doing is building that new relationship.

Conversations with First Nation community members taught students to begin to listen, and they took those words to heart, embracing their responsibility to listen, learn and acknowledge truths not found in textbooks, to re-examine their attitudes, and to center respect and gratitude as they tried to play their part as partners in building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Chapter Synthesis

This chapter and the one preceding it speak to the central question asked in this project, which is: how are (or are not) teachers integrating Indigenous perspectives into their teaching? Based on the minimal requirements outlined in the official English curriculum Dena, Kim, Cristine, Julie, and Kate, easily meet the requirement to include literature written by Indigenous authors as a choice among several. Moreover, the teachers all go beyond this basic requirement although to very different degrees. As we saw with Dena, a First Nation worldview is the lens through which she believes literature by Indigenous authors should be approached. Her teaching strategies for centering this First Nation lens include a philosophical understanding of a First Nation worldview (based on her experience), the use of proper protocols for inviting and consulting First Nation Elders and community members, values of collaboration rather than hierarchy through shared decision making, and much more. If we think again of the different levels of integration I interwove in a three-dimensional cube based on Kanu (2011) and Lowe and Yunkaporta (2013), Dena's pedagogical praxis touches upon most of the levels of integration. The other teachers integrate Indigenous perspectives through a primarily critical (but non-Indigenous lens). However, they still go beyond the requirements of the formal curriculum by ensuring their students had the chance to listen to a First Nation person who was invited to the school to share their knowledge, and in some cases participating in projects for reconciliation.

This chapter also gives a fuller picture of Dena's decolonizing praxis, how it centered an Indigenous worldview in content and process, and aimed to move students to a place where they wanted to take action out of a sense of responsibility rather than sympathy. The next chapter will tease out more of the ethical implications of Dena's decolonizing praxis, but briefly, we can imagine Dena's class is an ethical space of engagement (Ermine, 2007), a bridge for meeting, learning and understanding (Aoki, 2005). Each time she or one of her students interrupted a colonizing logic and suggested or asked how a given topic might be reconsidered through an

Indigenous perspective they were taking steps to create an ethical space for engagement. When the class worked through dis/comfort rather than turning away from it (e.g. with the *genocide conversation*) it demonstrated that some students were willing to sacrifice the feelings of security and legitimacy they drew from dominant narratives in order to move toward a place where they could engage with Indigenous peoples in an ethically relational way. For some students, like Eric, working through his discomfort so he could better listen to and understand Indigenous perspectives was his responsibility in the process of reconciliation.

Gathering student perceptions was an important part of answering the research questions. Students were strongly in favour of integrating Indigenous perspectives despite the emotional discomfort caused by the subject matter and contentious exchanges during discussion. There were two conversations that caused students notable dis/comfort: one is the *genocide conversation* and the other is the *survivor question*. In these moments students were suddenly confronted with opinions that may have been very different from their own. As Gen and Fay explained in a focus group, some students who were quick to assert their own opinions argumentatively failed to listen to their peers. Here, I suggest that students struggled to understand and practice listening as an ethics of engagement, rather than as a technical skill in which they hear and respond to each other. In the next chapter I will elaborate on the pedagogical implications of failing to understand listening as an ethics of engagement.

In this chapter, two students whose stories and experiences stand out to me are Ian and Jess. They had taken an English class with Dena prior to this project and had been involved in both the documentary project, which focused on raising awareness about the legacy of residential schools, and the PSA project, in which they focused on environmental issues. Having had these two learning experiences, Ian and Jess were more able to articulate connections between the importance of land, the legacy of residential schools, and the current difficulties that Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, leaders and policy makers have communicating effectively with each other. The experiences and perspectives Ian and Jess shared suggest that a decolonizing praxis that engages with reconciliation must interweave topics through Indigenous perspectives including those on land, history, and contemporary issues.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

Lessons Learned on/of Ethical Relationality

The purpose of this discussion chapter is to present and discuss seven main findings of this project. However, it aims to do more than that. It aims to remind us that questions of ethics are at the heart of this project. As such, it will speak to the way ethics is weaved into the conversations, the research questions, and the findings. In explaining the significance of each finding, I revisit some of the ethical dilemmas that arose in previous chapters, such as the *survivor question.* Asking how learning spaces can be guided by an ethics of relationality and co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing, to my mind, is a praxis-oriented question. I aim to answer in this chapter by contextualizing the ethical space of engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as theorized by Ermine (2007) to classroom learning spaces. As such, when I refer to "ethical space," it is in reference to Ermine's notion. I begin this discussion chapter by summarizing six main findings of the research and explaining the significance of these findings in relation to the literature I outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. The findings will be punctuated with relevant examples. Then I offer a seventh finding as a way of situating the previous six within the context of schooling.

Research Questions and Lessons Learned

To restate, the guiding questions for this project are:

1) How are (or are not) Indigenous perspectives integrated into the classroom curriculum? a) What resources, strategies and pedagogical rationale do teachers draw on? b) Do resources and teaching strategies reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics (i.e. through dominant historical narratives or Eurocentric curricular discourses)? c) Does classroom dialogue reproduce and/or decenter colonizing logics? d) What narratives and normative assumptions do students and teachers draw upon when integrating Indigenous perspectives and how does this impact engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing? e) How do students and teachers perceive of the learning experience with integrating Indigenous perspectives?

2) How can classrooms be (more) ethical spaces for engaging Indigenous perspectives? a) which (if any) pedagogical approaches that allowed Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews to co-exist, and what did these approaches look like? (i.e. temporal and spatial considerations)? b) how can educational administrators, teachers, and students contribute to ethical learning spaces, c) how do teachers and students understand their role and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation?

In response to the guiding questions, there are six main lessons learned or findings.

1) *A pedagogical approach that draws upon Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews in parallel provides students with two relational frameworks through which to see the world. This approach makes students more aware of their own positionality and the assumptions embedded in their everyday ways of thinking that reflect non-Indigenous (Western) worldviews.*

This finding is of particular significance because it addresses a growing area of literature, which outlines how teachers are integrating Indigenous perspectives in practice. Drawing inspiration from the Two Row Wampum which positions Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures as separate but equal, Dena starts with two frameworks, First Nation and postcolonial worldviews, and positions them relationally. Dena's approach resonates with Battiste (2000) who sees Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews as balanced and relational, rather than polar opposites. In Dena's approach, worldviews are not in competition, nor is one used to evaluate the other. She begins by illustrating these two frameworks through a simple Venn Diagram, and the core concepts listed continue to guide and redirect classroom discussions throughout the unit. Having that framework as a starting point gives students a language through which to communicate core concepts and it does not leave them trying to understand Indigenous peoples by cataloguing their culture (i.e. mastering knowledge of what ceremony is for what purpose, etc.). Moreover, the postcolonial framework creates an opportunity for reflexivity as students contemplate the way their experience of the world is mediated by colonialism through patterns of organization (i.e. schooling) and Othering (i.e. racial prejudice). Of course, a Venn Diagram alone does not constitute an Indigenous pedagogical lens. Dena's pedagogical choices are consciously influenced by her (Indigenous) cultural background and focused learning through doing and relationship building (e.g., through consensus based and shared decision making, consultation with First Nation community members, connection with the land). In this sense, Dena embodies her pedagogy. As a bi-racial woman she lives within and between two worldviews: the Indigenous worldview from which she draws many cultural attachments and

beliefs, and the non-Indigenous worldview that organizes many aspects of her professional life. Her experience of living within and between two worldviews can help us understand her emotional investment in centering Indigenous perspectives in the classroom, but also why she is able to envision worldviews co-existing on parallel paths in curricula and in educational institutions.

Situating worldviews in relation to one another as Dena did, gives depth to her approach. Working with what Haig-Brown (2010) calls 'deep learning,' she encourages her students to engage ways of being in the world (i.e., through connecting with and learning from First Nation community members) that shifts their thinking at an epistemological level. Moreover, she incorporates the following four levels of depth into her pedagogical approach (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013). She incorporates Indigenous protocols (ways of being) by removing desks when possible and having her students sit in a connected circle, and offering thanks to community members in advance of a request. She incorporates values (ways of valuing) by naming core values and intervening in conversations that made non-Indigenous value judgments. She incorporates processes (ways of doing) through shared decision-making and consulting community members. Finally, she incorporates systems or ways of knowing by learning from personal stories and experiences, and valuing these as truth.

Dena calls her approach "decolonizing" because it centres Indigenous perspectives and actively tries to resist the colonial structures and power relationships in schooling (Iseke-Barnes, 2008; McGregor, 2013). The significance of this finding is that it offers educators an example of how a decolonizing pedagogy can look in practice. For instance, Dena resists a traditionally organized classroom, teacher directed work and assessment, and the idea that a classroom is one teacher's domain, where certain people and certain subject matter are permitted entry. Later in this chapter I elaborate on these "decolonizing" moves and connect them to ways learning spaces can be more ethical for the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. For now, I focus on how Dena's parallel approach to worldviews relates to theoretical literature discussed in Chapter 3, which espouses epistemological pluralism in curricula that integrates Indigenous perspectives (Andreotti, et al, 2010; Haig-Brown, 2010; Kincheloe, 2008).

Of the five teacher contributors, Dena is the only one whose pedagogical approach could be considered epistemologically plural. (I explain in the next section why the other four

approaches are not.) A pedagogical implication of the epistemological pluralism in Dena's approach is that students are asked not to compare Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in an evaluative way, and when they do, there is space for Dena or for other students to push back. For example, following Andreotti et al. (2010) we can see the line of abyssal thinking shifting illusively as students discuss "parallel stories" from the novel *Three Day Road* and struggle to understand the words and actions of First Nation characters without drawing by default on their own value system and life experience as a lens of interpretation. In other examples, some students struggle to believe genocide happened on land now known as Canada, and the student who asks the ill-fated *survivor question* has a notion of what constituted survivor that he would not compromise. In these instances students struggle to allow Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews to co-exist in an ethical relationship of non-domination. However, at the same time, having two frameworks to draw upon makes it possible for students (and Dena) to intervene when non-Indigenous perspectives are used to evaluate Indigenous perspectives.

Even with a parallel approach to worldviews that offers two lenses through which students can analyze various texts and assumptions, I would be skeptical of suggesting non-Indigenous students can "inhabit" (Kincheloe, 2008) an Indigenous worldview. Moreover, I am wary such a goal could lead to forms of cultural and epistemological appropriation (Haig-Brown, 2010). Instead, I see the parallel approach to Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews as a way for students to move toward what Korteweg et al (2013) call a *relational standpoint*. As students develop awareness of Indigenous histories, beliefs, values and worldviews, they are more able to see the way their own histories, beliefs, and values shaped their own worldview and socio-historical positioning. For example, in a focus group Ian recalls, "it hit me" when he came to see that land was intimately tied to an Indigenous activist's sense of being. From his own standpoint, he had never thought of land as an extension of himself able to feel and make him feel pain. As such, he and Jess are unable to critically situate themselves and their education within discourses of multiculturalism that were all "happy and smiles." They reflect on how their standpoint would affect their capacity for action as future voters to select candidates who also demonstrated awareness and a commitment to making respectful decisions with Indigenous communities. Taken farther, it could be said that Ian and Jess were developing awareness of their "curricular standpoint" (Au, 2012), which is "a political and epistemological intervention against status-quo, hegemonic school knowledge, that in our current system, function to maintain and

reproduce unequal social relations" (p. 51). Their personal reflexivity is not limited to understanding their own complicity in colonial relations; they are looking to the discourses perpetuated by key players in the broader community to critique the politics of knowledge production and the limits of one's thinking (Nakata, Nakata, Keech & Bolt, 2012). In other words, they had come to a place where they could see the inherent biases in the way others approached Indigenous peoples and perspectives. This first finding, which explains the learning that occurred when worldviews were situated in parallel, stands in some contrast to the second finding. Here we will see some important limitations of a predominantly critical approach to integrating Indigenous perspectives into the classroom curriculum.

2) *Critical approaches to integrating Indigenous perspectives (i.e., those critiquing Eurocentric versions of history and stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples) are primarily based on a non-Indigenous lens of critique. Two consequences are: a) non-Indigenous values and assumptions that emerge in classroom dialogue go unquestioned and sometimes reproduced settler colonial ways of thinking, and b) Indigenous experiences are understood through non-Indigenous ways of seeing the world.*

Like the previous finding, this finding speaks to worldviews within the classroom. Four of five teacher participants in this study engage Indigenous perspectives critically but do so from a primarily non-Indigenous lens. As the stories and experiences shared in Chapters 5 and 6 show, when Indigenous perspectives are approached from a critical but non-Indigenous lens, certain colonizing assumptions may go unexamined, and Indigenous experiences may be understood through non-Indigenous ways of seeing the world. For example, in Kim's class, students discuss a chapter from *Three Day Road* in which the character Elijah's defiling of a religious symbol is interpreted as immoral and linked to the state of his mental health. They do not discuss the way residential school, abuse, disconnection from his culture, and identity struggles factored into his actions or his mental state. In Julie's class, students struggle to understand which life experiences could be attributed to the fact that Arnold, the main character in *Diary*, was a teenager ("general life problems"), and which life experiences were due to the fact that he was Native American ("related to being Native American").

A pedagogical implication highlighted by both examples of taking critical but non-Indigenous perspective is that when students view the characters in the novels based on their own

understanding of the world. In the absence of a tangible framework for understanding the values, beliefs, and historical traumas that informed these Indigenous characters' perspectives, their analysis is limited. Linda Smith (2012/1999) explains that decolonizing methodologies starts from a different worldview – apart from the conventional tools of Western education. Better text books and more creative seat work miss the point; instead it is like Tuck and Yang (2012) say, "[d]ecolonization is not an "and". It is an elsewhere" (p. 38). As such, the critical approach taken in these classrooms fails to be decolonizing.

While the critical lens often does not draw on shallow or culturally saturated representations of Indigenous cultures, and it is cultivating empathy and awareness among students, a shortcoming is that it does not centre an Indigenous lens, or emphasize co-existence with a critical non-Indigenous approach. This can be illustrated by referring to Kanu's (2011) criteria for integrating Indigenous perspectives, and noting the teachers did not choose instructional methods and strategies or engage an overarching philosophy reflective of Indigenous worldviews. From a breadth and depth perspective those are important shortcomings because the learning focuses on content, rather than on the processes, values, protocols and systems that would contribute to deeper engagement with Indigenous perspectives (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013).

One way to understand why some teachers gravitate toward critical (but non-Indigenous centered approaches) is by looking at the curriculum. The official curriculum asks teachers to critically include a variety of perspectives, but when it comes to Indigenous perspectives, it does not show what these perspectives look like in practice. This is a disadvantage for educators whom, when asked to integrate Indigenous perspectives, perceive it to be a content area to add on, or a topic to talk *about*. We see the latter in the classrooms of Kim, Kate, Cristine and Julie where students engage Indigenous issues from non-Indigenous points of view. Although teachers explain to me in interviews that integration means "weaving through" on an "ongoing basis," they are primarily weaving through content on given topics (learning about) rather than changing the ways learning was organized and challenging institutional structures at odds with Indigenous knowledges, as Dena did.

There is work to be done for teachers as well, to become more aware of the ways they read their own experience of the world onto Indigenous students. On day at River HS three of the

teacher participants were discussing an incident that happened between a teacher whom I did not know, and a student. The context of their conversation was that more students were identifying as First Nation, Métis & Inuit and if schools were going to be safer spaces in which these students could self-identify, some teachers still needed to take a different attitude with Indigenous students. Though they did not mention the Ministry's policy framework, their conversation shows awareness of its aims. I described the conversation in my researcher's journal:

> *A student, who identifies as First Nation, was wearing a t-shirt that said 'sweetgrass' which had a graphic depicting a braid of this sacred medicine. The teacher, however, saw 'sweetgrass' and stopped him on the way out of class to ask if the shirt was a reference drugs. This angered the student who replied something along the lines of 'it is not, bitch' – apparently a strong but not totally shocking statement coming from this particular student. Of course, the teacher was horrified, but the response of Dena and Julie and Kim was that the teacher should have known better in the first place, and it was no wonder the student was upset. They acknowledged that his language was disrespectful, but also that it had been prompted by a cultural disrespect from the teacher. As Julie said, "what did she expect" was going to happen asking him that?*

In talking about classrooms as ethical spaces of engagement, we have to look at the conditions that allow the situation to happen (e.g., cultural misunderstanding) and ask what ethical responsibilities non-Indigenous educators have to Indigenous students to create and maintain safe learning spaces. To use Ermine's (2007) words, ethical engagements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous require respect for "boundaries" and " moral thresholds" that one does not cross. In this case, the educator crosses a boundary when she treats a sacred medicine like a recreational drug. Her assumption draws on a stereotype that 'grass' is something to be 'smoked,' which, as we saw with the student's reaction, is highly offensive. If the teacher was not sure about the t-shirt, she might have said, "tell me about your shirt" which respects that ethical boundary by asking how the student makes meaning from sweetgrass, instead of asserting her own meaning. In this situation, taking the initiative to learn and develop a basic understanding of sacred medicines is an ethical responsibility of the teacher. The point here, is that if we want students to move beyond a critical approach that could potentially still read their own experience of the world into Indigenous perspectives, teachers must do the learning necessary to be role models.

While talking about teacher learning, a Superintendent for the school board explained to Dena's students, "from board perspective, we need to engage teachers in the learning – they have

to learn before they can teach. What teachers have told us is they need help finding a comfort level with this knowledge so they can feel credible representing these views as non-First Nation people." Students agree, and in a discussion that touched upon hiring history teachers who were well versed in Indigenous issues for a mandatory course, the student MS1 notes "teachers would have to learn it in order to teach, because you can't teach something you never learned."

In summary, this finding is aligned with literature that contends integrating Indigenous perspectives it is not only the content but also the processes through which those are engaged. Importantly, it also makes links between one's critique and the limits of one's thinking. The next finding will expand upon this point and consider what instructional strategies teachers chose, and how these strategies integrate Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, but do not decolonize the curriculum or the classroom space.

3) *Teachers continue to experience discomfort when integrating Indigenous perspectives. Some teachers mediate this discomfort by following the curriculum-as-plan very closely. In doing so they also limit the ways in which their class can be open to Indigenous perspectives, and re-inscribe hierarchical teacher authority (e.g. staying in control of a timed, scripted lesson).*

Whereas the previous finding speaks to worldview, this finding speaks more to process by looking at the pedagogical methods (i.e. learning strategies and tasks) in practice. In the context of this project it is important to understand discomfort in relation to the instructional methods teachers chose. For all teacher participants, discomfort arises in part due to the challenges they face when integrating Indigenous perspectives. Previous research has named these challenges, which include lack of supportive colleagues, lack of institutional support, resistance, and insufficient knowledge and historical background (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010; St. Denis, 2010; Deer, 2013). Rather than focusing on these challenges, I look at how teachers work through them, and if the ways in which they worked through challenges were leading to substantive engagement with Indigenous perspectives. I frame this process as dis/comfort. Discomfort is not a new idea when encountering difficult knowledge and epistemological tension (see especially Boler, 1999; Boler & & Zemblayas, 2003). Discomfort can also be an opportunity for rich, transformative learning (Regan, 2011); and it can also leave one searching for *comfort.* The experiences shared in earlier chapters to support this finding illustrates that teachers use a number

of strategies to mediate their discomfort, some of which are conscious (e.g., being willing to learn, reaching out to local First Nation communities), and others that more subtly undermine deep engagement with Indigenous perspectives (e.g., following a very detailed lesson plan to the minute, limiting space for discussion and also tension to arise). Regardless of the strategy used, discomfort is often met with the offering of, or search for comfort. This is most evident in teacher-student, student-community relationships where tensions are negotiated through compassionate responses; hence dis/comfort is two inseparable sides of the same coin.

At least two teachers, Kate and Julie explain their discomfort over saying the wrong thing, misrepresenting Indigenous cultures, and not having the historical background to present the information fairly. Interestingly, both these teachers choose or create detailed lessons and follow them very closely. A pedagogical implication of their choice is they follow a structured curriculum-as-plan (Aoki, 2005). Teachers determine the format and content of the lessons and during lessons they exercise close control over lesson timing and discussion. In Chapter 5, I explained the ways in which their teacher voices dominated the classroom during these times, and the ways they moved on from discussion questions after only one or two responses, thus, not engaging in substantive back and forth discussion.

This finding is significant in the current moment of reconciliation as more teachers and organizations move to develop Indigenous-focused curricular *content*. It is imperative that instructional strategies not be rooted in conventional (non-Indigenous) patterns of authority and hierarchy found in the classroom. In writing about the instructional strategies through which Indigenous perspectives should be integrated in the classroom, Yatta Kanu (2011) argues:

> Instructional strategies currently used in schools need to be replaced by strategies in which teachers attempt to empower their students by helping them acquire the skills of higher-order thinking, encouraging them to question and develop alternative interpretations of reality, and teaching them how to acquire and utilize knowledge in various forms and from different sources. Above all, teachers should ensure that the experiences they provide for their students are geared towards preparing students to look critically and inquisitively at what is happening in the world around them. In other words, the new pedagogical approaches should contribute to the transformation of the conditions of marginalization, subordination, and oppression. (p. 277)

I agree the critical skills she mentions are important for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Kim's pedagogical approach is perhaps best aligned with Kanu's description.

However, drawing on critical rather than decolonizing pedagogy holds potentially colonizing assumptions in the way teachers are positioned as the ones doing the empowering and the providing of rich experiences. Moreover, these critical skills can still be taught from a non-Indigenous perspective. Dena illustrated this point when she spoke of inquiry based learning about "molecules" versus "someone's culture" and we saw it in Kim's class where class discussions and student projects were critical of history but did not centre Indigenous ways of understanding the world (e.g., the First Nation, First Impression project described in Chapter 6, and a student's research project on World War I veteran Francis Pegahmagabow mentioned in Chapter 5).

This finding also points to the ways in which educators enact a non-Indigenous worldview, not by the things they teach, but by the way they use space and move through it. Whom a particular space is imagined to belong to has an important impact on where Indigenous perspectives are allowed to fit within a school. For example, if we think of the administrator's authoritative decision to assign native studies to history teachers who need to fill a timetable, then what goes on in that space under her/his command. Likewise, Dena muses, "teachers are just interesting characters because they are so attached to a room with their stuff, and their possessions and they own it." She recalls, "I've heard teachers say 'this is my room, you'll do as I say in my room' … you wanna talk about colonial pedagogy? There it is, right? And that's frightening because it's not your space, it's not *your* room." Thus, upsetting ideas about the ownership of space in schools and classrooms is another way learning spaces can be more ethical. Instead of thinking in terms of *my school* and *my classroom,* Dena thinks of spaces from a First Nation perspective as "fluid" and "shared." As part of her decolonizing pedagogy she envisions a classroom as a space without desks and without closed doors, so students can sit in a circle and be free to move in and out of the room. Despite being a department head she does not have her *own* classroom because she saw that for scheduling reasons it would be easier for another teacher to use the room where she normally teaches. Instead she uses "a cart" which allows her to "move" to various places in the school such as the library. Moreover, she agrees to share the English office with another program because the space is "underutilized" and "there was no one in the building willing to give up space." She chuckles saying, "people thought…there's an ulterior motive. Like, they don't get it. But, yeah. The way in which we see schools, is…it's a western perspective and it's – we teach from it, and we are in it – we just are."

This climate of ownership in schools compromises the notion of ethical space not only in the sense that the values of possessing versus sharing space are misaligned, but the knowledge within those spaces becomes owned and possessed, i.e., the geography knowledge is in the geography teacher's room. Dena's attempts to give up and share space are gestures of radical hospitality, an ethics of unconditional inclusion even to that which is foreign and threatening (Derrida, 2000). However, for Dena, there is nothing radical about it. Drawing on her experience in Frist Nation culture, she explains that creating a space of unconditional hospitality is like the atmosphere at a feast or large family gathering where there are "huge amounts of food and no one would ever question whether you brought somebody to that gathering."

As we see in this finding, teachers take comfort in what is familiar, pedagogically and spatially. At the same time, familiarity can undermine a truly decolonizing classroom. In the next finding, I will delve deeper into this complex intersection of colonizing logics and rich learning experiences.

4) *Even when certain colonizing logics find their way into classroom discussions, the learning can still be valuable and engaging when it is simultaneously disrupting other colonizing logics.*

This finding has particular significance in relation to the first finding because it illustrates that epistemological pluralism is a fluid and somewhat unpredictable process, where amazing moments are punctuated by a near plunge into the abyss (Andreotti et al, 2010). The never-final imperfect journey is, as Dena would say, where some of the most important learning occurs. For example, the *genocide conversation* was remarkably transformative when Dena's students discover a "Native American genocide" took place across North America, including the land many now call Canada. As Eric explains in a focus group, he didn't think his "opinion could change so fast" from thinking something utterly "stupid" to believing it legitimate. In another focus group, Jess and Ian echo Eric by talking about how their conceptions of Canada as a multicultural nation with a benevolent history are shattered. At the same time Gen, Fay and Helene point out that some students in the class demanded facts, numbers, and statistics to verify if genocide actually happened. For those students, personal accounts and testimony are not enough proof. Thus, the conversation simultaneously disrupts colonizing logics of peaceful

settlement, while also re-inscribing a colonizing logic for requiring fact-based evidence. Students who seek "proof" by numbers simultaneously discredited Indigenous voices.

There are more ways classroom dialogue reproduces or resists discourses of colonial, racial, and gendered dominance. In Kim and Dena's classes, for example, a history curriculum that focuses on military feats and heroic acts is regularly subject to critique by students. As I have illustrated in previous chapters, students contemplate what they have learned about Canada and multiculturalism, only to question it and propose alternative interpretations. In this sense, students and teachers are intervening in dominant discourses of colonial history.

In other instances, students and teachers fail to intervene. At the end of a lesson in Cristine's class in which students examine the racist cultural appropriation of Indigenous mascots, she asks students if they feel they have learned a lot. Many nod or murmur yes, and from my place as an observer, the lesson was articulate and critically engaging. A racialized Black male student replies, "you can't always tell people they're wrong, you know, they're not gonna like you." Given that the point of the lesson is to persuasively highlight the racism embedded in the debate about mascots, and the fact that Indigenous peoples receive racist backlash when they defend the integrity of their cultural symbols, I listened carefully for Cristine's response, which is: "for the rest of your life you'll come across people who don't like you for whatever reason, and you have to try to do your best in dealing." I do not know if the student's experience as a young black male prompted his comment. However, it is clear Cristine does not think to connect his comment to the lesson that touched upon racialized backlash. Her assumption is that personality differences are to blame for not getting along, and in that sense, the pedagogical implication of her response is to assert a race-less way of understanding the world, which in the context of the colonialism is problematic.

In an interview, Dena too, offered personalities as an explanation for disagreement:

> [Students] respect one another for the most part. I mean, obviously there's personalities but um, they also know what they can and can't get away with… [Students] know that I will call them out when something completely inappropriate is said… and then there's the trickle down effect so the other [students] see where you stand as a teacher too as far as those issues.

Dena is saying two things in this statement. First, that personality differences cause disagreement may be true in some cases, but as we saw above, it can also be a problematic assumption. Second, she is saying teachers need to show their students where they stand on issues of racial, gendered, and homophobic exclusion, particularly when insensitive comments are made. Such a stance (or lack of one) has ethical implications for making the classroom a safe learning space. For example, Julie dismisses racism and homophobia in her class by not addressing it. After explaining to her students that residential schools were supposed to make Indigenous children "*civilized*, and note my sarcasm" a male student enthusiastically turns to several students sitting around him and says, "How do you speak Indian? Woo-woo-woo-woo!" while elevating his voice and placing a hand over his mouth. Julie ignores the comment completely. Later during the same class I overheard a student loudly say "that's gay" in reference to something on his phone. Julie either does not hear or does not stop the lesson to address the comment, continuing an atmosphere where comments of a racist, or homophobic nature are tolerated.

This finding is also significant as more educational institutions implement mandatory learning about Indigenous perspectives and histories for all students. There will be resistance. Dena recalls intervening with a colleague vented about the mandatory learning in his daughter's civics class:

> the teacher was… First Nation and his daughter was just annoyed because everything, everything had to do with First Nation people. I said to him, 'and that's so much how First Nation children feel when they walk into every other classroom.' And it was a real moment for him I think and it's not the answer I think he expected.

Moreover, in the *survivor question* incident, when a student (MS1) challenged residential school survivors on the appropriateness of the term *survivor*, MS1 has very complicated reasons for resisting that were not straightforwardly racist nor rooted in disrespect. It is tempting for Dena to intervene and treat his resistance as a problem within him or an unacknowledged racism that needed to be fixed (Stanley, 2014). If through a meeting with the vice principal, she could only say the right thing to get through to him, have him change his mind, take back the troubling things he had said, and show empathy. This is not Dena's normal approach to resistance; as I have mentioned, she consciously tried to see it as an opportunity to dispel racist stereotypes and misunderstandings.

With much literature that focuses on the challenges of integrating Indigenous perspectives, and disrupting colonizing logics cultivating critical awareness of one's privilege and positioning, that we can be left a yearning to find the most impactful strategy whether autobiographical (Haig-Brown, 1999), ethical positioning (O'Dowd, 2010), finding common ground (Cannon, 2012). As these strategies offer many pathways forward, there are many varieties of resistance that will present roadblocks and opportunities. When I finish elaborating on the *survivor question* it will show that if we think of resistance too simplistically, educators may misinterpret a student's reasons.

A second implication of this fourth finding is that it reminds us colonizing logics *are* in conversations that intend to decolonize. Discourses of reconciliation highlight the present moment as a crucial juncture in which more educational institutions create and implement pedagogy in the name of reconciliation. I have highlighted reconciliation in this thesis because the teachers and students I worked with focused on reconciliation, and to critically explore the way reconciliation might be taken up in classrooms as more than a feel-good mantra to alleviate settler guilt. To this I should note, the conversations about reconciliation I witnessed in this research reflect what McMahon (2016) has problematically noted: mainstream conversations about reconciliation are focusing more on residential schools and empathy, and give less attention to collective responsibility in the present and the significance of land, treaties, and Indigenous sovereignty (see also Cannon, 2012). This is a troubling oversight as land plays a significant pedagogical role in Indigenous communities (Chambers, 2006; Simpson, 2014; Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014), and the colonization of land continues to be at the core of reconciliation and the imperative to build a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The ethical and pedagogical implications of the oversight of land are thus: if non-Indigenous peoples understand the work of reconciliation as a troubling critique of history and respectful awareness, reconciliation risks being utilized as a colonizing discourse in the sense that non-Indigenous peoples' engagement with reconciliation might not responding to Indigenous peoples' struggles for sovereignty and to decolonize. In light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, we Canadians are at a crucial juncture where it is imperative the curriculum developed and the pedagogical initiatives put forward do not merely retrace critical perspectives under the banner of reconciliation.

5) *The treaty relationship, sovereignty, and importance of land to Indigenous peoples represent significant gaps in knowledge for non-Indigenous students.*

Students are, or become familiar with residential schools over the course of their units of study. However, the absence of land as a central theme in classroom discussions indicates a gap in non-Indigenous students' (and perhaps some teachers') knowledge. Critical Indigenous and decolonizing scholarship also points to the absence of land in mainstream curricula and conversations around decolonizing (Grande, 2004; Simpson, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012, Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014). In the present study, we hear the implications of this gap directly from the voices of students when they draw upon colonizing narratives and assumptions to discuss the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. As we see in the focus group with Ben and Danika, major misunderstandings about the treaty relationship and the significance of land to Indigenous peoples allow Ben and Danika to look at contemporary representations of Indigenous peoples and see isolation and a lack of positive role models who they believe could influence youth to break an intergenerational cycle of poverty and substance abuse. Moreover, sovereignty is never mentioned in the context of Indigenous nations. As the literature review in Chapter 2 explained, Indian policy and education in Canada systematically eroded the sovereignty of Indigenous nations. Therefore, we know a conversation around Indigenous sovereignty is relevant to residential schools and the topics discussed in the classes of Dena and Kim. Moreover, Tupper (2014, 2011) has strongly advocated for treaty education, which I agree should centre Indigenous notions of sovereignty and the importance of land. These topics lend themselves to Dena's approach of situating worldviews in parallel and encouraging students to learn through inquiry: how did various Indigenous nations and colonial governments understand treaty, what were there motivations for negotiating, how have various treaties been interpreted, and what does this mean for Indigenous sovereignty today? An ethical and pedagogical implication of this fifth finding is thus: as long as land and sovereignty are left out of discussions that purport to integrate Indigenous perspectives, students will continue to have only a partial understanding of what it means to reconcile and what it means to decolonize. For example, Ben and Cam thought it necessary to learn about Indigenous histories to avoid repeating the past. I wonder, had land and sovereignty been topics of discussion in their courses, would they have understood the colonial "past" to be ongoing?

I suggest this omission is linked to worldviews, and better understood by making a distinction between 'land' and 'Land.' As Sandra Styres (2016) explains, uncapitalized, land is a place, a thing, a possession, a source of natural resources, and recreation. If we recall the comments from the student Eric, he associated land with various forms of financial compensation. However, when capitalized, Land is more than the place we are in; it is within us. Land is embodied, conscious, spiritual, inter-sensory and relational. By making this distinction 'Land' is absent from classroom dialogue, and while 'land' is not absent, it is not acknowledged as a central theme in the contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. When the significance of Land to Indigenous peoples and worldviews is the gap in understanding, land becomes a colonizing logic. This contention is aligned with Mignolo's (2011) argument (see Chapter 3) that coloniality appropriated understandings of land, water and all that is non-human living and classified these as nature.

When the significance of Land is discussed, students Ian and Jess recall it was First Nation community members who brought up the topic, and in my observations, I too note it is First Nation community members who encourage students to begin their research "at the beginning" and look at the foundations of the treaty relationship before moving down the "timeline" to learn about subsequent policies such as residential schooling. Jennifer Tupper (2011) has written extensively about the need for treaty education in Canada to be a counter story to the dominant settler mythologies that erase the histories of Indigenous peoples. This finding supports her contention that students are lacking in treaty education. Some provinces, such as Saskatchewan mandated treaty education nearly a decade ago (Tupper, 2011), however, it is only since the final report of the TRC and Calls to Action that the Ontario Ministry of Education has announced plans to mandate treaty education into the curriculum (2015, 2016).

In all five of the classes I observed more attention is given to residential schools and stereotypes (e.g., mascots). In focus groups and in classroom observations students enthusiastically express they need to learn about this history so "it never happens again" and so "we don't repeat the past." I read these comments as encouraging in terms of empathy and building awareness, but also as problematic: students are still seeing only part of the bigger picture. They see residential schools as an atrocious policy of assimilation – a past not to repeat - but do not see its systemic connections to various forms legalized discrimination, the treaty

relationship, seizure of lands, or the ways in which settler colonial narratives and presence continues to erase Indigenous peoples and histories. Cannon (2012) makes the point that for non-Indigenous Canadians, learning about residential schools cannot happen apart from critical conversations about collective responsibility and the relinquishing of "structural advantages acquired through colonialism and privilege" (p. 28), as these are necessary for reconciling the colonial past. Put another way, he is asking non-Indigenous Canadians to grapple with their roles and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation, and what this means for their relationship with Indigenous peoples.

The omission of Land has important implications for the ways in which non-Indigenous Canadians understand, support, and participate in the process of reconciliation. Land as a gap in knowledge means not only are there historical pieces missing, but curricula is not equipping students – *all* students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous to move forward toward a new relationship. Curricula need to address Land as a gap so Indigenous students and their communities can be supported in the struggle for resurgence of Indigenous lives and knowledges, and so non-Indigenous peoples can, as Dena says "not stand in the way" of that struggle, but instead understand be supportive in appropriate ways, and live ethically as neighbours to Indigenous peoples.

6) *Students struggle to listen as an ethics of engagement. This impacts their ability to achieve their aspirations of being open and respectful, and it hinders their relationships, particularly with First Nation students.*

In the days following the *survivor question* students struggle to work together through their differences of opinion. Some students feel that other students are more concerned with asserting and arguing their opinion, rather than listening, acknowledging and engaging in constructive dialogue. Willie Ermine (2007) says that bridging the ethical space between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is in part about knowing the boundaries, sacred spaces, and moral thresholds of each side. And while Ermine does not describe listening an explicit part of his ethical space for engagement, he might agree with my contention that we cannot come to know these boundaries that guide our ethical engagements if we do not listen. As such, my aim in this section is to build on Ermine and argue that in order to have ethical learning spaces for the

co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, listening needs to be reframed in curricula as an ethics of engagement: a foundation upon which dialogue and relationships are built, and central to a non-Indigenous person's role in the process of reconciliation.

In the process of reconciliation, and bridging the ethical divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, I contend that non-Indigenous peoples in particular must consider listening as a foundation of ethical relationships. An important finding of this project is that students, whose unit of study revolves around understanding an Indigenous worldview and participating in the process of reconciliation, struggle with listening. They can hear each other. When tension rise there is always someone bursting to make their point known, and sometimes they mediate the tension. Venturing to explain the tension as "personalities" risks simplifying the complexity of listening and the ways in which it is shaped by colonizing logics in the education system. My contention in this section is that students, teachers, and curriculum developers need to think of listening as an ethics of engagement, especially in building a new relationship with Indigenous peoples, and in the process of reconciliation.

In critical non-Indigenous (e.g., Western) scholarship, listening has been overlooked by a theoretical and empirical preoccupation with the politics of voice (Bickford, 1996; Dobson, 2014; Lacey, 2013) in which communication is more often framed as speaking across difference rather than "listening across difference" (Dreher, 2009, p. 445). Whereas voice and speaking are positioned as *active* and *public* - central tenets of inclusion, listening is problematically perceived as *private* and *passive*, despite it being central to public life (Lacey, 2013). Seeing the students' struggle to listen throughout this project raises the question: how is the oversight of listening a cultural and epistemological oversight that plays out in the classroom and in the broader culture of schooling? If we consider the reciprocity of speaking and listening as an ethics of communication (Rakow as cited in Mahau, 1996), it emphasizes a relationship of equal sharing between two parties rather than a relationship of coercion or domination. This relationship of reciprocity is much like the ethical space for engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that Donald (2009) and Ermine (2007) describe. In school culture, however, reciprocity has to compete with a number of conflicting social values, norms, and practices that privilege the individual by ranking and evaluating each student. For example, skills rewarded in critical thinking, such as the ability to be persuasive, dissect and build arguments encourage

students to evaluate various positions rather than to see them existing in relation. Like worldviews, students too are measured against one another, which fails to encourage an ethics that places the other prior to oneself. As I outlined in the theoretical framework chapter, it is with openness to listening to the other that one must come to an ethical space of engagement. I am not saying that an ethics of responsibility toward the other, or the collective is absent from schooling; I am saying it must compete with a curriculum of individualism.

The *Ontario English Curriculum Grades 11 and 12* (2007d), for example, "focuses on comprehension strategies for listening" that support "clear and coherent communication" and "emphasizes the use of higher-level thinking skills including critical literacy skills, to enable students to understand, appreciate, and evaluate what they read and view at a deeper level, and to help them become reflective, critical, and independent learners" (p. 5). In this sense, listening is a skill rather than an ethics of engagement. When listening is framed through "tasks" and "strategies" its purpose is instrumental: a literacy skill to be mastered, which as Janusik (2010) and McRae and Nainby (2015) contend, has been the dominant pedagogical approach to listening taken up in education. Janusik (2010) further argues the oversight of listening in research and curricula indicates that it lacks the credibility of solid empirical evidence needed to justify its inclusion.

If this is how the official curriculum undervalues listening, it is markedly different from the way the First Nation educators and community members I spoke to value it. As one First Nation educator explained what it meant for her to be invited into the school and consulted on the students' documentary project: "It means a lot to have someone who wants to listen" because for so many years it felt like nobody wanted to listen. She continues:

> There was a time where we said our Elders were sleeping, but now they're waking up and they're sharing their story and we need them to share their story so we can listen to the history of our people. Invite them in, and remember that what Elders share is not in the library. It's a talking, walking history. Our histories were mostly oral but there are some pictographs. That's how knowledge was passed on. That's how they found their way when they were walking through the bush, knowing how the tress were bent in a certain place. You had to learn from each area of the land because each area was different and the animals that lived there were different. It's the same with people and cultures. It's about listening and learning, and accepting the opinions of others even if they disagree.

The language here betrays two very culturally different understandings of listening, with an Indigenous worldview seeing listening as a way of life based on living in "balance," "acceptance" and reciprocity (Bell, 2013). The banal example of reading stories on paper instead of sharing them orally, is one way in which the everyday practice of listening constitutes culturally different relationships. We listen differently to a printed word than a living (human) being. In contrast, the curriculum takes up a dominant Western lens in which listening is a "skill." Reducing listening to technical terms fails to acknowledge listening as an ethics of engagement based on relationality and empathy. This difference is not only detrimental to students, but there are (re)colonizing consequences. In Chapter 6 Gen and Fay talked about how frustrating it was to have peers who refused to listen. Here, they elaborate by drawing on the conversation in which some students strongly deny a North American genocide, despite being presented with "facts" and "numbers":

> *Annette*: I'm wondering how you felt, maybe some of your emotions, when the conversation about genocide came up. Like how did you feel and what went through your mind?
> *Gen*: I felt, okay, angry because I was trying to say how like I felt about it and what I thought. I felt like people weren't listening, and that bothers me because they're saying their opinion and then I would say something back but they aren't listening to what I had to say, they just keep going. They keep talking. And that bothered me cause I was trying to tell them how I felt.
> *Annette*: Did you feel like it was a matter of them interrupting you or just a matter of you would say your point but they just wouldn't get it.
> *Gen*: Yeah… they wouldn't argue my point. They just kept on going.
> *Fay*: They would say, 'well, its still this way' (*inaudible*).
> *Gen*: Yeah. I would say something and they're like, 'yeah, but' and then they would say the same thing they just said and not talk about my point that I made. Like if they would talk about my points and said why it wasn't valid then it'd be okay but that's not what they did.

In the dialogue above, students are very frustrated when their peers' "ego" gets in the way of listening and they become "stuck on the numbers…even after hearing that the numbers aren't correct." An argument unfolds through binaries of right and wrong, rather than considering the situation relationally and with empathy. Fay remarks, "if they knew the situation happening to someone [they] know" they would never dismiss it. In a broader sense, refusing to listen (e.g., dismissing) is a (colonizing) political act of erasure that denies Indigenous peoples a past and a present and re-inscribes colonizing logics of peaceful settlement and naturalized presence. By

comparison, choosing to listen can be a political act of inclusion, and in the context of reconciliation, an integral part of awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action.

It is impossible for me to know exactly how the students I observed were taught to listen. However, I observed their experience with Dena (and perhaps other teachers) encourage them to speak, and the writing assignments they completed in her class (and possibly other classes as it is expected in Ontario English curricula) encourage them to build an argument and write persuasively. The valuing of arguing and persuading, which shapes communication should not be taken for granted, particularly in the instance of the *survivor question* when the student used the skills he had been taught and deployed them as resistance. In the context of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the ability to argue without the ability to listen reproduces a colonial ethics of domination even when that is not the intention. In Dena's classroom we see this relationship on a micro level as dialogue broke down and classroom relationships grew strained. As Gen said during a focus group, "you know who you never want to talk to again." She was under the impression that some of her peers were not willing to back down from their offensive opinions. It took her by surprise a moment later when Eric, referring to the *genocide conversation* said:

> Eric: I kind of discredited it at first when we were talking about the fact that it was a genocide I was like, 'yeah there's no way'… And then as we kept talking about it, I was like, 'whoa, it actually is.' I was really surprised my opinion could change so fast.
> …
> Gen: Actually, until Eric said that, I didn't know anyone in this class was listening to the other side of the opinion. So I'm glad someone actually was listening.

Listening, or the lack thereof, as I have outlined it, can help us understand some of the ethical dilemmas that arose during this project. In speaking with participants, the words *resistance* and *respect* came up a lot, with more than one teacher sharing experiences of student or colleague resistance, and all First Nation community members and educators emphasizing the need for respect. Although, resistance and disrespect can be personal, we need to be wary of fixating on them as obstacles in and of themselves, and to instead look critically at the colonizing logics that shape the act of listening which can lead to situations where there is perceived to be resistance or disrespect. To illustrate the point, the *survivor question* can at face value be seen as an act of disrespect. And it *is* disrespectful. However, the student makes it clear on numerous occasions that he wants to be respectful, and he is worried about saying the wrong thing in front

of First Nation community members. It then seems like a contradiction when he makes a contentious point and argued it forcefully. So what makes him speak this way? For one, he and his peers are encouraged to speak by Dena who works hard to create an atmosphere in which students can feel "safe" *speaking* even if their opinions might be "unpopular." Consider the dialogue below:

> *MS1*: Can I share my unpopular opinion first? Sometimes when we talk about residential schools, you say First Nation people don't like talking about it, why are we trying to bring it up so heavily?
> *Dena*: Valid question.
> *MS*: Ignoring it won't make it go away.
> *MS1*: You can't change anything, why do so much about it?
> *MS*: You make a point - most people aren't alive anymore.
> *FS*: For reconciliation, everyone has to be aware.
> *MS1*: What is awareness gonna do?
> *MS*: It could have opposite impact.

Dena has succeeded in making the space safe, however, as one student points out, "it could have the opposite impact", meaning an attempt to raise respectful awareness of the history of residential schools and the experiences of survivors could prompt views and opinions that compromise the safety of the space. Thus, the *survivor question* incident shows that 'safe' for one might not be safe for all. It is a balance.

In the days following the *survivor question* incident the student MS1 was firm in his opinion that former students of residential schools were not survivors, and the class stayed divided about whether to continue with their documentary project because some students found his comments so offensive. During this time Dena spent time talking to students about how they feel, and making sure they were okay. I noted in my researcher's journal: *Dena said she's had many talks with FNFS who was particularly aghast that MS1 would discredit and disrespect an Elder so much by not listening to what they were saying and just continuing with his opinion.*

In response, Dena called a meeting with MS1 and the vice principal to talk about the need for him to be empathetic. She was troubled that he held firm in his opinion while speculating with regret that his peers now "think I'm a terrible person." When I left off describing the fallout from the *survivor question* I expressed my reservations about that meeting because it seemed as though the student was being forced to atone. My instinct told me something was not right, and as it turns out, in the scramble to protect the offended students and keep the learning space safe,

consideration was not given to the ways in which the space was unsafe for MS1. No one stopped to *listen* to his story. I noted in my researcher's journal:

> *Dena wanted to chat today because she's struggling with the roadblock that happened in class…. I mentioned to Dena that [a First Nation educator] would be arriving any minute to chat with me and Dena was keen to talk to her too… (Once the three of us were talking) Dena mused that she couldn't figure out why [MS1] was so set against this one thing when he had been so enthusiastic about everything else – he was one of the most vocal students about including First Nation issues in history because it's 'Canadian history'. [The First Nation educator] said, "you never know what his own personal experience is, where he's coming from" and with that Dena had an epiphany. MS1's mother was a cancer survivor - a "serious" case of overcoming the odds cancer - and Dena had totally forgotten. Then it all made sense.*

As Dena pieced together the timeline of events in MS1's life, she realized he was probably still much more affected than he let on. At the end of the conversation, Dena decided to let the issues settle for a couple of weeks so emotions could calm down and trust rebuild. The fallout from the *survivor question* illustrates how the learning space has to be safe for First Nation students but also for dissenting voices. At first it seemed that MS1 ignored the emotional sensitivity and personal experience of survivors, First Nation students and the teacher. However, he was just as emotionally invested, which means we cannot reduce his behaviour to disrespect or resistance in and of themselves; we cannot 'fix' the error in his ways and make him respectful without denying his own experience. The ethical question is how does a teacher respond to (and protect) a student in this situation? In an ethical space of engagement, the teacher who is importantly an authority figure could be seen as pushing a "boundar[y] others should not cross" (Ermine, 2007, p. 195) by trying to force the student to apologize or change heart. At the same time, the student crossed a boundary for First Nation community members and students with words that could be seen to "violate and infringe the space of others" (Ermine, 2007, p. 195), and from a position that failed to acknowledge difficult historical context surrounding his question (Donald, 2009). Rather than finding a solution to this case, we are reminded that creating safe, ethical spaces can feel like a precarious balance rather than a shared victory.

A challenge for the class was to find ways to rebuild enough trust and re-establish enough dialogue to go forward with the documentary project. Consider the conversation below:

> *Dena asks if the project can go forward. In her conversations with students a number of them voiced concerns about everyone not being on the same page. Some (male) students*

feel they're on the same page despite the disagreement, suggesting it is a big disagreement but it is actually over a word and not the bigger picture. A MS says they would learn a lot more if they continue with the documentary project. Several others agree. He says in life there will be situations where you don't agree but still have to work with a group. A FS says everyone has to have the same goal, have empathy and consider others' emotions.

Dena: What if you were to quit?
FS: Nothing would change.
FNFS: That's what's happening all the time in the bigger picture.
Dena: It's important to work through rather than pretend it's too hard to work through. That's what society has done.
(More MS say disagreements are not all bad.)
Dena: Great things can come from conflict and organizations that squash conflict do not grow. It's important to be empathetic b/c of the emotional impact it has on people. You need to talk in order to progress. As you go on from this class, my hope is that you're brave enough to work through conflict rather than walk away.

If we reconsider this situation as the inability to understand listening from an Indigenous worldview and as an ethics of engagement, we see students struggling. They try to problem solve their issue, using listening as a skill to understand the roadblock they have encountered (i.e., a word or definition they disagreed upon) and mediate their way through it. At times they began to grapple with listening as an ethics of engagement (i.e., situations where you don't agree but have to work together), but it is important to note after this conversation the class was still divided. Many felt very strongly they couldn't work together if they were not on the same page.

To contribute to learning spaces guided by an ethics of relationality and co-existence curriculum developers and educators need to reconsider how listening is understood and taken up. As the challenges experienced in Dena's class indicate, listening as an ethics of engagement is crucial to building a new relationship with Indigenous peoples, because frankly, non-Indigenous peoples do not have a strong history of listening to Indigenous peoples. A First Nation educator made this point by explaining to me:

Schools need to know how to communicate with First Nation people and to understand their ways in order to be helpful in learning... Sharing your story is sharing your life; it's your history. That sharing is a giving and taking relationship that works both ways, Like the Two Row Wampum it's about balance… An Elder wrote a story, and it was a very good story that a number of people wanted to share, and when I asked her about letting others share the story she said 'no' because she didn't want anyone to diminish it or dismiss it. She only agreed when I said the power in the story is that it's coming from a

> First Nation perspective. When you invite someone in to share their story, they want to avoid right versus wrong controversy.

Here, the hesitation Elders feel about sharing their stories with non-Indigenous peoples speaks volumes about a colonial relationship where listening was not reciprocal.

Having learning spaces that are guided by a relational ethics of co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing means understanding listening as "a political and ethical act that takes place from within unjust social structures, and that can produce *and* resist social justice" (Taylor, 2015, p. 119). Listening in the classroom must focus on "how students "hear" through their beliefs, desires, values and commitments, and how as listeners they attend to these interpretive filters" (p. 121). Moreover, a pedagogy of discomfort:

> emphasizes the conditions under which socially just listening can take place, notably in the presence of a recognition of the role of social power, of ingrained distrust, and frequently, of historical lack of understanding or engagement. Developing this critical consciousness toward systemic inequality and oppression, then, means acknowledging that even the virtuous listener – the one who exercises respect for difference, a willingness to listen, an inclination to admit errors, even a willingness to assess one's biases – might fail to recognize his or her own place within hierarchies of social power that condition what testimony is or is not regarded as intelligible, as making sense. (Taylor, 2015, p. 120)

Supporting students as they develop a capacity and commitment for ethical listening is not a task for teachers alone. As I have pointed out, the way listening is encouraged by formal curricula as a skill, speaks to a set of deeply embedded (non-Indigenous) values. It is an example where despite the most engaging and innovative pedagogy that teachers like Dena can create, students who have been educated in a school system build upon non-Indigenous values, will continue to struggle respectfully engage with Indigenous peoples, perspectives and issues. As such, curriculum developers need to urgently reconsider what it means to listen ethically in the social, political and historical contexts of Canada in which we teach today. In light of the pedagogical goals we ask teachers to strive for through pedagogies for social justice, for anti-oppression, for equitable educational experiences and outcomes, and for the integration of Indigenous perspectives, we need to reconsider how the curriculum might reframe listening in order to better carry forward those goals.

Giving Context to the Main Findings

In addition to these six main findings which address the research questions, there is a seventh finding, which connects what is going on in the classroom with teachers and students, to those educational administrators and decision makers beyond the classroom. In other words, what I am calling a seventh finding, is the broader context in which the six previous findings lie.

7) *Educational administrators play a significant role in enabling or inhibiting the integration of Indigenous perspectives. Decisions from hiring practices to course scheduling and planning send a strong message to teachers, students, and the First Nation community.*

In this section I show several ways broader patterns of institutional hierarchy and organization have a significant pedagogical impact. Indigenizing educational institutions is a well-intended goal, but can be argued that it continues to serve assimilationist ends because the colonizing "structure and frames remain intact" (Grande, 2004, p. 41). I touched upon a similar point in an earlier chapter when noting a contradiction when the integration of Indigenous perspectives is expected to fit *within* the existing school curriculum and educational structures. With Grande's words in mind, this finding explains several ways hierarchical "structures and frames" such as top-down decision making, have an impact on teachers, students, and on the integration of Indigenous perspectives.

One of the strongest sub-themes related to the hiring practices of educational administrators. This is evident in Kate's struggle to do department wide that included Indigenous perspectives with few English teachers on staff, and in the way Kim, Cristine and Julie rely on Dena for guidance when integrating Indigenous perspectives. When it comes to hiring practices within schools, Dena is adamant, "you can't hire people who are like you all the time…Growth only happens when you challenge your institution, but that sounds fine in words but for [administrators] to actually put them into practice, it's a huge roadblock" because it "challenges that core belief that exists within the education system" and "I don't think [administrators] understand how clearly [First Nation people] recognize it." Though Dena did not name that core belief, from the examples I discuss below it might be something along the lines of: *Indigenous knowledges aren't legitimate knowledges, or at least not legitimate enough to be prioritized or*

represented by Indigenous peoples. That core belief is a huge barrier to ethical learning spaces and relationships.

I was particularly interested in Dena's experience working within institutional structure of schooling because she could share experiences that captured systemic patterns of exclusion. When she prefaced stories about hiring practices and course planning that were shared in Chapter 6, she explained:

> Because the face I wear versus the culture I feel I represent, sometimes adults are very willing to say things to me that had I been a nice darker tone (*laughs*) they wouldn't say those things to me… As a person, a bi-racial person, when you look White and White privilege is part of your life, that part of that White privilege is hearing things from people … that… would never be said…to a First Nation person who looked stereotypically First Nation.

The face Dena wore was shunned by a group of four male principals when she suggested at a meeting with board administrators and principals to hire more First Nation teachers. Her suggestion was not taken seriously. Four more senior level non-Indigenous male colleagues dismissing her input and suggesting privately that she needed to watch her mouth made such a negative impression on her as a female First Nations woman, that it she subsequently reconsidered her own career aspirations. Her story reveals a work climate, where both racism and sexism are so embedded that decision makers are literally refusing to engage (i.e. listen to the opinions of and hire) Indigenous peoples. If we return to Ermine (2007) and Donald (2009), that decision compromises the possibility for an ethical space of engagement in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples meet in a relationship of non-domination as equal partners.

In the context of schooling, the implications of exclusionary thinking are relevant in the classroom and in course planning, as we also saw in Chapter 6 when Dena was passed over for teaching Native Studies courses in favour of less experienced non-Indigenous teachers. Dena notes:

> There are lots of people – non First Nation people – that can teach native studies compassionately. But when you're just giving it to people to fill a schedule there's such a danger in doing that. And it almost comes to the point where you don't see that danger as important enough to do something about it. That's the message that's sent to me as a teacher. I'm sure that's the message the [students] are getting in one form or another – even if they can't articulate it from where they see it. Even the non-native [students].

When I spoke separately to students during a focus group their responses affirmed Dena's certainty. I asked the following question:

> *Annette*: How would you like to see school educating students on First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives and issues?
> *Eric*: Clone [Dena]!
> *Annette*: Ok.
> *Gen*: Yeah. That's actually true. We need First Nation teachers though. It's not like we can actually clone our teacher. We need First Nation teachers.

It is a compliment to Dena for students to hold such a high opinion of her, but their awareness of what is lacking in schools – First Nation teachers – speaks volumes about the impact hiring practices are having on their learning. The students see the lack of First Nation teachers, but they are not privy to contentious hiring decisions behind it.

Hiring practices and course planning are not the only ways administrators can be supportive. As Chapter 6 explained, it was very impactful having a superintendent who took the time to drive to River HS, interact with students, listen to them, and offer to support their projects for reconciliation. He verbalized these commitments in front of teachers, students and First Nation community members, which I read as a step onto that ethical bridge (Aoki, 2005) between Indigenous communities and educational institutions. While this administrator was part of an organizational hierarchy he, like Dena, does not wield his position as one of control. When hierarchy serves to exercise control over subordinates it is, according to Dena, a pattern of organization that continues to structure schooling through colonizing logic.

> *Dena*: the hierarchy that exists in schools… it's almost something that's anti-academic… [T]here are lots of people who just completely think I'm nuts when I say that... Because you're dealing with people who teach way they were taught, lead the way they were led, and do what they were taught to do. I mean it goes right – you want to talk about a connection to residential schools and about the impact of parenting on generations, well, the way we teach and the way we lead in schools – that's an intergenerational impact as well – and we can't seem to break free of that.

Dena makes the point, that her "people" made decisions for "hundreds and hundreds of years" in a less hierarchical decision-making system, but so often even colleagues who agree with her struggle to imagine the education system any other way. Students too, are wary of authority even as they tried to work within and around it. For example, I began my observations of Dena's class in the wake of a small scandal. Her students had put together a social justice magazine, and

promoted it through twitter with a hashtag. However, the website, hosted by the board, was not working, so they sent a follow up tweet to this effect, which was interpreted by the principal as a slight against the competence of school board administration. Dena was called into a meeting with the principal, and a debrief between her and students ensured about what went wrong in their twitter communication, and the consequences that come with challenging authority. For both Dena and her students, the response from school administration was swift and certain: retract the tweet and refrain from publically embarrassing school board leadership. This lesson in challenging authority comes to bear on the boldness of Dena's students a few weeks later as they planned their documentary project. Their desire to pressure the school board to include mandatory Indigenous histories and perspectives is tampered by their hesitation to approach the principal for fear of reprisal, but reluctance to by-pass the principle and approach the board directly. Would their goal, to point out the lack of Indigenous perspectives being taught, be interpreted as criticism? In other words, would institutional hierarchy be the barrier to prioritizing Indigenous perspectives? The class strategizes. Maybe one of them should meet with the principal and ask for his permission or input. No, they decided it would be better if they stood together simply "informed" him of their intentions for the sake of respecting the "chain of command."

What is interesting throughout this scenario is the fact that Dena let students decide how to proceed. She purposefully did not use her authority to make students downplay their position even though she knew she would be reprimanded yet again if her students clashed with the opinions of school and board administrators. In keeping with the goal of making learning spaces more ethical spaces, administrators play an important role through the way in which they assert their authority to maintain compliance or to nurture student initiatives such as making a documentary to support the process of reconciliation. The pedagogical contradiction is thus: educators ask students to engage in their critical inquiry into their social world (i.e. the past and present colonial relationships) and then link this inquiry with collective action (i.e. reconciliation). However, to actually support students in doing so, it is important that anti-authoritative pedagogies afford youth the space to take leadership on those issues of importance to them (Steinberg, 2014). In this case I contend, the anti-authoritative approach modeled by Dena, their teacher, is also needed from school and board administrators in order to support

students in engaging the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on more equitable and ethical terms than previous generations.

In Dena's class, for example, she tries to give students the opportunity to make decisions about their learning as much as possible. She facilitates shared decision-making in circle discussions by saying things like "let's get consensus." Shared decisions translate into students' interactions with First Nation community members whom they consulted. The students learn how to communicate more respectfully with Indigenous peoples, particularly on topics surrounding reconciliation. For example, one First Nation educator asked students to be "careful" whom they approach because not all First Nation people want to talk about residential schools. Students are careful to follow the guidance of the community members: they only contact the people whose names had been given to them by First Nation community members and only ask them to speak about the topic(s) they were familiar with and comfortable sharing. There are ethical lessons to be learned at all levels when it comes to decolonizing the institutional decision-making practices of schooling and re-framing the relationship between all parties involved in the decision-making process.

This chapter outlined six main ethical lessons learned or findings from the project. It situated these findings in relation to relevant literature, and drew out implication for the ways in which classroom learning spaces can be ethical spaces for the engagement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. Each lesson learned is also valuable for students, teachers, and educational administrators. For students, we see that listening as an ethics of engagement is linked to respectful awareness and dialogue. For teachers, we see that having a safe space is not only about protecting students and making sure they are okay, but also taking the initiative to learn, taking the time to set the context before difficult discussions, and intervening in discourses that reproduce dominance. For educational administrators (and teachers, as there is overlap) we see that the knowledges and bodies welcomed into or excluded from educational spaces have a lot to do with ideas of ownerships and decision-making. It was through decision-making hierarchies that integrating Indigenous perspectives met substantial road blocks, whether that be through hiring practices, course planning and scheduling, or simply the actions of a single administrator to be (or not be) supportive. The final chapter will synthesize some key points to

take from the findings outlined in this chapter and offer some ways forward for research and for reconciliation.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

A Decolonizing Pedagogical Praxis and an Ethics for Reconciliation

> *The generation that's going to change things in the First Nation community… a lot of people say that's this generation. This is our youth right now. But I think it has to not just be First Nations. It has to be all people. I think that a lot of First Nation kids – and not necessarily because of the school but because of home and because of social media and because of other things - they're becoming informed about who they are. But there's this disconnect with non-First Nation kids. They don't understand their role [in reconciliation]. And that could throw the whole thing off track if there's not more effort put in… I guess I worry that if [integrating Indigenous perspectives] is not being done all the time you'll be left with leaders who still don't want to talk to First Nation people. You know, in 20 years these will be the kids who still don't want to talk to First Nation people because they don't understand, they don't have the desire to understand.*
>
> *- Interview with Dena*

Coming to this concluding chapter fills me with gratitude, and not because the end is finally near. Rather, it is because of the generous and valuable contributions teachers, students, administrators, and First Nation educators and community members shared with me during this project. Although much has been learned, in many ways it feels like scratching the surface of the possibilities that lie in decolonizing pedagogies. In this conclusion I will revisit the highlights of each chapter, of the project's findings, and future directions.

This project and its design are guided by two main questions: how are teachers integrating Indigenous perspectives, worldviews and issues into their classroom curriculum, and in what ways can learning spaces be guided by an ethics of relationality and co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing? In asking these questions I seek promising pedagogical practices that could be useful to teachers and educators of various capacities, and which illustrate what integrating Indigenous perspectives could look like in practice. I also aim to

trace the worldview(s) expressed in both curricula and in classroom discussions to understand the ways in which non-Indigenous ways of knowing (e.g. colonizing logics) are or are not a lens through which Indigenous perspectives were approached. Finally, I aim to address current literature, which outlines challenges teachers face when integrating Indigenous perspectives, and from a position of ethical relationality, suggest ways educational administrators, teachers, and students can work through these challenges.

To accomplish these objectives, Chapter 2 beings with an overview of Indigenous education in what is now Canada in order to provide historical context. The history of traditional Indigenous education and colonial policies of assimilation in education is then juxtaposed with a review of current literature that looked at the challenges of integrating Indigenous perspectives, as well as pedagogical approaches used by educators at secondary and post secondary levels, and frameworks to guide these approaches.

Chapter 3 asks how curriculum can be a bridge for building a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. It conceptualizes curriculum as broad, epistemologically open, and grounded in relationships between teachers, students, communities, and their world. It then unpacks the ways in which colonizing logics are embedded within current curricula and outlined a notion of decolonizing curricula that would work towards creating learning spaces that are based on an ethics of non-domination and the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews.

Chapter 4 explains that methodologically, this project is a critical ethnography that acknowledges the colonizing linkages between research and Indigenous peoples. Taking the notion of ethical engagements seriously, as elaborated in the theoretical framework, methodology is re-imagined as ethical relationship building. This means participants are contributors whose gift is to share their voices, histories and knowledges. While conscious of this, as a researcher I am also a participant, and my voice, history and knowledge, which come to bear on my interpretations. The methods used include classroom observations, teacher interviews, focus groups with students, a researchers journal, and numerous conversations with First Nation educators and community members. These methods are chosen to illustrate research relationships in different ways, and to include thoughtful reflection.

Chapters 5 and 6 present many of the stories and experiences contributors shared. A large part of these chapters focus on the pedagogy and perspectives of five high school English teachers. However, the voices of students and the contributions of First Nation educators and community members are also crucial because in my conceptualization, curriculum – particularly decolonizing curricula - is about relationships both inside and outside of the classroom, and understanding those relationships as interconnected rather than flowing from the teacher's authority. Chapter 5 focuses on worldview, and the ways classroom dialogue reproduces or disrupts a Eurocentric lens through which Indigenous perspectives are approached. This chapter explains the way Dena's class grapple with First Nation and postcolonial worldviews in parallel, and works to disrupt their own tendencies to analyze texts through the lens of their own experience. The other four classes approach texts through a critical but primarily non-Indigenous lens. As such, this chapter offers several comparisons based on dialogue that happened across classrooms. This is particularly rich when the different classes were discussing the same topic, or even the same passage from a novel.

Chapter 6 focuses on the classroom pedagogy of teachers, the strategies they use, and the ways in which dis/comfort with difficult knowledge shapes the relationship between teachers and students. Here, Dena's pedagogy is unique among the other teacher participants. It is grounded in a First Nation worldview that encompassed the content of the learning as much as the processes and protocols surrounding the learning (such as sharing decision making and consulting First Nation community members, respectively). The other teacher participants lean toward more teacher-centered approaches, which in some cases, I read as a response to their discomfort or unfamiliarity with the subject matter. The latter part of this chapter also follows the journey of Dena's students as they participated in the process of reconciliation through a class research project of their own design.

Chapter 7 discusses the main ethical lessons learned or findings of this project. Briefly, the critical approaches taken up by the majority of teacher participants were not necessarily decolonizing. I will elaborate on the significance of this point later in this chapter. Despite the ways classroom pedagogy, gaps in knowledge, and the organization of schooling reproduced colonizing logics, rich learning happened simultaneously. The findings indicate that the journey toward reconciliation is not straightforward, but rather a journey of dis/comfort.

The remainder of this chapter will point to some key points to take away from this project. It will synthesize some of the research findings and offer a view of what potentially lies beyond. It will also offer something practical. A list of ways classroom learning spaces can be more ethical spaces of engagement for Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. It is not an exhaustive list; it is based only on the lessons learned in this project.

Dena's Decolonizing Pedagogy

Dena's pedagogy situates worldviews in parallel. As a bi-racial woman, Dena is the embodiment of her pedagogy. In many ways her pedagogy is grounded in the First Nations worldview she learned in her community. She navigates the classroom, the school and the world Parwith a mindset that centered on balance, holism and fluidity, but wears a face that is often taken to be non-Indigenous and, as she said, "benefit[s] from White privilege."

As such, Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews co-exist within Dena, whether she wants them to or not. She is the meeting point on Aoki's bridge, and she invites her students to pause, linger, experience, and see the relationality between ways of knowing from a place in-between. From her vantage point, she sees that moving away from a colonial relationship and toward an ethical one requires more than critique: it requires transformation. As such, her decolonizing pedagogy seeks to challenge and transform the Eurocentrism in both the content of curricula and the organization of schooling. She does this in a number of ways, a few of which I will summarize.

First, Dena genuinely values the contributions and decision-making capacity of students. She encourages them to speak and ask questions even if they were asking out of sheer ignorance. She encourages them to create some of their own assignments and engage in inquiry based learning so their learning would not be teacher-centered. Adding to this, she sits in a circle with students at their level and facilitated conversations rather than leading. Moreover, her classroom is a fluid space – in the library, the drama room, outdoors, in a conference room - and the door was open to visitors. I remember one day, a student who was not from her class dropped by to say hello. She invited him to join in the class discussion but warned him the topic was heavy. He chose to stay but declined to participate. Dena also invites First Nation educators and community

members regularly or had her students take on assignments that involved reaching out. During this project, students consult with a panel of First Nation educators and community members about how to respectfully make a documentary raising awareness about Indigenous histories and residential schools. The input of community members is taken seriously, and in that sense, decision-making regarding what and how students learned, extends beyond the classroom and into the community.

Differentiating Between Decolonizing and Critical Approaches

Dena's decolonizing approach to pedagogical praxis matters in light of the previous chapter's discussion. Here, the most salient point to take away is that integrating Indigenous perspectives is not necessarily the same as decolonizing the classroom curricula. Both of these endeavours are valuable but are not achieved by the same means. Indigenous educators and those committed to decolonizing education may see this distinction, but based on the experiences and perspectives shared in this thesis, I do not believe it is clearly conceptualized by all non-Indigenous educators. I contend it is a distinction non-Indigenous educators (and educators of teacher candidates) must strive to understand more fully, because as this thesis has shown, integrating Indigenous perspectives can be done critically, but at the same time reproduce Eurocentric and non-Indigenous patterns of authority and hierarchies of knowledge in the classroom. I contend that educators who wish to challenge Eurocentrism in the curriculum may fail to achieve this goal through critical approaches (i.e. one that examines counter narratives in history, and encourages critical thinking) if these approaches stop at critique and critical understanding and do not act to change the very patterns of organization and ways of doing that produce Eurocentrism. Snelgrove, Dahmoon and Corntassel (2014) make a similar point about settler colonial studies, which as a critical discipline contributes to understanding settler colonialism but at the same time mirrors institutionalized knowledge and potentially re-centers and re-empowers non-Indigenous peoples. Moreover, as an approach it risks being disconnected from the transformative goals of Indigenous and anti-colonial resistance, resurgence, and repatriation. This is why the critical lens of postcolonialism, which Dena introduced to her students, was juxtaposed so crucially with the First Nation lens. The postcolonial critique gave non-Indigenous students a way to examine the "common sense" ideas and values that shaped

colonial history and trace their relevance to the present day. It aroused in them a desire to change the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples but did not provide an alternate framework for understanding how to achieve that change.

Change is also difficult for teachers, but in a slightly different way. As the discussion demonstrated, none of the five teacher participants struggled with critical approaches, but those who were less comfortable with Indigenous perspectives did struggle to step away from classroom pedagogy that was predominantly teacher generated. These teachers may not resist a decolonizing praxis as I have outlined here, but in calling for decolonizing praxis, I am mindful that actually moving toward it may provoke renewed dis/comfort over and above potentially discomforting subject matter.

The distinction between a decolonizing praxis and critical approaches to classroom pedagogy is where the formal curriculum falls short in advocating critical thinking and a plurality of perspectives, because neither of these requirements necessarily mean the structures and organization of schooling which reproduce Eurocentric knowledge and patterns of hierarchical authority are being fully challenged. Put another way, teachers are being asked to integrate Indigenous perspectives, address an achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, provide culturally responsive curricula and educational experiences, and I am skeptical about how successfully these goals can be achieved in the absence of an explicitly decolonizing pedagogy supported and modeled by educational decision makers through their policies, hiring practices, and official curricula. As such, if there is a contribution this thesis makes, I hope it is to show why the difference between critically integrating and decolonizing matters at the level of classroom practice, but also to show that the possibilities for decolonizing pedagogies at the classroom level are indeed shaped by decisions and relationships beyond classroom walls.

We are reminded in this thesis that challenging the structure of schooling with a decolonizing praxis has repercussions, even while educational institutions profess their commitment to reconciliation by making spaces for Indigenous worldviews or mandatory learning. Time and again, Dena was met with resistance from colleagues and administrators: when she tried to change the way her classroom and office space was shared and organized, when she suggested hiring more First Nation teachers, and when her students tweeted about the broken link to their social justice magazine. Her colleagues who were integrating Indigenous

perspectives through a critical (as opposed to a decolonizing) approach did not speak to me about resistance from colleagues and administrators. We can interpret this struggle through Derrida's (2000) notion of conditional hospitality: when patterns of authority are threatened, Indigenous perspectives are less welcome. They are relegated to history and social studies and risk being accepted through rhetorics of inclusion (i.e. as one of many perspectives). Educators committed to decolonizing must continue to challenge such rhetorics of inclusion in education just as others have noted similar rhetorics in political discourses of recognition (Coulthard, 2014), sovereignty (Manuel, 2015), and reconciliation (Simpson, 2014) that stop short of transformative change. That is also why a decolonizing praxis like Dena's is all the more important in classroom learning spaces, because it challenges students to have deeper engagements with reconciliation, where words and intentions are grounded in actions.

Ethical Learning Spaces for the Co-existence Indigenous and non-Indigenous Worldviews: Lessons Learned

As the discussion chapter explained, ethics is weaved into many aspects of this project. The findings indicated that for learning spaces to encourage engagements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing that are based on an ethics of relationality and non-domination, students, teachers and educational administrators all have a role to play. Throughout this project, there were many ways students, teachers, and administrative decision makers facilitated and hindered the creation of an ethical space. Based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter, I wish to summarize the discussion on ethical space with a number of conclusions that I offer as practical lessons learned in this project for working toward more ethical learning spaces.

- **Willingness to learn**. For teachers, students, and school boards, one of the most important ways of moving past discomfort and ignorance is to take initiative to learn. Using ignorance, disinterest or citing other priority areas as an excuse for not learning has the potential to perpetuate harmful cultural misunderstandings and silences.

- **Genuine resources that include rather than centre out**. To avoid tokenistic inclusion, students asked that Indigenous perspectives appear across subjects, units, and focus on

"multiple issues", rather than, for example, having a First Nation focused book in English class appear once a year in isolation from other English content.

- **Shared decision-making**. Strategies such as student led learning, democratic decision making, open and adaptable lessons, circle discussions, inquiry based learning, and First Nation community support are not all necessarily based in Indigenous approaches to learning but they can be used to resist colonizing patterns of authority.

- **Atmosphere and physical space**. The way spaces are arranged impacts the relationships within those spaces. Atmospheres that cultivate respect and trust, combined with a physical layout that promotes open and egalitarian relationships can contribute to more ethical engagements. This in contrast to learning spaces that are perceived as "owned" (i.e. belonging to a certain teacher) designated for certain subject matter (i.e. geography room), and open only to enrolled students. This point is related to **institutionalized hierarchies of knowledge**: do not ask Indigenous perspectives to fit within a particular "subject" or prescribed space!

- **Protecting students** and making sure they are okay. When class is over, emotions are not. It is impossible to know someone's past and present completely, and how it can impact the opinions they take. This also means supporting students when there is pushback from parents, administration, peers, and community arise. Support could be reassuring students, or speaking out in their defense of their words or actions.

- **Mediating and facilitating**. Certain conversations, such as those around residential schools, require a level of background knowledge and preparation to set expectations and context. This is where a teacher's willingness to learn is crucial, because it prepares them to mediate difficult discussions that arise in ways that are productive allow for deeper understanding. For example, inquiry based learning has to be overseen closely due to the sensitive and controversial content coupled with misinformation that continues to circulate on the internet and in old textbooks.

- **Respect**. More than good intentions for a pleasant face-to-face interaction, it is respecting a different set of values, and not measuring this set of values against your own.

- **Colleague support**. Having colleagues in a department who are willing to collaborate with each other, and in particular having staff members who are Indigenous or have deep knowledge of Indigenous socio-historical contexts creates a support network for teachers who integrate Indigenous perspectives. This is related to hiring practices that create robust departments as well as individual attitudes.

- **Indigenous community support**. Respectfully inviting community members into schools to share their knowledge or for consultation means a lot, but also requires and facilitates trust building.

- **Valuing a person's story as their truth**. This asks non-Indigenous peoples not to judge the worth of an Indigenous person's story based on non-Indigenous notions of truth or validity. In particular, it means not asking Indigenous community members and Elders to justify their truth through facts and textbooks, or to question it if it conflicts with your experience of the world.

- **Overarching philosophy**. How teachers and students approach texts can be very different depending on the overarching philosophy. Attempting to centre an Indigenous worldview means consciously attempting not to read the world through a non-Indigenous lens, and instead attempting to understand how core values and beliefs shape an Indigenous understanding of the world.

- **Intervene in discourses that re-inscribe dominance**. Colonial, racial, and gendered dominance find many ways into classroom dialogue, from undercurrents in conversations (e.g. history as heroes and holidays), to insensitive side comments (e.g. "that's gay"). In the context of Indigenous education it is urgent to intervene by making such comments visible and offer a counter discourse.

- **Administrative support and decision-making**. School board officials and principals have a powerful influence over the quality of classroom learning through the teachers they hire and the courses they assign to teachers. Multiple examples of assigning unqualified teaches to Native Studies and not prioritizing the hiring of Indigenous teachers for Native Studies (*and other*) courses were noted by participants in this project, who felt these practices were alienating to Indigenous students, staff, and local communities. This was one of the biggest barriers to creating ethical engagements and learning spaces.

- **Listening as an ethics of engagement**. This emphasizes communication and relationships as reciprocal, where there is a balance between voice and listening, and where listening is guided by an ethics that puts the 'other' prior to oneself.

There are probably many more considerations that could have been added above, and I offer this non-exhaustive list as something tangible educators can reflect on and be mindful of as they engage Indigenous ways of knowing or a decolonizing pedagogical praxis. The list also indicates that teachers do not cultivate ethical spaces alone, but by a web of engagements between students, administrators and the broader community.

Limitations and Future Directions

At the close of this project, I have come to understand the initial research questions in much greater depth, and consequently, see ways this project is subject to limitations and also where it prompts new questions to explore in future research. A limitation to this research is the researcher. I am new to research of this scale. I am a non-Indigenous settler-Canadian. I try to honour without appropriating Indigenous ways of knowing, to listen before I speak, and when I speak not to speak for. Even so, my interpretations are my own. On account of my own positioning, and my own learning journey, I acknowledge having many 'blind spots.' The more I learned from this project, the more I realize there are historical pieces missing in my own knowledge, settler colonial assumptions that have yet to be disrupted, and more that I can do to make my own teaching practice grounded in ethical relationality. I hope such limitations characterize only this moment and that by continuing the journey, my future endeavours will continue to find new awareness and understanding.

In my interpretation and analysis I value the contributions of all teachers, but there is only one teacher who takes a decolonizing approach and who centers a First Nation worldview in her teaching. There are probably many other teachers who do this in their own way, whose pedagogical praxis would add rich dimensions to this study and to the literature. This has to do with the scope of the research. The school board where this project took place had teachers at the elementary level who were working closely with local Indigenous communities to develop and deliver culturally relevant curricula. However, the location, the curricula and subject areas, and the ages of students were all sufficiently different from high school English that a separate project, or at least, a different project (with different questions and methods) would have been needed to include elementary level teachers and students.

Finally, this study focused on teachers and students. However, administrators were identified as influential in the way Indigenous perspectives were prioritized. To that end, future

research must not only look at the initiatives of teachers and students, but also principals and board level administration.

The direction for future research that stands out to me the most is reconciliation. In this project, I spoke to First Nation community members, students, teachers, and administrators who were all genuine in supporting the process of reconciliation, and many of whom were so eager to listen to First Nation partners and collaborate to develop pedagogy and educational experiences that were appropriate, respectful and benefit all students. Future research needs to support those engagements, and support rigorous (non-rhetorical) understandings of reconciliation that are tied to action because, as this project has shown, colonizing logics persist even in those classrooms aiming to take part in the process of reconciliation. Literature from the field of education that addresses reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada explores pedagogical possibilities of treaty education (Tupper, 2012) and place-based education (Scully, 2012), critiques history text book representations (Clark, 2007), discusses the responsibility of settler society (Regan 2011) and engages in the politics of apologizing and redress (Henderson & Wakeham, 2013, 2009). However, this literature leaves a gap in understanding how students, teachers, and school boards are engaging in the process of reconciliation through educational initiatives, and how reconciliation is being taken up in classrooms. I argue that now, as more educational organizations work to address the TRC calls to action, is a crucial moment for research that aims to understand and support this process. This project begins to address that gap through a pedagogical praxis for reconciliation that centered on Dena, her students, and First Nation community members. However, it serves to show how much work is to be done, and also what opportunity there is to have this work serve the TRC Calls to Action and to do so in partnership with Indigenous peoples and communities, rather than creating a branch of academic literature for a scholarly audience.

To further research that aims to understand and support the process of reconciliation, there would be value to research projects that bridge school board level educational policy with youth participation in the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. As some school boards respond to the TRC Calls to Action, it's important to understand how students engage in the process of reconciliation through school or classroom based initiatives, for what reasons, and with what support. The TRC recommends governments,

educators, and Indigenous partners work together to implement, monitor, and report on Education for Reconciliation initiatives (TRC, 2015a). Each Indigenous educator interviewed for my doctoral research expressed certainty that it will be the young generation who will carry forward the momentum of reconciliation. "Change," one Elder put it, "will happen with the youth." I contend the culmination of the TRC's work presents a pressing moment of opportunity. That is, in order to respond effectively to the TRC recommendations, it is critical to understand how youth are participating in the process of reconciliation, and from a policy and decision making perspective, how schools can be places that support youth involvement in the process of reconciliation. As Indigenous scholar Verna Kirkness (2013) notes, "leadership… is not the purview of the educated or the elected. It is a time-honoured belief among Indigenous peoples that each person is born with innate strengths that can assist in the overall betterment of the community" (p. ix). As such, when educators ask young people to link their critical inquiry into the social world (i.e. the past and present colonial relationships) with collective action (i.e. reconciliation), it is important that anti-authoritative and decolonial pedagogies afford youth the space to lead (Steinberg, 2014), and to engage the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on more equitable and ethical terms than previous generations. That is message resonates with the findings of this dissertation and is one that I wish to carry forward in future research.

Concluding thoughts: How can Non-Indigenous Peoples Come to Understand Their Roles and Responsibilities in the Process of Reconciliation?

I come away from this project with a larger appreciation for the necessity of, and the possibilities of a decolonizing pedagogical praxis in the context of reconciliation. I have taken the lessons learned from Dena and from the discussion of ethical engagements and tried to consciously model these in my own teaching practice. I offer these approaches and considerations to students as possibilities for how integrating Indigenous perspectives might look like conceptually and in practice, explaining that integration is not only the content we teach but the processes by which we engage, and the relationships these engagements create. In particular, my understanding of what reconciliation means has changed, even since being in Dena's classroom. I find myself contemplating questions including: what does it mean for Indigenous nations to reassert sovereignty over their traditional lands, through traditional systems of governance, and in

areas such as education? What do non-Indigenous peoples need to learn in order to understand and support this resurgence? How can these topics be broached through curricula in the context of reconciliation? In this project, I did not see evidence that teachers and students were ready to grapple with these questions (in terms of having the background knowledge, and being emotionally prepared to confront the colonizing logics surrounding land that continue to give legitimacy to the settler society and undermine Indigenous rights to live as sovereign nations on their traditional territories).

By advocating for more of a focus on land and sovereignty (i.e. through treaty education, etc.) I do not mean to downplay the ways in which the legacy of residential schools continues to be central to reconciliation. Instead, I am suggesting 1) that sovereignty is not just a topic for Native Studies (OME, 2000); it is a cross curricular topic, and 2) not exploring land and sovereignty in connection with reconciliation leaves a layer of (mis)understanding, where colonizing logics legitimize settler presence on the land and undermine Indigenous sovereignty. Curricula needs to centre Indigenous perspectives on these topics as much as it needs to debunk dominant versions of history that omit Indian residential schools and policies of assimilation. The students who took part in this project were ready to do the latter, and I believe they can do the former.

As this final chapter comes to a close, I wish to reflect on the relevance of this project in the current moment of reconciliation. This thesis began with some words on the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada to mark the context from which I write. It asked at the outset how non-Indigenous (i.e. settler Canadian) peoples, particularly educators, can come to understand their roles and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation. Keeping in mind that most student participants in this project were non-Indigenous, much of their learning focused on understanding what reconciliation meant. According to the TRC (2015), "reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform Canadian society so that our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace, and prosperity on these lands we now share" (p. 7). Transformation, like a decolonizing pedagogical praxis, is not a simple request. To be inspired toward transformation, students had to see that they had personal connection to – and a stake in - history and reconciliation. Forming this personal connection was unique to everyone, just as everyone's role

in reconciliation and what it means to them, depends on who they are and where they are coming from. There is no prescription. As Dena explained:

> When I talk to [students] about residential schools… there's always this connection that students here make – for one reason or another they come from really difficult situations. So even though someone might say it's hard to teach kids when they come from backgrounds where maybe the stereotypes have been reinforced at home… those kids understand challenge… It's not despite their backgrounds that they understand First Nation issues; it's actually because of their backgrounds.... And you'll hear students say things like, 'my family tells me this, but now I understand that it's this.'

Learning about residential schools, she continues, helps students make those connections even if their own experiences are "not completely the same." Dena also notes this connection is strengthened when students realize how closely they live to and interact with residential school survivors in their daily lives. In making a connection students acknowledge someone else's experiences. Speaking about students, Dena says:

> When they know that you're connected, or in my case that I'm connected with the community, and that people in my family went to residential schools it kind of awakens them to 'oh, this happened to people who are related to people I know' and… they're less likely to just say, 'well I don't want to listen' or 'I don't believe' or whatever. There's a lot of power in speaking from that personal experience.

Dena's words share a crucial aspect of ethical relationality, where in the face of difficult and almost unbelievable knowledge, there is pause, and a conscious attempt not to evaluate someone else's life experience against one's own. Dena explains, students "[walk] away with so much more from having that personal contact" and they see the ways the topics they are researching are not just "issues or political things, but at the same point they are having a direct impact on the communities." Kim echoes the importance of making personal connections to local history, noting, "We talk about black history, especially in this area there's the underground railroad here… and [students] are very well versed in that… and sometimes I think it's eye-opening for them to see that there are other issues as well." Cristine recalls:

> We do have several [First Nation communities] within our county... A while ago there was an issue... with the land rights, um people had signs on their property saying 'not for sale'… People can easily get riled up… I think it's important for our next generation to be more open minded and more accepting than like maybe my parents' generation.

For a personal connection, students can find locally relevant issues like residential schools, land disputes and black history in their own back yard and listen to people in their community. That

connection builds understanding of one's roles and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation because students come to see themselves in relation to the residential school survivors and the First Nation community members. They also learn they have a listening role in the process of reconciliation, rather than leading or prescribing a path forward. Kim explains an experience she shared with some former students:

> One year… we had a staff member who had died, and I had had a [traditional First Nation] dancer come to the class to give a talk and… it turned out that he had known our teacher who died, and so he did a whole ceremony with the students gathered around... And he told one of the kids to take it outside after he burned [the sacred medicine] and put it on the grass… it was really nice to see how they embraced it and how meaningful that was to them… Everybody was quite upset that day, and so the fact that he did this... he said, 'we're going to put the dancing on hold for a minute and do this first' so it was a really good experience.

Kim goes on to describe the calm that settled through the class as a kind of healing. The ceremony the First Nation community member allowed them to participate in was a gift of respect to help them honour the memory of their former teacher. They couldn't have received that gift if the doors of their classroom hadn't been open, and if they hadn't allowed themselves to listen.

Like in Kim and Dena's classrooms, the doors are opening in many schools and classrooms. There is momentum for reconciliation, and a genuine desire among many educators and students to embark on their own journeys of understanding and participating in reconciliation just as the teachers and students did above. Students like Ian are reflecting on their learning experiences, and telling us educators they believe "it's important to recognize like, the First Nations history, because it is our history." Among students, responses like Ian's were the most common when I asked why Indigenous perspectives mattered. I agree with him, but I also believe there is much more to decolonizing classrooms, nurturing more ethical learning spaces, and moving forward the process of reconciliation. These are the complex tasks to unravel for educators and students. They require disruptive changes to the way relationships are navigated in the classroom and beyond, and they require that non-Indigenous Canadians acknowledge and value different ways of being in and understanding the world. Dena's class offered a glimpse of what is possible when a First Nation teacher's decolonizing approach stirs in her students a "passion" to "take action." She recalled to me one day during an interview, "You know I have

students that will say, 'I felt like I left with an understanding of English, but of the world too'." It is a special impact when something has changed within the students - changed the way they see themselves in relation to Indigenous communities and histories. It illustrates the potential for curriculum in connection with communities and educators to open the door for students, whoever they may be, to understanding their roles and responsibilities in the process of reconciliation, and to walk the parallel path of a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Appendix A: Research Request to School Board

Dear (Superintendent responsible for Indigenous education),

My name is Annette Furo and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa seeking to conduct research for my doctoral thesis at a few schools within your board. I have chosen to contact your board because of my familiarity with its schools, the populations within its catchment area, and the local region. I believe your teachers and students will make excellent participants for this study.

Below you will find a detailed summary of the research project, its duration, and requirement for participants. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and has successfully completed the ethical review process at the University of Ottawa.

Summary of research project

The research project touches upon thee main areas: curriculum implementation, integrating Indigenous perspectives, and classroom culture. The project will study how elementary teachers are integrating Indigenous perspectives into their classroom practice, what resources and teaching strategies are being used, and how students and teachers perceive of their learning experiences. The Ontario Ministry of Education has noted the integration of Indigenous perspectives is currently a priority area, important for *all* students in order to achieve more equitable and inclusive education and to build respectful awareness of Indigenous cultures.

A central purpose of the research is to understand how integrating Indigenous perspectives can impact classroom culture – in terms of values, ways of thinking and doing, and the ways students communicate with each other and with the broader communities they belong to. Curriculum materials and resources can promote a wide range of values and perspectives, but have been criticized for traditionally privileging European perspectives at the expense of many other points of view. My research will analyze the curriculum materials teachers are currently using to integrate Indigenous perspectives. Then through a period of classroom observations, it will consider how the curriculum materials, combined with instructional strategies and learning tasks impact classroom dialogue, and in turn, the way students learn to think about and relate to the diverse communities around them. Interviews with teacher participants and a focus group with students will follow classroom observations to gather their perceptions of the learning experiences.

The reason I choose to focus on Indigenous perspectives is because history has left our students with many challenges surrounding Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations in Canada generally, but also in specific local regions. If students are to address these challenges when they become adults and community leaders, their education must establish a sound foundation in understanding, respecting, and communicating effectively with various points of view.

A project like this is needed because teachers across the country continue to express hesitation about integrating Indigenous perspectives, partly because the history of Indigenous perspectives in the school curriculum has been one of much silence and misunderstanding. However, times are changing as educators, students and local communities are working together to build shared cultural understandings and incorporate the knowledge they gain across the curriculum – from math to history to civics to environmental education. What is needed are stories, experiences, and best practices from teachers in order to lead, inspire, and share with other teachers in the board

and across the province to make Indigenous perspectives present in all classrooms. As such, I think there are great opportunities for this research to have board-specific value in addition to contributing to educational knowledge more generally.

Types of data collection

The research project is qualitative. Data will be collected in the following ways:

- an initial interview with the classroom teacher (audio recorded)
- an analysis of the curricular materials being used by the teacher and students
- classroom observations (note taking, journaling)
- one focus group per class with 5-6 students (audio recorded)
- a follow up interview with the teacher (audio recorded).

Number of teacher/class participants

I am seeking **3** teacher participants who have their own class and teach within the grade 4-8 level. Any type of classroom is suitable for this study, as well as students of all backgrounds.

Duration

The observation period will last for a total of 3 months in order to ensure that adequate time can be spent with each teacher and his/her class. The amount of time with each class will be 3 half-days each week. It is my intent to begin classroom observations in early spring 2015.

Ethical considerations

As a researcher, I think it is very important to build effective relationships between researchers and teacher practitioners, and to design a study that will benefit the participants as much as it will the researcher. At the same time, I do not intend to make this project or my presence invasive for the teacher. The teacher must be willing to integrate Aboriginal perspectives but can do so using the resources and methods of his/her choice, and is not required to make an additional time commitment outside of regular school hours.

During class observations, students are not required to interact with the researcher. The data collected will only pertain to students who consent to participate. In focus groups, questions will be addressed to all participants and answering is voluntary. The privacy of participants will be protected by ensuring their anonymity and by explaining in a detailed consent form how the collected data will be used and securely stored.

Should you have questions or require more detailed information about any aspect of this study please feel free to contact me.

Finally, should you at any time have concerns about this study you may always refer to the University of Ottawa's Office of Research Ethics and Integrity (ethics@uottawa.ca | 613- 562-5387).

Sincerely,

Annette Furo, MEd, BEd, BSocSci
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Title of the study: Decolonizing the classroom curriculum: Indigenous knowledges, colonial logics, and ethical spaces

Name of Researcher: Annette Furo

Affiliation: University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study named above. By signing this form, I am indicating that I have read and understood the form and agree to participate in the study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to learn more about how teachers are integrating Aboriginal perspectives into their teaching practice, and what impact this has on the learning environment.

Participation: My participation will consist of carrying out my regular teaching duties during school hours while the researcher observes my class for three half days each week over a period of three months. I will also be asked to participate in two audio-recorded interviews of about one in duration. Only the researcher and myself will be present for these interviews. One interview will take place before the observation period begins, and the other interview upon completion of the observation period.

Risks: My participation in this study will require that I volunteer information about my professional approach to, and pedagogical rationale for integrating Aboriginal perspectives into my teaching practice. I will not be required to disclose personal information or personal views, and the researcher has assured me that I may decline to answer a question if it makes me feel uncomfortable.

Benefits: My participation in this study will allow me to reflect on, and develop my teaching practice in an area that is currently a priority to the Ontario Ministry of Education and to my school board.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I share will remain confidential. I understand that the contents of my contribution will be used only for the researcher's doctoral dissertation. Some of my contributions may be referenced in related research papers, reports, and presentations, however, my name and the name of my school will not be disclosed in any materials arising from this research.

Conservation of data: The data collected by the researcher during interviews and observations will consist of audio recordings, transcripts, and notes. It will be kept in a secure manner in encrypted files belonging to the researchers and a copy of the data will be kept on the University of Ottawa campus during the full period of retention.

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 such as coercion or pressure to change my mind. If I choose to withdraw, all data in the researcher's possession that was gathered before my withdrawal will be destroyed within 7 days and this communicated to me in written confirmation by the researcher.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Annette Furo of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, (supervised by research advisor Awad Ibrahim).

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

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

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

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

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix C: Student/Parent Focus Group Consent Form

Title of the study: Decolonizing the classroom curriculum: Indigenous knowledges, colonial logics, and ethical spaces

Name of Researcher: Annette Furo

Affiliation: University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the research study named above. Signing this form means that my parent/guardian and I have read and understood the form *together* and we both agree to my participating in the study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to learn more about how teachers are integrating Aboriginal perspectives into their teaching practice, and what impact this has on the learning environment.

Participation: My participation will consist of attending one focus group with 4-5 other students from my class. The focus group will last 30-45 minutes and be held at my school during regular school hours, either at lunch or during the time my teacher approves. The researcher will ask questions related to the topics my class has studied and the activities we did. She will direct these questions to everyone in the focus group and I will have an opportunity to answer as many or as few questions as I choose.

Risks: My participation in this focus group will not require me to answer any question that makes me feel uncomfortable. I will not be centered out and asked specifically to answer a particular question. I will not be required to give personal information or to speak to the researcher outside of this focus group.

Benefits: My participation will allow my teacher and my class to participate in a study that will help my teacher to develop his/her teaching practice in an area that is currently a priority to the Ontario Ministry of Education and to my school board.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I understand that the information gathered in the focus group will be used only for the researcher's doctoral dissertation. Some of the information may be referenced in related research papers, reports, and presentations, however, my name and the name of my school will not be disclosed in any materials arising from this research.

Conservation of data: The data collected by the researcher during the focus group will be audio-recorded. It will be kept in a secure manner in encrypted files belonging to the researcher and a copy of the data will be kept securely on the University of Ottawa campus.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time. If I choose to withdraw, all of my contributions to the researcher's data collection before my withdrawal will be destroyed within 7 days and this communicated to me in written confirmation by the researcher.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Annette Furo of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, (supervised by research advisor Awad Ibrahim).

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

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

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

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

Student's signature: _____   Date: _____

Guardian's signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix D: Guiding Interview Questions for Teachers

The following questions guide semi-structured interviews with teachers. The conversation style interviews are meant to be relaxed and as such may include additional questions depending on the teacher's responses, experiences or concerns. Questions were tailored for each teacher to address the context of her class.

Cristine, Julie, and Kim

1) Can you describe your experiences teaching First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?
2) How would you describe your comfort level with First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?
3) How do you feel the students respond?
4) Have you encountered any challenges or resistance?
5) What prompted you to include First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?
6) Have you had any professional development training about integrating First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?
7) When I say integrating, I have a certain idea of what that means in mind. What does it mean to you to integrate something into your teaching practice?
8) What resources do you use for integrating First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives? (If applicable: Where did you find the lessons you were using in Diary?)
9) What kind of teaching strategies have you used? What is your approach?
10) How do you feel First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives to be relevant to this school community, and to the broader local community?
11) By participating in this research, what would you like to get out of this for yourself?

Kate

1) What things did you think worked well in the lessons that integrated First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?
2) Were there moments or aspects that you found challenging? (maybe recap earlier experience)
3) How did you see students reacting to the First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives? (I.e. positively, negatively, engaged, curious).

4) Were there particular moments (events, interactions, learning activities) that stand out to you in a positive light?

5) What are some things you would modify (build upon, or give less emphasis to) the next time you integrate First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives for this subject/age group?

6) When I say integrating, I have a certain idea of what that means in mind. What does it mean to you to integrate something into your teaching practice?

7) Have you had any professional development training about integrating First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?

8) If you were to continue to integrate First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives, what kind of support do you feel would assist you in doing that?

9) Why is it important for *all* students to have First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives integrated into their courses?

10) How do you feel First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives to be relevant to this school community, and to the broader local community?

11) What would you like to get out of your participation in this research?

Dena Interview #1

1) Why is it important for *all* students to have First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives integrated into their courses?

2) Can you describe your experience teaching First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?

3) How would you describe your comfort level with First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?

4) How do you feel the students respond?

5) Have you encounter any challenges or resistance?

   a. You mentioned denial of history last week, are you able to think of an example or experience maybe something that was said, to illustrate 'denial'

6) What has helped and supported you, or what would help and support you?

7) What prompted you to include First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives department wide?

8) Have you had any professional development training about integrating First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?

9) What does it mean to you to integrate something into your teaching practice?

10) What resources do you use for integrating First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives?

11) What kind of teaching strategies have you used? (project based, etc.)

12) You mentioned the anti-discrimination approach your department takes, is there any other approach/overarching idea that you use to frame the discussion?

13) Have you found that your strategies or approaches have been limited by the structure of courses and units?

14) How do you feel First Nation, Métis & Inuit perspectives to be relevant to this school community, and to the broader local community?

15) By participating in this research, what would you like to get out of this for yourself, for your class, your school community, your professional community?

16) How many students at this school?

Dena Interview #2

1) Can you recap what happened yesterday, what some of the conversation was about?

2) How do you use stories in your teaching, and why are stories important even if they're not traditional stories.

3) How do you think, or use, or connect to the learning space? And why is spatial awareness important?

4) Can you tell me a little of what you know about traditional hospitality. What is the thinking behind being so open, so welcoming?

5) What role does school need to play in reconciliation?

6) How can individual people work to change the relationship i.e. teachers, students, admin.

7) Can the classroom be an ethical space? What needs to happen?

Appendix E: Guiding Questions for Focus Groups

The following questions guide focus groups with students. Questions were tailored for each focus group to address the context of their class.

Students from Kim's class

1) Was this the first time you read a novel in an English course that included First Nation history and issues?

2) Did you like *Three Day Road*?

3) What things about this book or from your class discussions really had an impact on you?

4) We also talked about biased accounts of history – like remembering war heroes, or the chapter you read about Thanksgiving. Is it important for everyone to know this less known history? Why?

5) What about the day everyone discussed residential schools. We talked about the language used in church and government apologies and whether it was sincere, we talked about the impact of being separated from your family, and the cycle of abuse that began as a result. We can't undo what happened but how do we go forward as a country, or as neighbors and peers?

6) Has reading *Three Day Road* made you think about your own identity?

7) Has reading *Three Day Road* impacted the way you think of yourself in relation to First Nation people?

8) Even though we weren't there throughout colonial history, we know that First Nation communities still feel the impacts today, do you think we share some responsibility in working to change that – to put things as right as they can be?

Students from Dena's class

1) What things about this unit – either *Three Day Road* or from your class discussions - really had an impact on you, (e.g. discussions, guests, etc.).

2) How did you feel when the conversation about genocide came up?

3) Why is it important to learn about First Nation issues and perspectives?

4) How would you like to see school educating students about First Nation perspectives and issues?

5) You've said it's important for all Canadians to know the history and to understand how that history impacts present day situations. You're Canadians or at least living in Canada. Has reading *Three Day Road* made you think about your own identity?

6) Has reading *Three Day Road* impacted the way you think of yourself in relation to First Nation people?

7) Do you feel Canadians have some responsibility?

8) As a country, how do we move forward?

9) What would you say to a teacher who is hesitating to teach this stuff because he or she is afraid of the controversy and the different opinions that might come up?

Appendix F: University of Ottawa Ethics Approval

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

Ethics Approval Notice

Social Sciences and Humanities REB

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

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Role
Awad	Ibrahim	Education / Education	Supervisor
Annette	Furo	Education / Education	Student Researcher

File Number: 06-14-12

Type of Project: PhD Thesis

Title: Decolonizing the classroom curriculum: Colonial logics, Indigenous knowledges, and ethical spaces

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
03/02/2015	03/01/2016	Ia

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:
N/A

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