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What Do the Stories of Indigenous Youth Reveal About Their Educational Experiences?

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MEd, University of Alberta, 2006

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

While the voices of Indigenous youth in other parts of the world have been sought out, no

studies have specifically focused on the educational experiences of urban Indigenous

youth in Canada. This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of youth-

adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in Western

Canada. The study was approached from a postcolonial perspective aligning with Native

Theory. This position is grounded on the premise that the experiences and stories of

participants reveal their lived realities. Indigenous youth, 18 to 21, were recruited through

targeted information sessions and word of mouth. Over 30 youth expressed interest in the

study, but only five participated. Following traditional Indigenous protocols in alignment

with Indigenous Research Methodologies, individual face to face interviews were

conducted using the Responsive Interview Model. The verbatim transcripts were coded

using pre-determined categories, as well as emerging In Vivo categories. The resulting

themes were used to construct a collaborative story presenting the participants'

experiences as a single story. The study reveals that Indigenous youth desire youth-adult

relationships based on mutual respect, where adults and youth are equal partners. There is

a desire for supports when faced with academic and social concerns. Some individuals

experienced internal conflict due to the continued colonialistic nature of Whitestream

education. This study contributes to positive social change in that when educators and

educational leaders know the lived experiences of Indigenous youth within urban

Whitestream schools, they can create educational environments better suited to the

unique needs of urban Indigenous youth.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the many Indigenous children, youth, and adults whose stories have not yet been heard or acted upon and the educators seeking relationships with their students.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to acknowledge the guiding hand of the Creator, who has placed individuals on the path with me not only to support me but challenge me as well.

I humbly acknowledge the support, encouragement, and guidance of my committee chair and mentor on this journey, Dr. Leslie Van Gelder. You have become more than an academic colleague; you have become a true friend on this journey.

Dr. Michael E. Marrapodi, as my methodologist, took a risk in supporting my work. Indigenous Research Methodology is still establishing itself within Western Academia. Thank you for asking the tough questions and pushing my methodology forward.

Thank you to Dr. Danielle A. Hedegard, my University Research Reviewer, for guiding me through the rigors of academic research while I pursued a non-traditional path.

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I want to acknowledge my many Elder teachers and mentors; every short conversation guided along the way. I would especially like to acknowledge the contributes that the Late Narcisse Blood and the Late Gerry Woods made to my journey. There is seldom a day that goes by that I do not think about you.

I have been privileged to have deep conversations with Indigenous scholars Marie Battiste, Leroy Little Bear and Gregory Cajete, as well as Non-Indigenous scholars, the

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. Seeking out the voices of students in detailing their educational experiences has become a way of facilitating systemic change (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, 2009; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003). While the voices of Indigenous youth have been sought out in Aotearoa New Zealand (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Bishop et al. 2003), Australia (Carnes & Robinson, 2014; McKeown, 2011; Saggers, 2015; Smyth & Robinson, 2015) and the United States (Cerecer, 2013; Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005), few studies have recorded the lived experiences of Canadian Indigenous youth, in terms of their educational experiences (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lessard, Caine & Clandinin, 2015; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Stelmach, Kovach, & Steeves, 2017). Knowing the lived experiences of Indigenous youth will help educators come to know how the current educational system and its Whitestream practices impact Indigenous youth. Reflecting upon such knowledge, educators may change their practices to more effectivity assist Indigenous youth in navigating and succeeding in Whitestream educational systems. In moving any educational systems forward, historical knowledge of how that system arose is required. In order to move forward, we need to know where we have been and what we want the future to be (Battiste, 2013).

In this investigation, an understanding and appreciation of Indigenous educational history is presented. Moving from an historical preceptive, the problem statement and purpose of the study are presented. The conceptual framework of the study is detailed

followed by the nature of the study. As several terms are unique to the area of Indigenous studies, they are defined for the reader. Assumptions of the study are present as are the scope and delimitations. The limitations and significance of the study are reviewed.

Background

For most of its existence, western formal education for Indigenous people in Canada has been aimed at assimilation. Duncan Campbell Scott, the head of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, established that the purpose of the Indian Residential School System was to educate the Indian out of the child; to turn Indigenous children into whites for the students' benefit (National Archives of Canada, 1920; Rheault, 2011). Federally-funded Indian Residential Schools operated in Canada for over 150 years, until 1996 (Anglican Church of Canada, 2018a). In the 1970s, First Nation communities began to reassume control over education. However, they continue to be accountable to the federal department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The federal structure isolates communities from each other and provincially funded schools. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for public education within their political boundaries. At the same time, each First Nation reserve or federally funded school is the responsibility of INAC (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2012). The Indian Act (Government of Canada, 1985) places responsibility and, thus, accountability of education for Indian children in the offices of INAC. Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982, delegates authority for education to the provinces concerning educational matters for all youth not covered under the Indian Act.

In 2010, the Memorandum of Understanding for First Nations Education in Alberta was agreed to and signed by representatives of the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First

Nations, Treaty 7 Management Corporation, Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, the

Alberta Minister of Education and the Minister of Indigenous Relations, as well as the

Canadian Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (Gov'ts of Alberta &

Canada, 2010). As an attempt at educational decolonization, this agreement outlined the

vision, principles, commitments, and strategies for improving education for Indigenous

students in Alberta regardless of where they attend school in the province (Gov't of

Alberta & Canada, 2010). Despite advancements in the delivery of educational services

to Indigenous youth, systemic barriers persist.

In 1996, the Indian Resenditial School system era came to a close; however, the

effects of the residential schools' educational legacy remain. The Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was established as part of the 2006 Indian

Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The TRC began public hearing of the

personal stories of Residential School survivors in 2008. Throughout the public events,

survivors revealed their experiences of abuses while being educated in the federally

sponsored system. With the conclusion of the TRC of Canada's tenure in 2015, the

personal and intimate history of activities in the Residential Schools were unveiled.

Whitestream educators continue to view their educational experiences as the norm

and standard of achievement (Ali, 2012; Checkoway, 2010; Smyth & Robinson, 2015),

yet the student population they serve is becoming increasingly ethnoculturally diverse. In

attempting to address the increased ethnocultural diversity, a multicultural approach is

being applied by Albertan Education (AB ED), primarily through the provincial social

studies program (AB ED, 2005c, 2007f, 2007g, 2007h, 2007i, 2007j). Multicultural

education, as described by Banks, is providing an educational experience from multiple

ethnocultural perspectives within a system that is founded upon a set of democratic ideals (as cited in Tucker, 1998). This systemic perspective is demonstrated by Social Studies programs in Alberta, based on concepts of pluralism or multiculturalism. The Alberta Social Studies Program Rationale and Philosophy states: "Central to the vision of the Alberta social studies program is the recognition of the diversity of experiences and perspectives and the pluralistic nature of Canadian society" (AB ED, 2005c, p. 1).

Multiculturalism, as practiced in Canadian schools, follows the educational perspectives of Banks (2001); it is a multicultural education that focuses on a generalized awareness and knowledge of other cultures. It does not address the lived ethnocultural realities of the students being taught. The inclusion of minority perspectives, content, and experiences become extras to a base curriculum (Battiste, 2013), and as extras, are seldom included due to the content weight of the prescribed curriculum. The Whitestream educational experience remains Eurocentric at its foundations despite the inclusion of minority knowledge content (Battiste, 2013; Denis as cited in Belanger & Walker, 2009; Grande, 2003). Addressing ethnocultural perspectives, content, and experiences from a multicultural position renders the life experiences of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized students invisible (Cavanagh, 2009). Battiste (2013) wrote that for educational decolonization to take place, all Peoples, not just Indigenous, should reflect on who they are, rather than whom they are told to be. This reflection on what is desired echoes the banking system of education, as described by Freire (1970/2005), where students are perceived as empty vessels that need to be filled. Freire stated that the oppressor would need to rely on the power of the oppressed to change the system. When Lorde (1984/2007) stated, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.

They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (p. 3), she was speaking about the condition of being different within a society that attempts to view all from a hegemonic perspective. Until the dominant social structure recognizes its privileged position, and authentically shares its power with minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009), the status quo continues. To begin this change, Battiste (2013) suggested a third educational space, like the third space suggested by Aikenhead and Jegede (1999) and Cajete (1994): space where all scholars, regardless of identity, examine the foundations of education. Ethnocultural identity is not set aside but is the lens through which discussions take place. By recognizing the culturality of Whitestream education, the disregard of the ethnoculturality of others can be addressed (Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009).

In addressing the culturality of an education system delivered from a Whitestream middle-class ethos, the concept of the 'other' still exists. How teachers perceive their students, their students' family, and the communities from which their students come from, dramatically influences the position from which instruction begins (Gay, 2010: Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009). Shields, Bishop, and Mazawi relied on Bishop and Glynn's (as cited in Shields et al., 2005) definition of deficit thinking and pathologizing the lived experiences of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009). Shields et al. described the situation this way:

> …a process where perceived structural-functional, cultural, or
> epistemological deviation from an assumed normal state is ascribed to
> another group as a product of power relationships, whereby the less

powerful group is deemed to be abnormal in some way. Pathologizing is a

form of colonization used to govern, regulate, manage, marginalize,

primarily through hegemonic discourse. (Shields et al., 2005, pp. x)

As Shields et al. (2005) found, deficit thinking reduces expectations for students as well

as setting up levels of superiority, which in turn lead to feelings of frustration and

exploitation as the efforts of well-intended individuals and groups fail to produce the

desired results (Ryan, 1972/1976). Failure results not from intent or effort but

misplacement. Ryan's (1972/1976) 'angry givers' saw no progress and thus began to

resent the very people they set out to help. Ryan found that the slow progress attained by

programs aimed at large scale social change can frustrate individuals who perceive no

systemic change despite time and increased financial support of social programs. Battiste

(2013) pointed out that Indigenous communities need to identify what is important to

them, educationally, if Indigenous education is to become equitable and equal in status to

the Whitestream. Critical conversations will determine what is essential. While these

critical conversations involve all stakeholders, the voices of Indigenous youth are

especially valuable in determining the processes used to satisfy the educational needs of

Indigenous communities (Battiste, 2013). While the Albertan educational system is

changing to increase overall academic achievement, Indigenous youth can speak to the

effectiveness of the changes. The voices of Indigenous youth through their personal

stories can tell educators what is working effectively and what is not (Hare & Pidgeon,

2011).

  The field of 'student voice' has undergone three significant waves of interest

since its establishment in the early 1970s (Silberman, 1971). During the first wave of

investigation, Silberman (1971), Feshbach (1969), and Mallery (1962) collected the stories of high school students. The focus of the second wave shifted from non-achievers and students at the margins to the voices of engaged, articulate youth who originated from the Whitestream middle-class ranks of North America (Beattie, 2012; Bertrand, 2014; Czerniawski, 2012).

Bridging the second and third waves of student voice research, Bishop and Berryman (2006) recorded and shared the educational experiences of Māori youth and found that they do not share the same experience as their Pākehā (European descent) peers. Shields et al. (2005) investigated the educational situations of students in the United States, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Israel. Shields et al. found that systemic pathologies, not only negatively impact educational achievement, but appear to work towards ensuring that minoritized, racialized, and marginalized students do not succeed (Cavanagh, 2009).

In the third wave of student voice research, scholars found that when youth are authentically engaged in dialogue and their voices respectfully listened to, they achieve higher levels of self-actualization and success (Gay, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009; Mitra, 2004). Kirk et al. (2015) linked authentic student-educator dialogue (relationship), student voice, and power-sharing as characteristics that lead to student empowerment resulting in greater levels of achievement, feelings of belonging, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1987).

While the voices and experiences of Black and Latino/a youth, as well as special education and English as Second Language students, have been researched (Flower, McKenna, Haring, & Pazey, 2015; Lagana-Riordan et al., 2011; Shultz & Cook-Sather,

2001), the voices of Indigenous youth received little attention (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Stelmach et al., 2017). Shields (in Shields et al., 2005, Chapter 2) explored the educational situation of Navajo youth attending both public and on-reserve schools finding that the systemic attitude was a pathological factor. Fryberg et al. (2013) identified ethnocultural mismatches between students and teachers as causal to relational difficulties. Carjuzaa (2012) found that a perceived lack of knowledge, funding, and support hampered educators from complying with the Montana *Indian Education for All Act* and engaging Native American youth. Hare and Pidgeon (2011) found that Indigenous youth perceived a biased and racist environment in school. Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) found that Nunavut Inuit youth valued teachers who cared for them as individuals and about their learning; they also found that educators needed to change their pedagogy rather than students changing their learning strategies. Stelmach, Kovach, and Steeves (2017) found that student perceptions of teachers were impactful to whether Indigenous youth desired to attend school regularly. Given the scope of Indigenous education in North America, finding only seven studies that addressed Native American/First Nation students speaks to a general dearth of research in this area.

In Alberta, education is shifting to a student-centric curriculum model. This shift began in 2011 with the *Framework for Student Learning: Competencies for Engaged Thinkers and Ethical Citizens with an Entrepreneurial Spirit,* which put students at the center of curriculum decision making (AB ED, 2011). While students are at the center of this shift, there is no documented consultation or collaboration with students in the development of curriculum or classroom pedagogies. As Rudduck, Chaplain, and

Wallace (1996) pointed out, young voices continue to be excluded from the discourse. When youth are included in the conversation, their voices are silenced, as adults dominate the conversations (Arshad-Ayas, Andreotti, & Sutherland, 2017; Mazawi in Shields et al., 2005; Robinson & Taylor, 2013; Rudduck, Chaplin, & Wallace, 1996).

Outside of Canada, scholars sought out the stories of Māori (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al. 2009; Bishop et al. 2006), Latino/Hispanic (Cavanagh, Vigil, & Garcia, 2015; Mitra, 2004; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009; Sleeter, 2012), and other culturally located youth (Cavanagh, 2009; Shields et al., 2005). Parents, educators, and community members were included in the conversations in efforts to effect change (Bishop et al., 2009; Cavanagh et al., 2015; Shields et al., 2005). Scholars outside Canada found that relationships are an indicator of conversational engagement and may be reflective of higher school graduation rates (Kennedy, 2011; McKeown, 2011; Mitra, 2004). To date, the voices of Indigenous youth in Canada are seldom included. Hare and Pidgeon (2011) sought out the voices of Indigenous youth and their lived experiences in North Ontario. Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) recorded the lived experiences of Nunavut Inuit youth. Lessard, Caine, and Clandinin (2015) explored the curriculum-making worlds of urban Indigenous youth in Regina, Saskatchewan. Stelmach et al. (2017) sought out the teacher characteristics that promoted Indigenous youth to attend school.

Hare and Pidgeon (2011) examined the lived experiences of 39 First Nation youth, aged 16 to 20, from two remote communities in Northern Ontario. The youth attending schools, both on-reserve and off-reserve, shared their perceptions of their educational experiences. The youth revealed to Hare and Pidgeon that they experienced

racism and prejudice in both educational settings. Some students remained in mainstream schools, while others found more tolerant environments in alternative schools. Hare and Pidgeon found that students attending the on-reserve school experienced regular cultural indignities as Whitestream educators delivered a curriculum void of ethnocultural content. Hare and Pidgeon found that Indigenous youth developed strategies to overcome the cultural bigotry and prejudice they faced regularly. Hare and Pidgeon called for more research to examine the educational situations that Indigenous youth experience.

Lessard et al. (2015) explored the worlds of two urban Indigenous youth as they constructed meaning between the curricula of home and school; their purpose was to gain a better understanding of urban Indigenous youth's multiple curriculum-making worlds. While the curriculum may direct pedagogy and thus student-adult relationships, curriculum-making seldom involves student voice. Lessard et al. (2015) determined that not only does learning take place outside the school, but that curriculum-making in the world outside school may have a greater impact on academic success.

Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) conducted a 5-year study in three Inuit communities on Baffin Island in Nunavut, Canada. The purpose of the project was to identify factors contributing to educational success as perceived by the students. They recorded the lived experiences of 99 youth in grades five to eight, as well as six teachers. Over the 5 year research period, student perceptions were used to construct a picture of what success looked like to students. Students identified characteristics that contributed to positive interactions in the classroom being attributable to the teachers, while teachers attributed negative interactions to be the fault of students. Working from the youth

concepts of success and factors students felt that lead to that success, Lewthwaite and McMillan constructed a list of successful practices similar to Bishop and Berryman's (2009) description of the Effective Teacher Profile. Lewthwaite and McMillan found that teachers were are the heart of change in increasing the sense of success experienced by Indigenous youth. When teachers envisioned themselves as central to change, they developed shifting power relationships with students and the community. They worked toward collaborative relationships with all stakeholders, developing ethnoculturally responsive practices similar to those described by Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Gay (2010).

Stelmach et al. (2017) conducted a study involving 75 Indigenous youth in grades nine to twelve, attending six schools across Saskatchewan, Canada. The schools were urban and rural as well as public and First Nation schools. Stelmach et al. conducted focus groups to ascertain "What do teachers do (or not do) that makes you want to go to school?" (p. 1). Students told the researchers that relationships with teachers were most impactful in their wanting to attend school or not. Relational qualities that promoted attendance were:

- Teachers who demonstrated a personal interest in their students
- Youth could trust teachers who care about them
- Teachers who had expectations of their students
- Teachers who clearly understood and knew their subject matter
- Teachers who were openminded, caring, and exhibited a sense of humor.

The study participants voiced their concerns regarding teacher characteristics that discouraged them from attending school regularly. These characteristics were not only relational but included the learning environment created or allowed to develop.

- Teachers who permitted negative mood to enter the learning space

- Teachers who yelled or were hostile towards students

- Teachers who were impatience with students' ability to quickly grasp new concepts followed by frustration when they asked for extra help to gain a complete understanding

- Teachers who were not clear or inconsistent when disciplining misbehavior

- Teachers who had favorites

The students talked about the relationship between home and school. Teachers were described as being disparaging towards Indigenous students' home life. The study participants also stated they felt discriminated against when they were singled out due to their darker skin color and were the subjects of suspicion regarding adverse incidents; Indigenous culture was denigrated and approached from a deficit position. This study supports the findings of Hare and Pidgeon (2011) in terms of the negativity perceived by the participating youth. However, the findings of Lewthwaite et al. (2014) were mirrored by the participants' responses in the Stelmach et al. study. Participants voiced appreciation of relationships based on care, respect, and honest communication.

Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) described a situation in contrast to that of Hare and Pidgeon (2011). Lewthwaite and McMillan found educators, working within a Whitestream paradigm, were able to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into their teaching, and integrate into the community. Hare and Pidgeon described an environment

where teachers pedagogically stayed outside the communities they served, in essence, contributing to the ethnoculturally marginalization of Indigenous youth. Both these studies looked at remote Northern communities where the Indigenous populations are from a single Indigenous group. Hare and Pidgeon collected and shared the stories of Anishinaabe youth; while Lewthwaite and McMillan worked with Inuit youth in their home communities. Stelmach et al. (2017) worked with Indigenous youth across the three major Indigenous groups in Saskatchewan; the youth identified as Cree, Dene, or Salteaux. Their findings align with both Hare and Pidgeon as well as Lewthwaite and McMillan, suggesting that the factors influencing the lived experience of Indigenous youth are varied and complex. The urban area of this study is in a major metropolitan area of Western Canada and is home to a highly diverse collection of Indigenous populations from across Canada. This study attempted to determine where the lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth lay in terms of these three studies.

To date, no other studies involving the lived experiences of Indigenous youth in Canada can be found. With only three studies regarding the lived experiences of Indigenous youth, the lived experiences of Indigenous youth from diverse home communities attending high schools in an urban setting have not been collected nor shared. This study explored the lived experiences of Indigenous youth attending urban high schools regarding youth-adult relationships in these high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. The stories shared by urban Indigenous youth in Western Canada will fill the gap that currently exists in the literature. The stories may assist educators in adapting their practices to facilitate greater academic success among Indigenous students enrolled in Whitestream educational systems.

Problem Statement

Internationally, the voices and lived experiences of youth as they experience various academic systems are sought out (Clarke, Boorman, & Nind, 2011; Elwood, 2013; Fielding, 2010; Robinson & Taylor, 2013; Rudduck et al., 1996; Seale, 2010; Seale, Gibson, Haynes, & Potter, 2014). Much research of student voice and the analysis of youth lived experiences was conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand by Bishop and his research associates (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, 2009; Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop et al., 2003). The lived experiences of youth in Australia are detailed in several studies in both mainstream school and alternative educational settings (Carnes & Robinson, 2014; McKeown, 2011; Saggers, 2015; Smyth & Robinson, 2015). American youth, including the voices and lived experiences of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009), contribute greatly to the literature regarding student voice. Whitestream youth voices dominate the conversations (Beattie, 2012; Blair & Valdez Noel, 2014; Cook-Sather, 2006; Mitra, 2003; Rector-Aranda & Raider-Roth, 2015; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). The lived experiences of youth of color in the United States were explored by Bertrand (2014), Lagana-Riordan et al. (2011), and Shultz and Cook-Sather (2001). The lived experiences of Native American youth were recorded and shared out by Cerecer (2013), and Shields (in Shields et al., 2005).

To date, the lived experiences of Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in Canada have not been sought out. Hare and Pidgeon (2011) concerned themselves with Indigenous high school students in remote northern communities of Ontario. Hare and Pidgeon found the field of Indigenous youth voice required more study in order for educators and policymakers to address the unique issues impacting Indigenous youth

effectively. Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) analyzed the lived experiences of middle school-aged students in remote communities on Baffin Island, Nunavut. Analyzing the lived experiences of middle school Inuit youth, Lewthwaite and McMillan constructed a list of teacher characteristics similar to Bishop and Berryman's (2009) Effective Teacher Profile. While including the lived experiences of Inuit youth, Lewthwaite and McMillan confirmed the effectiveness of ethnoculturally response pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009; Gay, 2010) in addressing the unique learner needs of Indigenous students in remote northern communities subscribing to Whitestream curricular objectives. Lessard et al. (2014) explored the worlds of two urban Indigenous youth as they constructed meaning between the curricula of home and school; their purpose was to gain a better "understanding of the multiple curriculum-making worlds of" (p 197) urban Indigenous youth. While curriculum may direct pedagogy and thus student-adult relationships, curriculum-making seldom includes student voice and lived experiences. Lessard et al. (2014) determined that not only does learning take place outside the school, but that curriculum-making in the world outside school may have a greater impact on academic success. Stelmach et al. (2017), in collecting and analyzing the stories of Indigenous youth across Saskatchewan, determine that relationships were foundational in motivating Indigenous youth to attend school, Whitestream, or not.

Other studies involving Indigenous youth in the geographic area of this study did not address educational lived experiences. Genuis, Willows, Alexander First Nation, and Jardine (2015) enlisted Indigenous youth as data collectors in their study regarding traditional food security. While involving the lived experiences of Indigenous youth, Iwasaki (2015) was concerned with how local service agencies were addressing the non-

educational needs of youth. Previous academic studies have not concerned themselves with the lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth regarding their educational experiences, leaving a gap in the literature regarding the voices of Indigenous youth in Whitestream education. Through exploring the lived experiences of Indigenous youth attending urban high schools, this study hoped to discover what these lived experiences reveal about youth-adult relationships in high school settings.

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. The adoption the *United Nations' Declaration Rights of Indigenous People* (UN, 2008), the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), 2015a) and the inclusion of Indigenous experiences, content, and perspectives into Whitestream curriculum may set the stage for authentic inclusion of Indigenous students in the Whitestream educational experience. Knowing how Indigenous students currently perceive their lived experiences will be invaluable for the development, implementation, and delivery of an authentically inclusive curriculum. As seen with the implementation of the Montana *Indian Education for All Act* enacted in 1972 (Carjazaa, 2012), if the legislated policy is to be impactful at the classroom level, teachers need resources and supports.

This research hoped to share the voices of marginalized, minoritized, and racialized youth (Cavanagh, 2009) as they share stories of their lived experiences within the high school environment of Western Canada. The sharing of the stories of Indigenous

youths' lived experiences, may assist educators and system leaders in gaining greater awareness and appreciation of the lived experiences of Indigenous youth regarding their experiences within Whitestream education. Equipped with such knowledge, classroom teachers, schools, and system leadership can better prepare to address the systemic realities experienced by Indigenous youth, families, and communities. Knowledge of Indigenous students' lived experiences will be valuable across educational systems. Classroom teachers will be able to use the information to reflect upon and perhaps adjust their practice to better facilitate the growth, development, and achievement of their Indigenous students. Educational leaders may revise and create new policies that increase the wholistic success of Indigenous students throughout the dominant educational system.

Research Question

The foundational question of this research is, "What do the lived experiences of Indigenous youth reveal about youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada?"

Conceptual Framework

Scholars (Gay, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009; Mitra, 2004) found that when marginalized, racialized, and minoritized youth (Cavanagh, 2009) authentically participated in critical dialogue, their engagement with school increased, as did their academic achievement levels and their sense of self-actualization. While these scholars influenced the direction of this study, the extensive works of Bishop and his associates (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop et al., 2003; Shields et al., 2005) working with Māori youth, families and their communities and how to more effectively engage with Whitestream education, guided

this project. Bishop (1999), Bishop and Berryman (2009), Bishop et al. (2003), Bishop et al. (2009), and Shields et al. (2005) grounded their work in Kaupapa Māori Theory, which has alignments with Critical Theory (Eketone, 2008). Bishop's (1999) concept of collaborative storying guided the collection and analysis of the collective stories and the construction of the collaborative story that revealed the lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth. To facilitate dialogue with Indigenous youth, they were invited to share their perceptions of the local education system through individual interviews.

A traditional method of sharing personal experiences is through storytelling (Bishop, 1999; Wilson, 2008) or yarning (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010). Storytelling and yarning take both the teller and the listener(s) on a multifaceted journey, adding experiential information to deepen the understanding of the experience(s) being shared. Collecting stories from Indigenous youth required that a respectful manner be used, one that followed culturally appropriate methodologies (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013; Smith, 1999/2008). Inquiry methods such as collaborative storying (Bishop, 1999) and the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) facilitated appropriate and authentic recording and sharing of stories. These methodologies align with Indigenous Research Methodologies as set out by Kovach (2010), Smith (1999/2008), and Wilson (2008).

Nature of the Study

The phenomena of perceptions and perspectives are composed of the lived experiences of individuals within set environments, such as urban high schools, and are studied using several methods. For this project, phenomenology was identified as an authentic and relevant method of inquiry. According to Smith (2013), phenomenology

addresses the study of perception, the internalization of lived experiences, as well as how those perceptions are influenced by social practices, attitudes, and political systems. Phenomenology facilitated the exploration of lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth as they shared stories of their high school experiences. Individuals may experience the same occurrence or event in individualistically unique ways. Phenomenology, as the study of everyday events, affords the collection and analysis of individual experiences and the identification of commonalities across those shared experiences.

In this phenomenological study, the lived experiences of Indigenous youth attending urban high schools were explored. Indigenous youth, whether urban or rural, are influenced and impacted by various historical factors. Indigenous youth, as members of a minoritized, racialized, and marginalized population (Cavanagh, 2009), experience relationships in high school differently from their Whitestream peers. Analysis of the stories shared by urban Indigenous youth about their high school experiences revealed information valuable to educators that may facilitate greater overall success for Indigenous youth attending high schools situated within the Whitestream environment.

This study followed the tradition of Indigenous inquiry as set forth by Battiste (2013), Bishop (1999), Bishop and Berryman (2006), Kovach (2010), Smith (1999/2008), and Wilson (2008). If Indigenous populations are to be engaged in the educational processes, they need to be consulted (Battiste, 2013; Bishop, 1999; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). As education in Western Canada moves to a more student-focused process, the voices of Indigenous youth can help to shape an educational system that meets their unique needs. Few studies have asked Indigenous youth about their lived experiences in the Whitestream education system (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al. 2003;

Cavanagh et al., 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Stelmach et al., 2017). To date, only two Canadian studies focused on the high school experiences of Indigenous youth (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Stelmach et al., 2017). For this study, stories of the lived experiences from urban Indigenous youth that have attended high school were collected through individual interviews. The stories were analyzed for common themes that were used to construct a collaborative story that was validated by the research participants (Bishop, 1999).

Definitions

First Nation: INAC defines First Nations as follows "First Nations people in Canada are the people who used to be called "Indians," but this term is now considered incorrect by some (INAC, 2014). A community of individuals whose ancestors signed a treaty with the British Crown or the government of Canada. First Nation communities are often referred to as reserves in Canada and reservations in the United States.

Indigenous People: The International Labour Organization defines Indigenous People as tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regarded wholly or partially by their customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations (Battiste, 2008).

INAC (2017a) define 'Indigenous peoples' as a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants; 'Aboriginal peoples' is also used. For this project, Indigenous people are considered endemic or native to a land or territory. Indigenous people are the first inhabitants of Turtle Island also known as

North America. In Canada, Indigenous peoples are considered to be composed of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit. For legal and political purposes Indigenous peoples are also referred to as Indians, Status Indians, and non-status Indian. According to the text of Numbered Treaty 8, half-breeds, now Métis, are recognized as Indigenous. Métis under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, are now considered Indians under the law (Stevenson, 2002).

Inuit: INAC describes Inuit as the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic. The word Inuit means "the people" in the language of Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk (INAC, 2017b). The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national representational organization protecting and advancing the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada describes Inuit as follows:

> Inuit are an Indigenous people living primarily in Inuit Nunangat. The majority of our population lives in 53 communities spread across Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing 35% of Canada's landmass and 50% of its coastline. We have lived in our homeland since time immemorial. Our communities are among the most culturally resilient in North America. (ITK, 2018)

Lived experiences: the everyday experiences encountered in life. For this study lived experiences refers to the daily interactions experienced by youth in urban high school environments (Smith, 2013),

Métis: The advent of the fur trade in west-central North America during the 18th century was accompanied by a growing number of mixed offspring of Indian women and European fur traders. As this population established distinct

communities separate from those of Indians and Europeans and married among

themselves, a new Aboriginal people emerged – the Métis people – with their own

unique culture, traditions, language (Michif), way of life, collective consciousness

and nationhood. (Metis Nation of Canada, n.d.)

Miyopimâtisiwin: living a good life; it is based on relationships, one's relationships with

not only humans but all things in the environment. To practice miyopimâtisiwin is

to have good relationships with all things. (Robinson, Ealey, & Willier, 2005).

Storytelling: a form of oral communication where an individual relates an event, practice,

or teaching through the art of telling a story. (Battiste, 2013, pp. 184-185)

Whitestream: the term 'Whitestream' has become synonymous with 'mainstream.'

However, the term goes beyond to include the Eurocentric ideology that persists in

much of the colonized world. Anders and Lester (2013) use the term Whitestream

to refer to the "genocidal legacies and everyday politic of discourses, practices,

institutions, policies and laws structured by white supremacy, white, neoliberal,

middle class dominance on lands which is now called the United States" (p. 18).

Denis (as cited in Belanger & Walker, 2009) uses Whitestream to describe the

concept representing "the idea that Canadian society is structured overwhelmingly

according to the 'white' (of European descent) experience" (as cited in Belanger &

Walker, 2009, p. 123).

Yarning: or storytelling is a form of conversation and a method of exchanging

information in both an informal and formal sense. Yarning, as practiced in

Australia and parts of Aotearoa New Zealand, may be considered a form of casual

conversation or gossip. (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010).

Youth-adult relationships: those interactions between individuals who are recognized as

being either a youth or an adult. The designation between being a youth and an

adult is fuzzy, with the legal age of majority often being the separation between the

two groups. Gaudet (2007) defines the life stage of youth as the "time of life

characterized by a quest for autonomy and an exploration of identity between

adolescence and adulthood (Ch. 2, para 1)". High school is only one place where

these relationships are played out. For this study, youth are individuals who take on

or have taken on the role of student. At the same time, adults may be viewed as

educators, instructors, administrators, clerical or custodial staff, or other individuals

fulfilling roles outside the student role.

Assumptions

For this study, the following assumptions were taken as truths. A primary

assumption was that urban Indigenous youth, aged 18 to 21, would authentically and

honestly share stories of their high school experiences. It was also assumed that urban

Indigenous youth would be willing to participate in the study and that their stories and

experiences would provide insights into the student-teacher relationship.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on collecting the perceptions of urban Indigenous youth as

they shared their high school experiences through personal stories. To date, the high

school experiences of Indigenous youth in Canada, urban or rural, have received little

attention. In conducting research involving Indigenous populations, Whitestream

approaches are no longer acceptable. To authentically appreciate and collect the stories of

Indigenous youth, research methodologies relevant to and in alignment with Indigenous

protocols were needed (Battiste, 2013: Bishop, 1999; Kovach, 2010; personal communication, Sherry Letendre, Elder Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, March 2015; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008). In sharing their stories, Indigenous youth shared their unique lived experiences within Whitestream education.

This study is limited to the lived experiences of self-identifying Indigenous youth age 18 to 21, residing within a metropolitan area of Western Canada. Indigenous youth and their academic achievement have been a subject of interest and concern provincially since 1982 (Alberta Education, 1987) and federally since 2003 (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2003). From these dates until the present, no studies seeking the voices of Indigenous youth in Western Canada regarding their lived experiences have been documented. Indigenous youth within the area of interest have participated in research projects (Genuis, Willows, Alexander First Nation, & Jardine, 2015; Iwasaki, 2015). No project until this one has sought out the lived experiences of exclusively urban Indigenous youth regarding their experiences in the Whitestream educational system. While other minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009) reside within the metropolitan area, only self-identifying Indigenous youth were invited to participate. All youth, 18 to 21 years old, in Western Canada, have experiences with high school; however, Indigenous youth as an identified population have not succeeded to the same levels as their Whitestream peers (Statistics Canada, 2013). The lived experiences of Indigenous youth may reveal information that can increase their academic engagement and success.

The Whitestream approach to the education of Indigenous children and youth is grounded in the deficit pathology of colonial education (Ali, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Bishop

& Berryman, 2009; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Stelmach et al., 2017). Given such a situation, where colonialism still overshadows minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations, (Cavanagh, 2009) their ideologies, philosophies, and epistemologies, a postcolonial perspective was the relevant lens through which to view this project (Abu-Shomar, 2013; Aman, 2015; Andreotti, 2014; Shahjahan, 2014; van der Westhuizen, 2013).

Within traditional Indigenous societal structures, individuals only speak for themselves; they do not represent a collective. Thus, individual lived experiences should not be generalized to individuals or groups outside the study. Following this tradition, participants have shared only their individual lived experiences. The construction of a common story incorporated salient aspects of all the stories shared. The final collaborative story was shared back and authenticated with participants to ensure that their voices and lived experiences were represented as they have intended. The composition of the collaborative story contains elements that may be applied to similar situations involving Indigenous youth.

Delimitations refer to "what the researcher is not going to do" (Leedy & Ormrod, as cited in Ellis & Levy, 2009). In this study, youth younger than 18 and older than 21 were not invited to participate. As noted, other ethnoculturally located youths attend high school in the metropolitan area of interest; for this study, they were excluded. Their high school experiences may bear some similarities, but the disparity between them and their Whitestream peers is not as great as that of their Indigenous peers (Statistics Canada, 2013).

There are several major urban areas in Western Canada with significant Indigenous populations. Youth residing within the metropolitan area of interest at the time of the study were considered for two pragmatic reasons: the area has a large Indigenous urban population (Statistics Canada, 2010a, 2010b) and is also the area within which I reside.

Limitations

Limitations are factors that are outside the researcher's control, but which can and may influence the collection of data, the analysis, and the results of the study; they may negatively impact the internal validity of a study (Ellis & Levy, 2009).

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Several factors influenced and limited the participation of potential participants and the active engagement of those who choose to be involved in the study. Every effort was made to overcome these identified limiting factors; those identified while conducting the study were addressed as they arose. The sample size was limited to ten individual interviews. Additional individuals would be invited to participate in individual interviews

should ten participants not be initially found to ensure adequate data. Traditional meeting protocols are expectations of Indigenous Research Methodologies. Individual interview questions were constructed using the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) as a template. Using the Responsive Interview Model resulted in additional interview questions based upon participant responses, resulting in additional information. Audio recordings were used to record the individual interviews, to form a level of voice authentication, and to ensure each participant's story was given in their own words and voice.

Significance

Outside of Canada, asking ethnoculturally located youth to share their stories about their lived experiences in school has proven to be effective in determining factors that impact their engagement, academic achievement, and self-actualization (Gay, 2010; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009; Mitra, 2004). Students' stories have helped in formulating actions that increased academic success and educational attainment (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al. 2009; Cavanagh et al., 2015; Shields et al. 2005). Through the collection, analysis, and sharing of stories from urban Indigenous youth in Western Canada, the absence of the unique Canadian perspectives of ethnoculturally located youth can be addressed. The resulting knowledge will contribute to the emerging literature addressing the lack of voices from ethnoculturally located youth in the development of educational initiatives.

Summary

The stories of Indigenous youth about their lived experiences can inform educators about what is working and what may need to be changed in order to engage

Indigenous youth more effectively. By inviting Indigenous youth to share the stories of their lived experiences within the educational system and authentically listening and reflecting on those stories, systemic reform can begin to incorporate student-identified characteristics. Characteristics that may lead to increasing their engagement, academic achievement, and self-actualization. The collection, analysis, and confirming of Indigenous youths' lived experiences and voices through Indigenous Research Methodologies lead to a collaborative story. Sharing that collaborative story with educators and system leaders may help them gain a greater awareness and appreciation of Indigenous youths' lived experiences within Whitestream education.

The next chapter discusses the literature surrounding student voice and its use in educational settings. The literature forms three waves of investigation. The post-colonial underpinning of this study is detailed, as well as the research methodology. Indigenous Research Methodologies are introduced as a means of incorporating traditional Indigenous protocols.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Indigenous students remain behind their Whitestream peers in terms of highs school completion rates (Statistics Canada, 2013) despite efforts to increase their academic engagement. Battiste (2013) stated that if authentic systemic change is to be made in education, the desires of Indigenous people need to be listened to and included within the Whitestream educational experiences. Unless Indigenous voices are part of the design and implementation process of future educational experiences, Banksian multiculturalism (Banks, 2001) will prevail, and Indigenous voices will remain muted (Battiste, 2013, Cajete, 1994). In parts of Western Canada, curriculum development is moving towards a student-centric focus. The voices of Indigenous youth have not been included in the conversations concerning curriculum development. As such, policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators do not know how the system may be improved from the perspective of Indigenous youth. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada.

This chapter begins with a discussion of postcolonial theory or perceptive and how it applies to the current project. The concept of voice is explored through a discussion of whether the subaltern can speak (Spivak, 1988). A brief historical tour of events impacting the present-day educational experiences of Indigenous youth is presented in order to provide an appreciation and understanding of how the current educational situation developed. The emerging field of student voice is examined, and the

lack of a comprehensive Indigenous voice is revealed. The use of student voice and agency concerning other educational populations of concern is explored.

Literature Search Strategy

Several databases and search engines were used to harvest peer-reviewed articles for this literature review. Articles published since 2010 were of major consideration; however, foundational items pre-2010 are included. The search engines and databases housed by the Walden Library were used as well as the advanced search of Google Scholar. The following databases housed within the Walden Library were accessed: EBSCO, ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE, Taylor and Francis Online, SociINDEX. The databases hosted by Academia and ResearchGate were also accessed. Many search terms were used. Searches began with "Indigenous student voice," which did not yield any scholarly articles. Searches using the term "student voice" initially yielded articles addressing literary voice or dramatic voice (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2018). Resources referring to the importance of student voice and perceptions regarding social change were found in April 2018 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018a; Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, 2018; Victoria State Government, Education, and Training, 2018). Expanding the search to include "student voice in education" produced resources from governmental agencies (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018b) and institutions of higher education (Shafer, 2016). Mitra's 2003 article, "Student Voice in School Reform: Reframing Student-Teacher Relationships," was a break from talking about how student voice can be used to looking at the process of using student voice. Using the search terms "high school," "student voice(s)," "aboriginal education," "First Nations' education," and "Indigenous education" yielded mixed results. These results concerned studies addressing

higher education, Native American students' lived experiences at university, and Whitestream high school lived experiences of non-Indigenous minority populations. Other search terms that were used included: culturally responsive teaching, cultural responsiveness, voice, student perceptions, and youth engagement. Using these various terms on different dates since the initial literature search has yielded additional resources. Research that pertained exclusively to Indigenous student voice is rare. Analysis of the resources listed in the reference listings of articles led to additional scholarly resources.

Revisiting the databases named above for pertinent literature in March 2020 yielded few items of application. Expanding the search parameters to include "Indigenous student voice (education)" and "indigenous or native or aboriginal or Indians or first nations student voice (social justice)" produced three articles worthy of inclusion. An April 2020 search using the terms: "indigenous or native or aboriginal or Indians or first nations," "youth," and "voice" yielded three more relevant articles. Several of these articles referenced items and scholars already included in this work.

Theoretical Foundation

Bishop and Berryman (2006) focused on what it is to be Māori within the Aotearoa New Zealand educational system; in this, they adhered to Kaupapa Māori Theory (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2013), the concept of knowing and being Māori. Eketone (2008) suggested that Kaupapa Māori Theory is conceptually aligned with Critical Theory and, by extension, with Critical Race Theory. Bishop and Berryman suggested that when educators and policymakers know Indigenous youths' lived experiences in high school, they are better able to address the needs of those youth. Currently, many educational systems view minoritized, racialized, and marginalized

youth (Cavanagh, 2009) from a position of deficit thinking and colonialism (Battiste, 2013; Shields et al., 2005). Critical Theory challenges the existing power differential, while Critical Race Theory focuses on the racial dichotomy that is present in that power differential (Closson, 2010; Eketone, 2008; Sleeter, 2017). The dominant ethnoculturality of the Whitestream education system perceives non-members as needing remediation and correction if they are to succeed in the mainstream (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Valencia, 1997). The colonial structure of education is detectable (Abu-Shomar, 2013; Aman, 2015; Battiste, 2013). Basing this study on the work of Bishop and Berryman (2006), Hare and Pidgeon (2011), Shields et al. (2005), and Fryberg et al. (2013), the perspectives and lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth was the lens through which the educational system was viewed. The lived experiences and stories of the youth provide information on what it is like to be an urban Indigenous youth in Whitestream metropolitan high schools in Western Canada. Exploring Indigenous student voices through a postcolonial lens provides information to overcome systemic deficit thinking. As the lived experiences of the Indigenous student participants are unknown, the collaborative story constructed from their individual and unique stories provides information helpful in determining their overall concerns and how they might be addressed.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this project followed that of Bishop (1999), Bishop and Berryman (2009), Bishop et al. (2009), Bishop et al. (2003), and Shields et al. (2005) as they sought out the stories and perceptions of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009) in Aotearoa New Zealand. Bishop and his colleagues

worked from the position of Kaupapa Māori Theory. Kaupapa Māori Theory extends into the methodology and how one conducts research; it arises from a traditional Māori approach to life. Kaupapa Māori Theory was formalized for Western academia in the early 1980s by Smith (as cited in Eketone, 2008), arising from a conceptualized alignment between Critical Theory and Kaupapa Māori praxis. Kaupapa Māori Theory has taken on the approach of Critical Theory. Kaupapa Māori Theory attempts to address or rectify the oppressive power differential that exists between Western ideologies and those of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009; Eketone, 2008). In the application of Kaupapa Māori Theory to research, services, or curricular construction, constructive approaches have been used (Eketone, 2008). Kaupapa Māori Theory may align with Critical Theory; however, the constructive approaches move it closer in agreement to Native Theory as suggested by Eketone (2008). Russell stated that Native Theory is "the right of Indigenous people to make sense of their time and place in the world" (as cited in Hollis-English, 2015, p. 8). Eketone stated that Indigenous theories such as Native Theory and Kaupapa Māori Theory exist on their merit, for they explain the world from a specific worldview (as cited in Hollis-English, 2015). Worldviews are constructed from personal experiences within the world (Little Bear, 2000). Therefore, a Critical Theory alignment with Kaupapa Māori is based upon the experiences of colonialism and systemic oppression (Closson, 2010; Sleeter, 2017). However, if Critical Theory or Critical Race Theory (Closson, 2010; Sleeter, 2017) are to achieve their goal of equality across social, economic, and educational spectra, neither Critical Theory nor Critical Race Theory can continue to exist in the long term, nor should they (Eketone, 2008). In this situation, Native Theory emerges as having greater

longevity. In addressing the current reality of Indigenous/Western discourse, Native Theory not only accepts the changing relationships between the actors but expects the change to occur. A flux exists between the thoughts, perceptions, and realities of Indigenous scholars and their Whitestream colleagues. Little Bear (2000) describes a flux as the intersection between knowledge systems where a conflict between worldviews and perceptions exists, they are incompatible due to differences, yet they interact and coexist (L. Little Bear, personal communication, April 2016, Indigenous Languages Symposium, Edmonton). This flux is where conversations lead to consensus and the creation of new knowledge systems (Little Bear, 2000). A flux exists where Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, Kaupapa Māori Theory, and Native Theory meet as equal and valid knowledge systems. Each approach explains the reality conceived by those who subscribe to unique and individualistic premises.

While Kaupapa Māori is not directly applicable to a Western Canadian context, the Nehiyawak (Cree) concept of miyopimâtisiwin (good living) is similar to Kaupapa Māori Theory and was used as the conceptual framework. Like Native Theory (Russell as cited in Hollis-English, 2015, p. 8), miyopimâtisiwin aligns with Kaupapa Māori Theory and Critical Theory but is not concerned with power differentials. Within a miyopimâtisiwin conceptualization, the perceived reality is addressed; how the situation arose is not the primary focus. (M)iyopimâtisiwin is about moving forward to achieve a balanced and good path in one's life. The good path is achieved through the accumulation of knowledge and experiences, which in turn becomes wisdom that is shared with those seeking knowledge on their journey towards miyopimâtisiwin, ways of knowing become ways of being.

By knowing the lived experiences and stories of Indigenous youth, educators and policymakers may increase their awareness and knowledge of their prejudices and biases, enabling them to address their personal beliefs as well as systemic factors that contribute to such beliefs. Battiste (2013) stated that in order to effect change, the voices of Indigenous people need to be added to the conversation. This situation provides the impetus for including the voices of Indigenous youth to effect change within the Whitestream educational system so that it may more appropriately address their unique needs. The Nehiyawak concept of miyopimâtisiwin leads to the belief that good relationships are possible; we only need to voice our perspectives and discuss them, identify the commonalities, and arrive at a consensus to resolve issues of concern (Robinson et al., 2005). The literature review looks at scholarly discussions that may lead to miyopimâtisiwin for all.

Literature Review

Education as an instrument of nation-building continues to experience the shadow of colonialism in countries that are former colonies and protectorates (Abu-Shomar, 2013; Ali; 2012; Aman, 2015; Beavis et al., 2015). Some scholars (Abu-Shomar, 2013; Aman, 2015; Andreotti, 2014) suggested that globalization and neo-liberalism are extensions of colonialism and domination of developing nations by the developed nations through economics, politics, and militarization. Aman (2015) explored the impact of postcolonial thought in terms of interculturality, suggesting that education is often perceived as a matter of the knowledge needed to reduce the boundaries between "we and they" in order to arrive as "us." Abu-Shomar (2013) submitted that colonial thought continues to dominate higher education through the promotion of English as the means of

instruction, evaluation, and content studied; Eurocentric thought continues to dominate over local knowledge and wisdom as well as who is permitted to participant in the exchange (Ali, 2012). Beavis et al. (2015) contended that historical colonial factors continue to impact healthcare concerns for Indigenous populations in Canada; a postcolonial approach helps healthcare practitioners to reflect upon their role in the continuation of systemic in-equitabilities. The postcolonial experiences of health care practitioners may inform educators as they venture upon a similar journey, as they reflect on the impact of colonialism on Whitestream educational practices and philosophies.

The North American educational system is dominated by White middle-class female teachers (Gay, 2010; Ali, 2012; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). These individuals often have little contact with minoritized, racialized, and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) populations during their teacher training (Borrero, Conner, & Mejia, 2012; Butler, Kane, & Morshead, 2015; Kidd, 2012; Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015). The education system is predicated on the norms, values, and practices of those who carry out the work of the system. Thus, the North American education system is founded upon White middle-class mainstream ideologies. Those individuals who do not share membership in the dominant ethos are often considered to be lacking and in need of remediation. This perception is not to say that members of the dominant White middle-class mainstream perceive themselves superior to others, just that this is their frame of reference based on their common experience (Ali, 2012).

Postcolonial theory or more precisely postcolonial perspectives or points of view (Shahjahan, 2014; van der Westhuizen, 2013) are concepts that allow for the development of third spaces (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999; Bertrand, 2014; Cajete, 1994;

Donald, 2012; Kayira, 2013; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015) in which long-held beliefs of

Eurocentrism can be challenged. Even when creating a third space, the legacy of imperial

colonialism continues to vex education and the voices of youth. *The National Youth*

White Paper on Global Citizenship (2015) was composed of the input of over 1000

Canadian youth across Canada. Arshad-Ayas, Andreotti, and Sutherland (2017) found

that while the youth made recommendations for educational and social change in efforts

towards global equability, their approach and statements reflected colonial hegemony

where the powerful attempt to impose their helpfulness upon the less powerful. This

situation is similar to the situation regarding *sita* in India, which Spavik (1988) described

as "white men saving brown women from brown men" (p. 92). The articulate and socially

privileged view themselves as the saviors of those who have less materially. However,

when short-term change is not forthcoming, they resent their efforts to bring about

impactful social change (Ryan, 1972/1976). The youth contributing to *The National*

Youth White Paper on Global Citizenship were "systematically chosen from each school

to represent Canada's diverse geographic and demographic population (The National

Youth White Paper on Global Citizenship, 2015, Prologue). *The National Youth White*

Paper on Global Citizenship acknowledges the diversity of Canadian youth yet required

them to speak with one voice.

Applying postcolonial perspectives to health care training programs in Aotearoa

New Zealand, a country with parallel post-Colonial challenges similar to Canada, cultural

safety was found to be used to encourage healthcare professionals to understand "culture

as context-dependent and power-laden" (Beavis et al., 2015, p. 2). Cultural safety is

determined by those receiving health care. Applying cultural safety to this study required

the application of Indigenous Research Methodologies that honored the stories and lived experiences of Indigenous participants.

Freire (1970/2005) wrote that if society is to change, it is the oppressed who will free the oppressors; thus, educators cannot truly free themselves from established educational structures without the help of their students. Facilitating the voices of students across the system to be heard is a challenge, one that Spivak (1988) explored through the subalterns of India. The protective approach given to Indian widows in colonial India is similar to the parental approach of Canadian educational and political institutions.

Bailey (2015) suggested that when investigating the achievement gap between dominant ethnocultural community youth and minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009), a postcolonial approach is required. Bailey suggested that the causal factors of the achievement gap are to be found in the shared colonial experiences of North America. In Bailey's review of the literature, no study using a postcolonial lens was found investigating the achievement gap. Postcolonial perspectives (Shahjahan, 2014; van der Westhuizen, 2013) do not place one knowledge system above another but search for intersection points that bring groups closer together, as well as identifying shared states of being, knowing, and doing that lead to reconciliation between groups.

In 2015, the TRC of Canada released *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action,* introducing a new approach to Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. The opening statement of the document speaks to this new relationship: "In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the TRC makes the following calls to action…" (2015a, p. 1). The

document lists 94 calls, of which seven are explicitly directed towards education and four addressing education for reconciliation. *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (TRC) does not call for a righting of past wrongs, perceived or actual, but an acknowledgment of the factual history shared by all Canadians, non-Indigenous and Indigenous alike. In working toward reconciliation, the TRC made the following statement introducing their principles of truth and reconciliations:

> It is due to the courage and determination of former students-the Survivors of Canada's residential school system-that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established. They worked for decades to place the issue of the abusive treatment that students were subjected to at residential schools on the national agenda. Their perseverance led to the reaching of the historic Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.
>
> All Canadians must now demonstrate the same level of courage and determination, as we commit to an ongoing process of reconciliation. By establishing a new and respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, we will restore what must be restored, repair what must be repaired, and return what must be returned. (TRC, 2015b, p. 1)

The goal of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada can be viewed through a postcolonial lens as Indigenous matters move from the periphery to the center of Canadian social issues. It is through the lens of postcolonial perspectives that this study was undertaken.

Spivak (1988), in her essay on power and voice, "Can the subaltern speak?" concluded that the subaltern could not speak. Spivak based her declaration on the silencing of Indian women by British colonial power holders. During the British occupation of India, Indian social structures, laws, and practices were perceived as inferior to British standards. Spivak used the practice of *sati,* the ceremonial self-sacrifice of widows upon their husband's funeral pyres, as an example of British colonial practices that degraded and barbarized indigenous Indian practices without questioning their origins, social function, religious or spiritual significance. Assuming that the practice of *sati* was to ensure that family property stayed within male hands, or that it was a means to ensure that women continue to take a subservient role in Indian society, the British colonial government outlawed the practice. As Spivak suggested, this could be perceived as a case of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (p. 92). By outlawing a practice that had limited adherence within traditional Indian society, Indian women were not only placed in a role of possession and property but rendered silent in matters that concerned them as persons. The outlawing of an event that, for some, was a sacred ceremony of pure devotion demonstrated to members of Indian society that the British considered their social practices as aberrant, barbaric, and in need of replacement.

With state independence, the Indian citizenry sought to regain their uniqueness but within a colonialistic world. Gandhi (1998) described this re-assumption of power as changing the color of the faces in power. Colonial power structures and forms of governance had successfully usurped traditional Indian structures and practices. In the new India, the educated upper classes stepped forward to assume leadership. During the transition, colonial and later Indian scholars offered their interpretation of social

structures and the plight of the subalterns. Spivak (as cited in De Kock, 1992) does not

define subalterns as lower-class persons or simply oppressed workers; subalterns are held

outside the colonial society. The Indian subalterns are in "a space of difference" (Spivak

as cited in De Kock, 1992, p. 45), their access to the colonial social structures is

restricted. Restricted at the privilege of the colonizers and their replacements. In

attempting to better the situation of the lower classes and the subalterns, the scholars,

white, brown, and mixed, prevented the subalterns from speaking for themselves. In

taking the subaltern's voice to the world, well-intended individuals silenced not only the

voices of the subaltern but took away their thoughts, agency, and personhood as well. In

attempting to speak for another, the other's voice is silenced. In the world of advocacy,

how do minoritized, racialized, and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) people make their

voices heard?

How does the subaltern condition of colonial India impact the lived experiences

of Indigenous youth in contemporary Western Canada? As a former British colony and

still a member of the Commonwealth, Canada, like India, retains many vestiges of its

colonial past. This colonial past carries over into the present day overtly with restrictive

laws, and covertly with social attitudes. The *Indian Act* (1876 and subsequent

enactments), based on the intent of the *Royal Proclamation* of 1793, set Indigenous

people apart from all other Canadians. The administration of the *Indian Act* by the federal

department of INAC continues the original paternalistic role of directing the lives of

Indigenous people by dictating methods and measures of accountability, overseeing

Education, Health, and governance of First Nation communities. While Indigenous

people are making gains in repossessing their independence, they are still accountable to

INAC for many of their actions. Furthermore, contemporary education offered to Indigenous students still suffers from the shadow of Indian Residential Schools, also known as industrial or training schools.

Indian Residential Schools were operated by religious institutions, and funded by the Canadian federal government. The first recognized Indian Residential School in Canada opened in 1828. The Mohawk Institute operated by the Anglican Church was also the longest continuously operated Indian Residential School in Canada (Anglican Church of Canada, 2018b). Over the next 168 years, 139 Indian Residential Schools operated across Canada. It is estimated that over 150,000 Indigenous children were removed, some forcefully, from their parental homes to be educated at residential schools. With the closing of Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, in 1996, the Indian Residential School era came to an end after almost 170 years of operation (Anglican Church of Canada, 2018a).

The original purpose of the Indian Residential Schools was to educate and integrate Indigenous children, their families, and communities into the dominating colonialist society. Indian Residential Schools became institutions of assimilation and conformity through forced enrollment and overt denial of traditional languages, cultural practices, or contact with traditional kinship system members. According to Ryerson, in his 1847 statement, Indian children were to be assimilated into the Canadian Whitestream through education and religious conversion (Ryerson, in Ryerson University's Aboriginal Education Council, 2010). Conformity to the Canadian Whitestream was further induced though socially restrictive laws and practices that forbid heritage language use, the

practice of tribal custom and ceremony, and even free movement across traditional

territories (*Indian Act*, 1876, and subsequent enactments).

Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin referred to the residential school era as "cultural

genocide" in her May 28, 2015, address to the Pluralism Lecture Within Indigenous

Communities (Lehmann, 2015). Indian Residential Schools have come to signify colonial

oppression and subjugation. Duncan Campbell Scott, the head of the Department of

Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, made the most damning pronouncement about Indian

Residential Schools. He declared that the purpose of the Indian Residential School

system was to "educate the Indian out of the child," in effect, to turn Indigenous children

into whites for their benefit (National Archives of Canada, 1920; Rheault, 2011). Scott

wrote:

The Indian Problem

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that

the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to

stand alone …

Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that

has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question,

and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill. (Duncan

Campell (*sic*) Scott, 1920, National Archives of Canada)

In carrying out his mandate, Campbell set policies that removed children from

their communities and placed them in residential schools sometimes hundreds of miles

away. They were stripped of their Indigenous identity, forbidden to speak their first

languages, or practice their spirituality. They were abused in numerous ways

(emotionally, mentally, physically, and sexually), as revealed through the statements of survivors at the Truth and Reconciliation events that occurred across Canada. Systemically. Indigenous peoples have been dispossessed of their traditional lands, forbidden to move across those land, or to participate in spiritual and communal ceremonies. Indigenous people have been forced to live on the margins of the Whitestream society. This attitude continues to reduce Indigenous traditional educational practices to nonsense and worthlessness when compared to the colonial education system. Even before Campbell set the educational course of Indian Residential Schools, treaties were being interpreted to restrict the activities of Indigenous people.

Treaties and their colonial legalistic interpretation, limited Indigenous occupation to small tracts of land, at times, not even within traditional territories. Indigenous people were confined to reserves, prevented from maintaining their traditional ceremonies and movements, critical components of their traditional education (Narcisse Blood, late Elder of the Kainai community, personal communication, 2014). There is emerging evidence that Campbell sought to restrict further the activities of Indigenous people residing on reserves by instituting a pass system (personal communications from family members living on the Mistawasis First Nation, 1980 to the present; Williams, 2016). In order to leave the reserve, individuals were required to obtain a pass from the Indian agent. If an Indigenous individual was found off-reserve without a valid pass, they were subject to retribution and penalty, often fines and jail time. Despite the illegality of this non-legislated system, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were charged with its enforcement. Successive federal governments, up until the mid-1950s continued to enforce the pass system without question. Some Indigenous people left the reserves to

seek a new and better life, often leaving their identity behind to become French, German, English, or even Spanish or Portuguese.

To restrict and limit the growth of Canadian Indigenous populations off-the-reserve, Indigenous women who married non-status or white men were stripped of their Indian status or were no longer recognized as Status Indians. A Status Indian is an individual recognized by the federal government as being registered under the *Indian Act;* they may also be referred to as a Registered Indian (INAC, 2018). Typically, individuals whose families were party to signing treaties with the Crown are considered to be Status Indians; individuals who do not have this connection are referred to as non-status Indians. For instance, within my own family. On the day, my great Grandmother married a Métis man; the local Indian agent declared she was no longer an Indian. This declaration robbed her descendants not only of their heritage but cut off contact with her relatives and eliminated the extensive kinship system that had sustained the family for generations. However, when non-Indian or white women married Status Indian men, they gained Indian status, as did their children. This oppressive and myogenic law was repealed in the 1980s; however, the message that Indigenous women had diminished status, had been delivered. The number of missing and murdered Indigenous women may be a continued legacy of this attitude (Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the B.C. CEDAW Group, 2012).

The *Indian Act 1876* dictated that when Indigenous individuals managed to achieve higher education, they were stripped of their Indian status upon graduation. This practice continued until 1961, when "compulsory enfranchisement provisions were removed from the Indian Act" (Makarenko, 2008). This practice had a twofold effect.

First, it sent the message that if a Status Indian was capable of higher education, s/he could no longer be an Indian. Secondly, stripping Indian status from Indian graduates maintained the statistical perception that Indians were not capable of achieving higher education, let alone completing grade school (Elizabeth Lightening, personal communication, 2000).

In the United States of America, similar federal policies were enacted to limit and eliminate Indian status.

> House Concurrent Resolution 108 of the 83rd Congress in 1953 led to the passage in the next few years of a number of termination bills. Introduced by Representative William H. Harrison of Wyoming and by Senator Arthur V, Watkins of Utah (who later became Chairman of the Indian Claims Commission), the terminations resolution read in part:
>
> "It is the policy of Congress, as rapidly as possible, to make the Indian within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States, and to end their status as wards of the United States, and to grant them all the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizenship…" (Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1975, p. 10).

This termination policy remained active and aggressively perused until the Public Law 93-1973 "Repealing the Act of Terminating Federal Supervision Over Property and Members of the Menominee Indian Tribe" was signed into law (Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1975, p. 19).

Indigenous men and women stepped forward to enlist in the military during the World Wars; in Canada, they were promised the same benefits as their non-Indigenous colleagues upon return to civilian life. Later it was stipulated that they would be stripped of their Indian Status if they accepted the benefits (LackenBauer, Moses, Sheffield, & Gohier, 2010; personal communication from Indigenous veterans, the Late Elder Gerry Wood and Knowledge Keeper Terry Lusty, 2014).

Prevented from participating in Whitestream economic activities, provided with abusive educational experiences and their Indigenous identity stripped away, many Indigenous people fell into self-destructive behaviors or walked away from their Indigenousness to take on more colonially acceptable ethnocultural identities. In some families, they became French, English, or when pressured to identify, Métis; anything that would distance the family from their Indigenous ancestry. Self-deprecation was a survival response to the societal oppression to make their way in the world. This story was repeated across Canada as Indigenous people left the poverty and restrictions of the reserve to seek better lives. Marginalized by a system that found no value in Indigenous people, their heritage, customs, or knowledge, Indigenous people found no good reason to attempt integration and a restricted degree of assimilation. This history and these experiences are the legacies that Indigenous children carry and meet in schools across Canada. *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action* (2015), implores educational systems to address and discuss these dark and hidden chapters in Canadian history. Call to action 62 in part states:

We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in

consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and

educators, to:

i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and

Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a

mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve

students. (TRC, 2015a, p. 7)

On January 13, 2017, members of the lobby group, Albertans for Education, made

a presentation to the Expert Working Groups of Alberta Education curriculum

development team addressing history. The representative of Albertans for Education

stated that if there was a limited time for content instruction regarding history, only the

Eurocentric version of history should be taught. Many of the audience disagreed with this

statement (AniaLyda Ossowska, personal communication, January 13, 2017, member of

the Expert Working Groups). The Eurocentric perspective of Canadian history has

dominated the last one hundred years of formal grade school education in Canada. In

Alberta, until 2002, the only formal mention of Indigenous people in curricular

documents was either in policy or minor mentions in the Social Studies Program of

Study.

From the *Native Education in Alberta Schools* (AB ED, 1985) until the *First

Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (Alberta Learning, 2002a), the

provincial system looked at how to help self-identifying Indigenous students achieve. At

the federal level, Senator Thelma Chalifoux, the first Métis woman to be appointed to the

Canadian Senate, presented the report *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for*

Change (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2003). Many of the recommendations of the report, while supportive of Aboriginal youth, did not address educational concerns outside suggestions of programs and funding. Most of the assistance could be described as parental, in that social workers and liaison workers were to be employed to impress upon students and their families the importance of education. Little information and few supports were implemented to assist and support classroom teachers in making educational experiences relevant to Indigenous students.

In 2002, *Aboriginal Studies 10-20-30* (Alberta Learning, 2002) was implemented as an elective class. This course series was initailly aimed at all students. However, Indigenous students became the primary audience with few non-Indigenous students enrolling in the course. The resources for *Aboriginal Studies 10-20-30* (Alberta Learning, 2002), co-created with Indigenous community members, were perceived as being only for high school. This perception prevented the use of the resources at lower grade levels even as a teacher reference. In what is still termed the 'new Social Studies' Program of Studies, released in 2005, Indigenous (First Nation, Métis, and Inuit) references were included in the common front matter for all grades. Focused Indigenous outcomes and content were specified in grades 5, 9, and 11 (AB ED, 2005c). First Nation, Métis, and Inuit perspectives were first included in the front matter of the Science 10 program in 2005, after much pressure from Indigenous community members (AB ED, 2005b; Debbie Mineault, personal communication June 2006). Subject areas such as English Languages and Mathematics were devoid of Indigenous content or references outside general statements on inclusion in the front matter (AB ED, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006e, 2006f, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2007f, 2007g, 2007h, 2007i,

2007j, 2007k). With minimal Indigenous content in the form of front matter statements and curricular outcomes, in the legislated curriculum, teachers in Alberta are hard-pressed to find resources and support for their teaching. The inclusion of Indigenous content and perspectives had been left to a few knowledgeable teachers and classroom consultants.

Identifying a need to support teachers with the inclusion of Indigenous content and perspectives, Elders and Knowledge Keepers from Indigenous communities across Alberta requested a teacher support resource similar to the learning resources for *Aboriginal Studies 10-20-30* (Alberta Learning, 2002) but all grade levels. In 2005, *Our Words Our Ways, Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners* (AB ED, 2005a) was published to help classroom teachers gain knowledge regarding Indigenous students, their families, and communities. *Our Words, Our Ways* addressed topics such as protocol and kinship. In January 2012, after years of collaborative development, AB ED launched the interactive website, *Walking Together: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum* (AB ED, 2012). A series of in-services and workshops were conducted across the province. These workshops were to familiarize teachers with the website and the resources contained in it.

There have been modest gains in the academic engagement and achievement of Indigenous students, but they continue to lag behind their Whitestream peers. In Manitoba, graduation rates for Indigenous students rose from 46.9% in June 2014 to 58.4% in June 2015; this is in comparison to the non-Indigenous rates of 83.3% to 89.2% over the same period (Government of Manitoba, 2017). Kainai High School in Cardston, Alberta implemented the Kainai Quarter System Project in 2010; by 2014, overall

increases were demonstrated; however, the small student population makes it difficult to generalize. In 2010, three students graduated with an Alberta diploma, while in 2014, five graduated (Bourassa, 2015). Overall graduation rates for Indigenous high school students in Alberta are not readily available to public inquiry; no reported statistics were found.

Gordon and White (2014) found that high school completion rates for Indigenous students across Canada have remained constant at 23% from 2001 to 2011. Brayboy and Maaka (2015) found the results for American Indians and Alaska Natives youth to be much higher. In 2001, 52% of American Indians and Alaska Natives achieved high school completion compared to 68% for non-Indigenous students. The United States Census Bureau (US Census Bureau) reported in 2014 that 82.2% of American Indians and Alaska Natives over 25 years of age attained a high school diploma or an equivalent. This achievement is below the overall national average of 88.3% reported for 2014 (US Census Bureau, 2014, 2017a,). In 2016 the high school or higher attainment rate had declined to 79.9% for American Indians and Alaska Natives (US Census Bureau, 2017b).

In August 2014, the Alberta government, via AB ED established the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Division (FNMIED). The original mandate of this new division was to eliminate the achievement gap between First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students and their Whitestream peers in Alberta. This mandate was formally changed to the reduction of the achievement gap. The FNMIED website previously contained the following statement regarding its mission:

Alberta Education is committed to improving education outcomes and creating opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in Alberta. Our goal is to ensure all students have equitable opportunities for success.

Targeted supports and close collaboration are required to realize the vision

that all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in Alberta achieve or exceed

the educational outcomes set for Alberta students. (AB ED, 2015)

The website describes FNMIED's mission as: "Alberta Education is working in

collaboration with education partners to implement programs and initiatives to

eliminate the achievement gap between First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, and

other students in Alberta" (AB ED, 2018a).

With a desire to update and develop curriculum to meet the 21st century needs of

Albertans, FNMIED committed to engaging with Whitestream colleagues to ensure that

current and future curricula contain Indigenous perspectives and content. This portion of

the FNMIED mandate is officially contained within Standard 3 of the *Guiding*

Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial

Curriculum (The Guiding Framework). Standard 3 states:

Curriculum includes ways of knowing and diverse perspectives, in historical

and contemporary contexts, of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

• First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditional knowledge, experiences and

languages and cultures are evident within meaningful, relevant and authentic

learning outcomes.

• Curriculum includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories, including

residential schools and their legacy, and treaties and the diverse contributions

of First Nations, Métis and Inuit to Alberta and Canada. (AB ED, 2016, p. 24)

This standard was developed through consultation with Indigenous educators, Elders,

Knowledge Keepers, and community leaders. Students were not directly involved in the

development or wording of the standard. Issues of relevance, meaningful content, and cultural visibility were voiced to the contributors by students in their communities. Students who were relatives of contributors and may have been in the process of disengaging due to lack of relevance, meaningful content, and cultural visibility (Elder Skyes Powderface, personal communication, 2015, member of the Alberta Education Elders Advisory Committee,). Many Elders during meetings of the Alberta Education Elders Advisory Committee stated they heard similar things from young people in their communities across Alberta (personal communication, Alberta Education Elders Advisory Committee members, various meetings 2009 to 2016).

In enhancing the current curriculum and developing future curricula, AB ED indicated that the focus of curriculum development moves from a subject focused undertaking to a student-focused endeavor. The vision statement of The Guiding Framework reads as follows:

Vision for Students

Students are at the heart of Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 education

system. The following vision articulates hopes and expectations for all

students:

Students are lifelong learners inspired to pursue their aspirations and

interests; achieve fulfilment and success; and contribute to communities and

the world. (AB ED, 2016, p. 3)

Despite these foundational statements referencing the importance of students and the education being developed for them, students themselves have had little involvement. Previously, the Alberta government established *SpeakOut*, a youth council established to

provide elected provincial government officials to access to student voices and perspectives.

> The Council consists of 24 youth, ages 14 to 19, with different backgrounds, opinions, experiences and perspectives from all regions of Alberta. The Council provides its perspectives to the Minister and Alberta Education on educational issues. (Alberta Gov't, 2008, para. 5)

The council members received presentations regarding various aspects of education from AB ED staff, and a meet and greet with AB ED officials representing the Ministry. *SpeakOut* held significant events with youth representatives from across the province. The young people attending these events, like those of the Council proper, could be described as members of the Whitestream. In all the time that these events were held, only four self-identifying Indigenous youth attended. No self-identifying Indigenous youth has ever been a member of the Minister's Council. The information transfer was directed towards the students and their guardians, not to the government officials making the presentations. An email inquiry to the indicated address on the *SpeakOut* website requesting additional information regarding current council activities bounced back as undeliverable. How is it that such good intentions and focus have failed to involve the students for whom education is said to be created and carried out?

   Rudduck et al. (1996) asserted that young people are traditionally excluded from conversations regarding education as it applies to them. This exclusion does not suggest that such conversations have not occurred before or since Rudduck et al.'s determination. Student voice pioneer researcher Silberman (1971) acknowledged the difficulties of attempting to converse with students about their school experiences. Often when they do

talk among themselves, educational content or concerns are not the topics, but rather the rules and restrictions of school. Silberman and his contemporaries formed the first wave of student voice research. As previously stated, this first wave of interest was more focused on youth perceptions of school. While policies were found to set the stage for teacher/student interactions (Biber & Minuchin, 1969), teachers' perceptions of their students and teacher preference (Feshbach, 1969) were found to impact student engagement. Contributing to accessing student voice during the first wave of investigation, Noyes and McAndrew (1968) found there was little agreement on the purpose of schooling. However, many students were aware that schooling involved a process, a process that could be learned. Mallery (1962) investigated the perceptions and priorities of high school students and reported the perceptions of youth and how they felt about their educational experiences covering topics such as curriculum, content relevance, teacher-student interactions, and college admission requirements.

Rudduck et al. (1996) determined that the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) inspections from their inception were to include student involvement in determining the quality of education delivered by British schools. A brief review of inspection reports and associated publications available on the internet indicate that 20 years later, the reports do not indicate that student involvement is of any authentic consideration. The absence of student involvement may not be an indication of the process, but what is determined to be significant enough to report. AB ED, in a fashion similar to OFSTED inspections, conducts annual satisfaction surveys with multiple stakeholders, among them students (AB ED, 2010). AB ED states that: "gathering feedback and perspectives from stakeholders and beneficiaries of the

Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education system provides insight on the attitudes and opinions of Albertans towards the performance of the learning system" (AB ED, 2018b, para 1 and 2).

There are two surveys aimed at high school students. One for the general population and one specific for self-identifying First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students; there is no difference between the two surveys other than the title and two scripted pieces in the survey aimed at Indigenous students. The first is a scripted request to speak to the Aboriginal person enrolled in high school. The second is a scripted response should the person answering the phone ask how the interviewer knew they are a self-identified Aboriginal student. These surveys appear symptomatic of the postcolonial situation described by Spivak (1988); in that Whitestream students and their self-identifying Indigenous peers are perceived to have the same concerns and are impacted by the same issues. There is no question to indicate if the school the students attend is urban, rural, provincially, or federally funded.

Rudduck et al. (1996) form part of the second wave of student voice researchers. In their studies, they expressed appreciation for the complexities of students' lived realities. Similar dominating societal structures exist in England and North America, as the education systems are directed and designed to meet and continue a white middle-class ethos. In their discussion, Rudduck et al. did not directly address aspects of ethnocultural marginalization. However, low socioeconomic situations were revealed by student participants and informants. Marginalization regarding ethnoculturality, socio-economic status, geopolitical, religion, or spirituality silences many voices.

Shields et al. (2005), forming the end of the second wave of research into student voice, found that ethnocultural minority students are not embraced by the ethnoculturally dominant Whitestream. Shields (in Shields et al., 2005, Chapter 2) found that Navajo students, attending school off the reservation, were treated from a deficit position. This position focuses on what supports and abilities students are presumed **not** to have, such as parental support and encouragement, adequate academic abilities such as literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills. Shields et al. (2005) described deficit thinking to be similar to being "at-risk." At-risk students:

> have a home language other than English, com(e) from a single parent
> family, liv(e) with a form of abuse, or in poverty. In North America,
> there are special funds for "inner-city" school, Title 1 schools, English
> as Second Language students and homeless populations. (Shields et al.,
> 2005, p. 3).

Shields (in Shields et al., 2005, Chapter 2) found that parents indicated that their concerns and voices were dismissed as the Anglo culture dominated the educational environment.

Seeking the voices of Māori students, Bishop (in Shields et al., 2005, Chapter 3) found that conditions agreed to in the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840, were all but ignored. Before the implementation of Te Kotahitanga, the Aotearoa New Zealand state curriculum was devoid of Maori voices, concepts or perceptions. Bishop found Māori educational structures marginalized through isolation and restriction to Māori children and youth only. Whitestream schools integrate Maori students through assimilation and conformity to the dominant Pākehā or settler population's social ideals.

Mazawi (in Shields et al., 2005, Chapter 4) working with Bedouin students, their families, and communities in Israel found systemic structures and practices that actively silenced not just the voices of students but entire communities, in an attempt to eliminate their unique identities. These examples illustrate the barriers minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009) face when engaging the Whitestream educational system. Through the work of Bishop and his colleagues, Aotearoa New Zealand has become a model of Indigenous integration (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, 2009; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop, Ladwig, & Berryman, 2014). Aotearoa New Zealand's educational efforts have a distinct advantage over Canadian efforts in that New Zealand has a single identified Indigenous people, the Māori, while Canada has hundreds; 64 distinct First Nations are recognized in Alberta alone. Aotearoa New Zealand has a single treaty, the Treaty of Waitangi 1840, governing affairs between the Māori and the Pākehā or settler population, while Canada has multiple treaties extending back to 1701 (INAC, 2010).

If minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009) experience challenges when engaging with Whitestream educational systems, how are they to be heard? While Spivak (1988) has stated that the subalterns cannot speak for themselves, Indigenous voices *are* being heard. Cajete (1994), at the University of New Mexico, has developed an effective Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy that not only applies to science but other subject areas with minor modification. Battiste (2013) at the University of Saskatchewan has challenged the Eurocentric dominance of the Canadian educational system and suggested ways to reestablish an Indigenous partnership. Foremost, Battiste believes in making Whitestream educators aware of "the colonial and

neo-colonial practices that continue to marginalize and racialize Indigenous students" (p. 69). Recognizing the importance that place and land play in the holistic lives of Indigenous people is critical for coming to understand Indigenous worldviews. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Bishop and his colleagues have done extensive research and developed a professional development project that helps Pākehā educators increase Māori student engagement and achievement (Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Bishop et al., 2014).

Cajete (1994) based his Indigenous curriculum in a relationship with the land and the beings that inhabit it. In this sense, the curriculum is place-specific, yet commonalities allow aspects to be applied to other spaces and times. Through relationships, individuals find their sense of being and purpose and, in turn, can express their voice. Battiste (2013) informed Indigenous educators that before educational systems can be reestablished, Indigenous people need to determine and state what their desired goals for education are. In this declaration of educational goals, Indigenous people need to assert their voices and be heard. Battiste posited that a relationship needs to be established between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples where unique and separate educational systems are mutually respected. Bishop and his colleagues researched the desires of the Māori communities and identified the characteristics of effective teachers to establish the *Effective Teaching Profile* (Bishop & Berryman, 2009). Through the Te Kotahitanga professional development project, the *Effective Teaching Profile* was shared with over 30 schools in Aotearoa New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2009). Like Cajete's curriculum, the Te Kotahitanga professional development project is based on traditional beliefs, Kaupapa Māori, the Māori philosophy of relationship, role, and

purpose. In being Māori, Māori students, their families, and communities through Kaupapa Māori have reestablished their voice.

In finding their agency and using their voices, Battiste (2013), Cajete (1994), Bishop (1999), and others Indigenous scholars, such as Kovach (2010), Smith (1999/2008), and Wilson (2008), first had to establish and prove their worth within the dominant colonial education systems. In this process, they found friends and allies who encouraged and created opportunities for non-traditional and non-colonial voices to be heard (Battiste, 2013). In turn, these Indigenous scholars and their allies have created opportunities for Indigenous voices to be heard first hand. The establishment of higher education institutions such as Blue Quills University, The University of Waikato, and the numerous colleges related to Indigenous and Native Studies have established an authentic venue for Indigenous voices. Despite the presence of Indigenous voice in higher education, the same cannot yet be said of K-12 school education.

There has been much research and listening to students at higher educational levels (Blair & Valdes Noel, 2014; Hamshire et al., 2017; McLeod, 2011; Seale et al., 2014). In reviewing journal articles, the majority are concerned with the collection and expression of adult student voices engaged in higher education (Busher, 2012; Butler et al., 2015; Hamshire et al., 2017). Adult students can express their views and concerns through formal and informal processes. For example, at Walden University, the end of each quarter or semester provides students with an opportunity to share their perspectives and perceptions on courses and instructional relationships. Here in the expression of adult student voices, it is still the researchers presenting the students' voices, not the students

themselves. Listening to and hearing from students, at all levels and authentically presenting their voices bears unique challenges.

The term "student voice" appeared to have come into usage in 1978 with the *Special Issue* of *Educational Review* (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006); this was during the first wave of student voice research. However, the researchers were interested in student perspectives, not their voices. According to Rudduck and Fielding (2006), the inclusion of student voice goes back to the 1890s with the establishment of Bedales School by John Haden Badley. Bedales School was a response to the strict conventional Victorian schools of the time; the focus was to be on the students and their holistic development as persons. Badley felt that an alternative to the strict Victorian educational experience was needed, the emphasis was placed on Science and the Arts as well as volunteerism. In 1916, students were given a voice in governance through the establishment of a Student Council (Bedales, 2018). After over 125 years, educational systems still struggle with the inclusion of student voice. Fear and hesitation exist in all corners; students fear how what they say will be taken, while teachers and educational leaders fall prey to the ideology of immaturity (Grace as cited in Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Children and youth are perceived as lacking experience and knowledge of what is vital to their educational and personal development. They are viewed as empty vessels to be filled with predetermined information (Freire, 1970/2005).

Mitra (2004) found that research into student voice is not a new thing; however, in the first years of the 21st century, the purpose has changed. Cusick (as cited in Mitra, 2004) and deCharms (as cited in Mitra, 2004) documented the "student power movements asserted the right of students to participate in decision-making in classrooms

and schoolwide" (p. 652). The current focus is founded on the perception that student voice and engagement can improve learning outcomes and increase student engagement through more equitable power-sharing regarding classroom learning experiences. Mitra (2004) could cite few studies that involved students in decision-making processes that directly impacted their learning experiences. It was found that when students are actively encouraged to share their voices, those students experienced increased levels of agency, school, and group belonging and competency. However, students need to be confident in the language they use. Hornberger and Kvietok Duenas (2019) found that Kichwa (an Indigenous language spoken in the Alto Napo region of Peru) speaking students while knowing the subject matter were hesitant (shy) to speak in Spanish. It appeared that it was not their inability to speak Spanish but rather their non-fluency and being uncomfortable with the language. As the students were able to practice their Spanish speaking skills in a comfortable and low-tension learning environment, they acquired greater confidence in speaking Spanish. Such non-fluency and feelings of uncomfortableness with academic and Whitestream jargon leave Indigenous youth feeling they have little to say of importance or that non-fluency will be taken as an inability to communicate. Mitra (2004) indicated that student voice research needed to be expanded and documented. It appears that the same situation of twenty years ago continues to exist.

Despite the term being in active use for years, there are still difficulties encountered with defining "student voice." Cook-Sather (2006) looked at the term "student voice" and what that term has come to mean in the 21st century. Student voice is not just the thoughts and perceptions of students; it is an expression of their selves, their

identities, their agency, and their visions for what might be. Others have stated (Checkoway, 2010; Fleming, 2013; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015) that the purpose of student voice is dependent upon who is speaking and who is listening. From its inception, student voice has been about systemic change. In the early 1970s, student voice was about the school experiences and how the system could be changed to facilitate greater student success (Silberman, 1971). Later the focus changed to legislation and policy.

Implementing the articles from the *United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) (Unicef, 1989), has added to the legislated foundation and reasons for engaging students in issues that impacted them. In the 21st century, the focus changed from policy to practices. Multicultural education and ethnocultural responsive pedagogies and strategies have become easier to apply to classrooms than altering systemic policy (Banks, 1993; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009). Curriculum, pedagogy, and relationships facilitate student engagement through outcome negotiation and contributions.

Lundy (2007) reviewed the implication of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC*)* (Unicef, 1989), specifically Article 12. Article 12 of the UNCRC is being used in the application of children's rights by policymakers and academics. Article 12 reads:

> 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or
> her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters
> affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in
> accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the

opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings

affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in

accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (Unicef, 1989, p. 2)

Lundy (2007) found that while Article 12 is widely cited, it is not well

understood. Applying Article 12 strictly as a mechanism to support student voice and

student consultation reduces the effectiveness and underlying principle of the article and

the Convention. Article 12 is perceived to limit the authority and systemic power of

adults or cost additional funds to implement; these perceptions result in resistance to full

implementation. Lundy suggested a simplistic model for applying Article 12 that involves

four elements.

Space: Children must be given the opportunity to express a view

Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their views

Audience: The view must be listened to

Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

(Lundy, 2007, p. 933)

This model provides a concise process of implementing Article 12 to all issues and

matters that impact the lives of children and youth. The four elements set out a process

that can be met without any degradation of authority, power, or inflicting financial costs.

This model may convey cost savings and more equitably share authority and systemic

power. The acceptance of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples* (United Nations, 2008), made the involvement and participation of Indigenous

children and youth all the more imperative.

Leat and Reid (2012) explored curriculum development in light of Articles 12 and 13 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Unicef, 1989). Application of Articles 12 and 13 requires the involvement of students in the areas and processes that impact them. In knowledge-based curriculum models, students have little opportunity to be involved in the development of curriculum. Knowledge is held by specialists who may be described as subscribers to the banking system of education (Freire, 1970/2005). In this concept, students are empty vessels to be filled with predetermined knowledge. In moving towards student involvement in curriculum development or student-centric curriculum development, Leat and Reid identified three primary issues impacting student involvement. The first is the assumption that student involvement requires adult complicity and acceptance. The fear of teachers and administrators giving up power to students is an unnerving concept. The second addresses the distribution of power between adults and students, as well as how power distribution takes place. Leat and Reid, as well as others (Checkoway, 2010; Czerniawski, 2012) found that the more confident and articulate students are the ones whose voices are heard and then generalized to the entire student population. This situation has been evident in the various *SpeakOut* events hosted by AB ED on behalf of the Government of Alberta, where those students who appear to have the most affinity with the Whitestream were the ones who were also the most articulate (Alberta Gov't, 2008). The third issue concerns which students are involved, whose voices are heard, those who comply with adult expectations or those who exist at the socioeconomic, ethnocultural, geopolitical, gender, sexual orientation, or religious margins. In the

composition of the *National Youth White Paper on Global Citizenship* (2015), the youth acknowledge the marginalization of Indigenous youth from Whitestream conversations.

Leat and Reid (2012) asserted that current knowledge outcome-based curricula offer little involvement for students. Changing over to process-based curricula requires teachers to view their students in a different way; from a strength-based orientation. Within process-based curricula, students and teachers perceive themselves as partners and collaborators. When teachers view their students as capable learners and contributors to the learning process, students view their teachers differently, as partners and collaborators who are concerned with their achievement, well-being, and growth as persons. The change in teacher perceptions of students and the reciprocal view of students of their teachers' changes how teachers perceive themselves and their ability to facilitate the success of their students.

Robinson and Taylor (2013) found that student voice is not just providing opportunities for youth to express themselves. However, that student voice work should provide students with the power to effect change regarding their learning. Robinson and Taylor reviewed projects in England that suggest that student voice is incorporated to bring about educational change. In looking at how student voice is utilized, Robinson and Taylor found that systemic factors within the dominant culture silenced the voices of the minoritized, radicalized, and marginalized students (Cavanagh, 2009). Robinson and Taylor found that when student and staff ideologies are not in agreement with the dominant cultural and behavioral expectation those students and staff are silenced. Working in such conditions, one cannot be certain that the voices being heard are indeed the authentic voices of students or the echo of the adults governing their realities.

Robinson and Taylor (2013) questioned the purpose of involving youth and exploiting their voices within the traditional educational paradigm. Others (Beattie, 2012; Bertrand, 2014; Carnes & Robinson 2014; Elwood, 2013; Horn, 2015; Kirk et al., 2015; Lewthwaite, Owen, Doiron, Renaud, & McMillan, 2014; Stelmach et al., 2017) suggested that a systemic paradigm shift is needed to incorporate student voices to effect authentic student-focused change.

In a national study, Elwood (2013) determined the extent of consultation that students are involved in and how they feel about it. Feelings ranged from tokenism to authentic engagement resulting is real change. Students stated they believed they have input in areas of low-risk items such as the physical environment of their institutions and non-educational activities. In areas of high student impact (high risk), such as curricular content, evaluations, and assessments, the students stated they have little influence and that things were just done to them. Further investigation revealed that students have real concerns about how decisions regarding curricular content and assessment are imposed on them and their teachers. Students voiced their concerns about how information is passed from them to decision-makers; they suggested that teachers might become power brokers between students and decision-makers. Students believed that teachers have a better understanding of the issues that impact students than the educational leaders responsible for effecting change (Elwood, 2013).

In efforts to advance student voice in the 21st century, Rector-Aranda and Raider-Roth (2015) used anonymous online surveys concerning student involvement in the Jewish Court of All Time, a web-mediated simulation designed for middle school classrooms. In assuming historical roles, students can use the anonymity of online

character personas to express themselves, often in contexts that are counter to their personal perceptive. Within the anonymous context of the online simulation, students and teachers became equals, sharing ideas and comments devoid of positional power. The online simulations offered safe spaces for students to express their voices and assert their agency. While such anonymity may provide safe conditions for students to express themselves, it does not provide an authentic expression of student voice. In the context of the project, students were provided a venue to explore historical events rather than express concerns regarding issues impacting them in the here and now.

As schools and school systems face accountability measures under US federal education policies, Kirshner and Jefferson (2015) examined the involvement of students in the turnaround process of community schools. They found that students were often excluded from discussions that hold a direct impact upon their educational experiences. When students were invited to participate, their input was limited and often tokenistic. Students participants were invited from "A-lists." Students who either accept the decisions of adults or agree with the socioeconomic and geopolitical visions of the adults; minoritized, racialized and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) youth are seldom invited to participate. When members of minoritized, racialized and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) groups are invited to participate, they experienced barriers. Systemic barriers such as language, educational level, the physicality of meeting places distract from their full and authentic participation (Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015). It appeared that those who come from similar circumstances and thus share relationships of commonality are invited to speak more often than those who do not share the same circumstances as the power brokers.

Beattie (2012) indicated that in American secondary schools that follow the "industrial era model," relationships are secondary to the business of education. Conformity, through "(u)niformity and obedience are highly prized by adults" (Beattie, 2012, para 4). Conformity accompanies the silenced voices of both students and teachers. A model where students are empowered to inform teachers of their learning experiences, and teachers are encouraged to make changes to accommodate student learning needs, requires a shift in the power dynamic and perception that the real problem lies within the organizational structure rather than with the students.

Colonialism continues to exert an invisible power throughout educational systems. Adzahlie-Mensah and Dunne (2019) determined that the colonial structure of Ghanaian schools continues to silence student voices through the institutional demand of conformity. The power dynamic and hierarchy established during colonial occupations are entrenched in the educational system. Similar power dynamics are at work for Spivak (1988) and the silencing of the Indian others as well as for Freire's (1970/2005) rural workers. Without power, alternative voices cannot be heard, and those holding power cannot authentically speak for the oppressed. Freire asserted, that only when the other has their voice, can the system be authentically changed. It is not a matter of tearing down the master's house with the master's tools but renovating the structure to accommodate all (Lorde, 1984/2007). In attempting to elevate the voices of the others to be heard, those in positions of advocacy and power need to hold a relationship of trust with the others whose voices they wish to be heard.

Postcolonial perspectives focus on the current and third wave of student voice research. Scholars (Abu-Shomar, 2013; Aman, 2015; Andreotti, 2014; Cerecer, 2013;

Kayira, 2013) have explored alternative views of the establishment as they attempt to bring the voices on the margins closer to the center where they can be heard and reflected apon.

In the field of student voice, Czerniawski (2012) stated that the concept of trust had received little notice. Trust is not only necessary for authentic dialogue to occur between students and researchers, teachers and educational leaders, and decision-makers but also full disclosure of the purpose to which the student voices are aimed. Czerniawski identified two competing narratives in student voice initiatives. The first narrative is intended to improve the educational experience through systemic improvements in power-sharing, curriculum, and pedagogy. The second is focused on policy and promotion of institutions; Czerniawski stated such goals might reduce the authentic nature of student voices. Trust may be reduced when the student voice participants are only from the Whitestream. Czerniawski found that individuals encouraged to participate in student voice initiatives subscribe or are perceived to adhere, to Whitestream norms. Checkoway (2010) found perceptions that only middle and upper-class individuals have the desire and ability to be involved. This perception eliminated the voices of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009). These perceptions align with Czerniawski's findings that some teachers believe not including low-performing marginalized students is in their best interest; non-invitation provides more time to devote to their academic standings.

Rudduck and Fielding (2006) reminded us to consider the who, how, and why of student voice. Which students are to speak, who is represented, who listens, and who is taking action. The how relates to how are student voices listened to, are they invited to

join a pre-determined agenda, or do they have a choice in determining what topics are to be addressed? Why could be the most substantial question; are the students involved in a process leading to authentic change, are their voices used to reaffirm the adult agendas or are they political pawns in the promotion of educational consumerism (Fleming, 2013)?

Fleming (2013) looked at three youth-focused community initiatives in Britain and the participation of young people in their organizational structure. While Lundy (2007) suggested that the increase in youth participation is due to the adoption of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Child* (Unicef, 1989), Fleming suggested that consumerism plays a part in the use of youth participation by social agencies providing youth services. The consumer approach is based on organizational self-promotion and reporting rather than accountability and an authentic desire to involve youth. Despite the need for a change in organizational culture, young people feel that their involvement is of value and valuable to them (Fleming, 2013). Fleming found that youth are adept at identifying consultations that are tokenistic and based on participation through invitation approach. Invitations are perceived as consultation when the goals, agenda, and processes defined by adults, are validated by youth. This process is reflective of Fleming's application of Peters and Waterman's (as cited in Fleming, 2013) seven S model of organizational change. The hard factors of the model: strategy, structure, and systems, are addressed by organizations involved with youth. However, the soft factors, shared values, staff, skills and knowledge, and style of leadership are not receiving the same level of attention. Yet, these factors are critical to the involvement and participation of youth in organizations that impact their lived realities. Based on Fleming's experiences in Britain and Australia, youth participation in social service is underway and increasing. However, involvement

and participation in educational policy and curricular content are still a high-risk area of contention. Much of the work involving grade school youth and the expression of their voices is conducted in alternative programs, programs aimed at youth at risk of dropping out of school, experiencing difficulties, and severe challenges in Whitestream school environments.

Busher (2012) found four basic concepts regarding student voice. 1) A single student voice does not exist; every student has a unique perspective and way of voicing that perspective. When students are restricted to promoting a single voice, many voices are silenced; this, unfortunately, is the case in Alberta with the Minister of Education's Student Council and *SpeakOut*; only those students who participate have a voice. While listening to every student may be daunting, when each student is listened to, levels of engagement, and ownership of the educational experience increase. 2) When teachers engage their students in authentic conversations about their educational experiences, teachers can reflect upon student perspectives and improve their practice and establish relationships of care (Nodding, 2005) with their students. 3) Student voices raise questions about classroom and school cultures and what makes an effective learning environment. They provide suggestions to educational leaders as to how systems may be improved for the benefit of all. 4). Two of the accepted purposes of education are to prepare young people for active citizenship and productive contribution to their society. Busher believed that in recognizing student voice, educational leaders, teachers, and other adults in authority provide opportunities for students to develop active citizenship and contribution to their society. Student voice provides an avenue for students to be partners in their educational experiences and legitimatizes their status as people to be respected

and acknowledged, as stated in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Unicef, 1989).

Flower, McKenna, Haring, and Pazey (2015) spoke with high school students categorized as emotionally disturbed to determine their perceptions of school to post-secondary transition supports. Few scholars have sought the voices of students with emotional or behavioral conditions concerning perceptions of their educational experiences. Students indicated several factors that benefit their transition. Curricula relevant to their immediate situation and future career goals is essential. Teachers who support students through relationships of care (Noddings, 2005), have high expectations and ensure that students do their best, informing students of social supports they could access were described as critical to student engagement and success. Teachers who apply ethnoculturally responsive pedagogy and strategies (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings 1994/2009) can support their students in individually relevant ways. The student participants indicated that relationships in one form or another are critical to successful transitions from high school (Flower et al., 2015).

Girls defined as *special need*s due to behavioral, emotional, or social difficulties are seldom listened to when voicing their concerns or lived experiences (Clarke et al., 2011). Clarke, Boorman, and Nind (2011) acknowledged "that some voices are difficult to hear because of a lack of conventional communication resources, a hesitant or inarticulate delivery, and a marginalised social status" (p. 2). According to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Unicef, 1989), children have a right to express themselves. However, Clarke et al. (2011) found that the results are simplistic, in that only non-confrontational and low impact topics are addressed, topics and issues that

agree with the status quo or the promotion of traditional power structures. For authentic

dialogue to occur, listening, and responding to the voices of youth is needed (Busher,

2012).

Listening to youth voices may be a difficult undertaking due to the "contextual,

fluid and shifting" (Clarke et al., 2011, p. 7) nature of youth attempting to find their place

in the world. As indicated by Checkoway (2010), the voices of youth cannot be taken to

be authentic or representative of any group or segment of the youth population. Clarke et

al. (2011) found that when the girls were given a safe nonintrusive venue to express

themselves, they related insightful and detailed accounts of their lived experiences that

are informative to future actions. According to Indigenous Research Methodologies

(Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Bishop, 1999; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010; Smith,

1999/2008; Wilson, 2008), the authenticity of voice is to be ensured through collective

yarning or collaborative storying. Closing the loop requires that the collective story be

approved by the participants, silence or non-responsiveness of participants concerning the

played back, or retold stories cannot be taken as approval of accuracy.

Wilson, Stemp, and McGinty (2011) investigated alternative educational

programs in Queensland, Australia. Various programs are implemented to address low

graduation rates and disengagement by a disproportionate number of Indigenous youths

from Whitestream education. While many programs identified the needs and issues of

youth at risk of educational disengagement, few programs solicit students for input in the

construction of programs. Wilson et al. (2011) identified a single study as having

contacted youth to determine their perceptions of alternative education programs. Wilson

and Stemp (as cited in Wilson et al., 2011) identified three factors that are impactful to

the re-engagement and success of Indigenous youth in alternative education programs: learning programs are relevant to their lived realities, learning environments are welcoming, and flexible to the non-academic demands of their lived realities, and the relationships between teachers and students are relations of care rather than position. Wilson et al. found that relationships of care (Noddings, 2005) are a common feature of successful alternative education programs. Relationships of care (Noddings, 2005) are not just demonstrated by the interaction between the teaching staff and students but also in how the staff supports the students' access to non-academic supports. As Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Gay (2010) implied, relationships that extend beyond the classroom benefit learning and instill a sense of belonging for minoritized, racialized, and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) students.

In an attempt to move closer to an authentic inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Saggers (2015) sought out the stories of students with ASD. The students attended a Whitestream high school in a large urban secondary school in Australia. While previous studies focused on the academic outcomes and experience of children with ASD as related by caregivers and educators, Saggers collected stories directly from the students with ASD about their lived experiences in high school with teachers, peers, and curricular content. Saggers found that relationships positively impacted the experiences of students with ASD, relationships with peers, teachers, and educational assistants. Negatively impacting feelings of well-being for the participating students were teachers who yell, noisy environments, bullying and teasing from peers and complicity about the bullying from adults, the stress load of homework regarding too much, and too many common due dates. From the stories of the students, Saggers

suggested that support be implements to assist with easing the stress from these negative factors. Saggers concluded that the needs of ASD students could be addressed by adopting and practicing the principles of social justice.

Students either actively attending or having attended the Rosemont Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services alternative education programs shared their experiences with McKeown (2011). The primary factors re-engaging students are small class sizes, connectedness, and relationships. Peer friendships, while significant, were not as important as relationships with staff. Realistic expectations and parental support were also identified by students as important to their success. By studying successful alternative education programs, McKeown hoped to identify standards for other programs. Basing new programs on established factors may be successful. However, this does not engage future students in the establishment of programs; they are only able to share their experiences after the fact. Each new program requires youth involvement at the onset to achieve the liberating democratic education that McKeown found others spoke of.

Lagana-Riordan et al. (2011), invited students enrolled in an alternative school to share their perceptions of the alternative school and traditional Whitestream schools they had attended. Students cited poor relationships with traditional Whitestream school teachers as a contributing factor to their lack of success. Participants stated that the climate of traditional Whitestream schools was not welcoming, and many felt unsafe. The application of rigid discipline and zero-tolerance policies drive students at-risk of achieving graduation out of traditional Whitestream schools. The lack of relationships, the feelings of being pushed out of an unsafe and unwelcoming environment lead to poor

peer relationships. In the end, the students disengage as their only option to retain their self-worth. Enrolling in alternative programs as a means to achieve high school graduation, participants stated they found a more caring environment where teachers cared about them, not just as students but as persons. Students stated that the teachers in the alternative programs held high expectations for all students and addressed their unique individual circumstances when dealing with students experiencing difficulties. Teachers were viewed as partners, who desire to see students succeed; they work from the students' basis of strength. Not only did students have positive success orientated relationships with their teachers but also other staff in the school. Lagana-Riordan et al. suggested that all school staff receive solution-based training when working in alternative programs. The factors that Lagana-Riordan et al. identified as impactful for at-risk student success are characteristic of ethnoculturally responsive teaching, as described by Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Gay (2010).

Simmons, Graham, and Thomas (2015) looked at student perceptions of wellbeing and what school factors contributed to positive student wellbeing. As part of a larger investigation Simmons et al. consulted with students aged 6 to 17 in three large Australian Catholic school districts to determine what their ideal school would be. Data collection took one of three formats depending on the age of the respondent. Oral reports, visuals drawings, and posters from the youngest participants, detailed written descriptions from the oldest and a mixture of visual, oral discussions, and written submission for the middle-grade participants. Simmons et al. identified four major themes; teacher pedagogy, school environment, and culture, the ability to have a say, and relationships. Simmons et al. determined that none of the suggestions from students negatively impact

education. Characteristics associated with teacher pedagogy, school environment, and culture can be related to facilitating better relationships within the school environment and with educators. Older students focused on a more equitable relationship with educational instructors and leaders where they are respected, and their lived experiences acknowledged as valuable contributions to the process of education. Across age groups, the data suggested that students do not feel they have any input into the decision-making process even though they are the ones who experience the greatest impact from those decisions.

Kennedy (2011) investigated the interactions between teachers and students in community day school classrooms of a large urban area in the Southwestern United States. The minoritized, racialized, and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) student participants in the study had not experienced success within the dominant Whitestream educational programming. Students who participated in the study experienced low achievement levels and had histories of negative behavior; these students were placed in alternative program settings. Within these alternative education settings, the students experienced lower teacher-student ratios. Low adult-student ratios facilitate greater contact between teachers and students, leading to the establishment of deeper relationships. Deeper teacher-student relationships facilitated increased engagement, regular attendance, and reductions in classroom disruptions. These relationships, in turn, lead to students stating that the teachers care about them and help them achieve (Kennedy, 2011; Noddings, 2005). In caring for their students (Noddings, 2005), teachers hold high expectations for their students; this results in greater overall achievement. Kennedy found that the learning environment of alternative programs enhanced the

transition process for students who had not regularly experienced success. However, Kennedy cautioned against the use of alternative programming if other support systems are not in place. These cautions align with the thoughts of Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) that learning reaches beyond the classroom into the community where non-educational supports may exist.

Looking at the reflective stories of youth who partnered with various community agencies in a metropolitan area in Alberta, Iwasaki (2015) determined the most influential factors to the engagement of at-risk, marginalized youth. Respecting and honoring the voices of youth and incorporating their ideas into action helped establish authentic partnerships and power-sharing. Engaging youth as collaborators who bring value to a project facilitated ownership of the project. Iwasaki stated that the establishment of authentic relationships based on trust is vital, the stability of members and accountability of members to the group provided a strength-based position from which to work. The creation of spaces where youth can participate in non-judgment discussions about topics that concern them facilitated the development of self-worth and confidence. Youth feel that when they are treated with respect, they gain personally from the learning experiences (Iwasaki, 2015).

Lickers (2017) solicited stories from Indigenous youth, 18 to 30 years old, from across Alberta to determine their concepts of Indigenous leadership. Lickers found that knowledge of traditional leadership characteristics among the study populations was "critically lacking" (Licker, 2017, p 84). While lacking in traditional leadership knowledge, Lickers determined that Youth Leadership Programs, teachers, and educational programs played important roles in the formal learning of leadership skills.

The leadership training that youth received was predominately Western-based and therefore lacked Indigenous traditional components. Traditional content was shared by family, Elders, and community representatives. Participants in Lickers' study voiced desires to have leadership programs incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Lickers' study, while pursuing the concept of Indigenous youth empowerment, did not address the relationships between youth and adults in achieving youth leadership and empowerment.

Analyzing the stories of eighth-grade students, Horn (2015) determined the factors in public school that empower students and which factors do not. Using critical inquiry, the student participants researched and presented on issues impacting their lives and communities. Horn asserted that when students feel empowered, they take ownership of their learning. This empowerment is further enhanced by learning experiences that participants have a voice in shaping. However, above all else, the relationships students form with staff are most influential in affecting student empowerment. Horn stated that for schools to empower students, a paradigm shift needed. A shift in position that shares power between educators and students, where students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and share it with others. Freire (1970/2005) stated a similar power position, where in order for the oppressor to be freed, the oppressed have the power to change the system.

Carnes and Robinson (2014) conducted separate studies that resembled each other in what they defined as oppressive colonial institutions. Carnes' focused on the experiences of young Aboriginal men enrolled in HALO (Hopes, Aspirations, and Leadership Opportunities) Aboriginal prisoner education program at an Australian prison

outside Perth (Carnes & Robinson, 2014). The educational experiences of youth enrolled in Anchorage High, a government secondary school located in the outer suburbs of Perth, Australia were the focus of Robinson's study and contribution to the article. Within both institutions were identified barriers that prevent Aboriginal youth and young men from achieving academic success. In yarning sessions (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010) both institutionalized groups noted that relationships with authority figures were lacking. Participants of both studies stated that authority figures were abusive with their power regardless of the motivations of the students or prisoners. The participants desired relationships that facilitated two-way communication built on trust, respect and power sharing. Contextual relevance of curricular content and discipline policy were noted to be lacking in both institutions, impairing the establishment of authentic engagement and relationship building. Carnes and Robinson found that deficit theorizing in each situation by power holders placed the fault for lack of academic advancement, reform, and reintegration into public life on the students and prisoners rather than the system.

Smyth and Robinson (2015) concluded that the current educational foundations of alternative programs do not address the needs of marginalized students due to their policies. They based their conclusion on the analysis of the stories collected from marginalized youth who were pushed out of the Whitestream educational system. Smyth and Robinson found that many disengaged youths are dealing with issues related to their lived realities. Realities that the Whitestream educational system does not or will not take into consideration. Standardized policies, based on a business model rather than youth success, are the causal factors in marginalized youth disengaging from school rather than continuing to engage with a system of punitive rules and unwelcoming environments

(Smyth & Robinson, 2015). Despite policies, alternative programs can establish welcoming relationships with marginalized youth through smaller class sizes, teachers who establish personable relationships with their students, a curriculum based on real-world concepts and issues, and student empowerment through course and assessment choices. Smyth and Robinson's investigation identified a disjunction between policy and programs intended to re-engage youth and their effectiveness. They suggested greater student involvement and policies aimed at the needs of students rather than a standardized business model aimed at a common experience, economic accountability, and conformity.

Soliciting student voices, Wharton, Goodwin, and Cameron (2014) set out to analyze and understand student learning experiences in higher education institutions in England. While contemporary course evaluations produced results regarding student satisfaction, Wharton et al. (2014) proposed that they do not reveal student perspectives of their learning experiences. Wharton et al. suggested that if higher education institutions are to meet the needs of their changing student populations, those institutions need to understand the lived experiences, perspectives and expectations of those students. Wharton et al. determined that there is a disconnect between traditional instructional methods and student expectations and learning styles. Large classes while holding economic advantage are less engaging and thus less motivating to students across all ability levels. Assessment is seen to be more informative to student learning than lecture. Replacing the 'chalk and talk' approach to instruction with 'death by PowerPoint' lacks the relational characteristics that students desire. Wharton et al. found that if higher education institutions are to attract students, they need to know student expectations.

Tong and Adamson (2015) in their determination of the value of school-based assessment in three Hong Kong high schools solicited student voice. The design and intent of moving towards school-based assessment from centrally administrated one-off examinations was to improve students' achievement in English Language Arts through more immediate feedback. From the student responses, Tong and Adamson shared that students do not appreciate school-based assessment and are often left confused as to how they are to improve their command of English. Without student feedback, it is assumed that school-based assessment in Hong Kong high schools is yielding improved achievement results similar to other jurisdictions using school-based assessment. While Tong and Adamson indicated that students appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback on the assessment strategy, they are not comfortable with the process or assessment strategy. It is speculated that this hesitation is due to the rigor of the inherited colonial educational system. Tong and Adamson suggested that the conceptual mismatch of purpose and effectiveness of school-based assessment as indicated by student feedback (voice) is due to divergent perceptions among students and educators. Without the inclusion of student voice, Tong and Adamson found educational leaders assumed that students are disrespectful of teacher feedback, rather than not understanding how to use teacher feedback from school-based assessment activities. Tong and Adamson determined that for student voice and feedback to be used effectively several factors need to be taken into consideration. While factors such as parental expectations, school culture, teacher practice and ideology impact the process; student perceptions and expectations of themselves and their teachers are just as important; cultural nuances may

also come into play. Informing students of the purpose of inclusion influence how they respond (Robinson & Taylor, 2013).

Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2015) suggested that utilizing student voice can impact educational and professional development. While action-research tends to have a celebratory flare, authentic consultation with students and reflection upon what they have to say about their educational experiences produces uncomfortable conversations based upon "unwelcome truths" (p. 2). The exposure of "unwelcome truths" encounters two struggles. The first originates with the tellers of the "unwelcome truths," the students themselves, the second with the listener, the teachers. Access to and the inclusion of student voices is hampered by systemic preconception of who can speak and what they can speak about. Articulate students are heard and listened to, but they are found to mirror the status quo (Czerniawski, 2012); students who are privileged to be members of the dominant socioeconomic and ethnocultural majority reflect the values and practices of their realities. The voices of the minoritized, racialized and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) are not included or only superficially to describe deficit situations. When the white middle-class teacher majority hear stories that reflect their perceptions, they have reason to celebrate what is right with their world. However, when their practices are questioned in those stories, they are taken aback, and their professional identity tarnished. The "unwelcome truths" once reflected upon, lead educators to focus on their students' learning rather than their teaching (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015, p. 1). Mockler and Groundwater-Smith suggested that the inclusion of authentic student voice in the development of educational, professional development can help teachers participate in uncomfortable conversations, resulting in authentic systemic change for all students.

Young, Madsen, and Young (2010) reviewed the perceptions of principals and their abilities to address issues of increasing ethnocultural diversity in their schools. In conflict situations when parents voiced their concerns about academic disparity and perceived racially inequitable discipline, jurisdictional leadership established a diversity strategy plan. Young et al. (2010) found that a lack of direction, accountability, and support left principals in confusion. Without guidance, the principals could not effectively assess the diversity issues in their respective schools beyond the level of self and staff awareness and celebration of culturally specific days. Young et al. found that while parental voices were addressed, the voices of principals seeking clarity of the diversity strategies were not. This inability of principals to be heard resulted in the diversity strategy being no more than lip-service to parental concerns. This situation not only demonstrated the issues surrounding the perception of marginalized voices but a systemic inability to move past the status quo. While parental voices had political influence, the principals did not. This lack of influence harkens back to the statements of Czerniawski (2012) and Fleming (2013), regarding the political and promotional aspects of voice. The parental voices were responded to as the elected official are accountable to the parents, whereas jurisdictional leadership is responsible to the board of trustees rather than the principals who voiced their concerns about the diversity strategy plan. In systems where the voices of educational leaders are not heard, can the voice of teachers or even students be detected? As scholars seek out the voices of students, youth and children the power positionality and purpose of seeking those voices needs to be addressed. Evidence suggested that principals are more likely to listen to student voices than jurisdictional leaders are to listen to principals.

Borrero, Conner, and Mejia (2012) found that when using a social justice approach to service-learning with pre-service teachers, the voices of the urban students they worked with were informative to the outcomes of projects and the learning of the pre-service teachers. Borrero et al. (2012) suggested that listening to student voices in carrying out the projects required pre-service teachers to undergo a paradigm shift, accepting the students as co-creators and collaborators. Accepting the unique lived experiences and perspectives that students bring to the projects, pre-service teachers gained an insight that would not be present if the students were not involved. The pre-service teachers and their students established authentic relationships that further the results of the social justice projects. Borrero et al. determined that engaging pre-service teachers with urban youth was an authentic way for pre-service teachers to examine their reasons for wishing to teach and to examine the ethnocultural, socioeconomic position from which they come from, in the face of an ever-increasing ethnocultural socioeconomically diverse student population.

Miller and Martin (2014) interviewed four principals of ethnoculturally diverse schools to determine how they were addressing issues of cultural responsiveness and social justice as well as if their training had prepared them for such tasks. Miller and Martin found that the principals did not believe they had received adequate training in regard to the increasing ethnocultural diversity they were experiencing. Miller and Martin found that "too many instances described by the principals had undergirding biases and assumptions that reflected deficit thinking, resistance, color blindness, personal and professional contradictions and ideological contradictions" (p. 13).

Due to the predominance of teachers coming from a white middle-class ethos, there exists a great potential to 'essentialized' education. Such essentialization is represented with such terms as multicultural, diverse, urban, inner city, or rural; regardless of the term, a form of racism is being subscribed to consciously or unconsciously leading to a deficit approach (Butler et al., 2015). The terms, urban or inner-city schools, draw up images of lower socio-economic communities inhabited by minoritized, racialized and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) populations. Urban or inner city merely describes the geographic location of some schools. Schools experiencing poor socioeconomic condition exist across a wide geography. Physically located, geographically, in the inner city some schools may not experience any of the stereotypic challenges, and yet schools in residential communities of large suburban areas may experience all the conditions associated with inner-city schools: high ethnocultural diversity, lower socioeconomic status and little geopolitical power. Entering such situations pre-service teachers and teacher candidates experienced a range of motivations and emotions. Butler, Kane, and Morshead (2015) found that by immersing pre-service teachers and teacher candidates in urban learning environments working directly with students, they can challenge the essentialization that white middle-class pre-service teachers and teacher candidates bring to their preconceptions of working with students in urban high schools in eastern Canada. Immersed in the school culture, experiencing the day to day while authentically listening to student voices, the pre-service teachers, and teacher candidates came to understand the security and safety of the space called school. Experiencing the school space through the lived experiences and perspectives of the attending students, the pre-service teachers and teacher candidates gained a greater

appreciation of the creation and maintenance of a school culture and environment separate from its geographic location. Butler et al. (2015) stated that immersion in unique school settings and cultures coupled with student voice should not be an isolated experience but should be a series of experiences over the educational career of pre-service teachers and teacher candidates. In this way, authentic relationships can be established between the pre-service teachers and teacher candidates and the students. Otherwise, the essentialization of urban and inner-city school continues (Butler et al., 2015).

Bertrand (2014) suggested that to provide an authentic opportunity for students to share their lived experiences and perspectives of educational systems, educational leaders need to respect and participate in reciprocal dialogue. Bertrand found that while most leaders were receptive to students making presentations to voice their concerns, few were accepting of the students' perspectives and lived experiences at face value or objectively. More often than not, the presentations were received as an extension of learning outcomes. Educational leaders appeared more concerned with the quality of the presentations rather than the content (Bertrand, 2014). While minoritized, racialized, and marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) youth can present unique lived experiences and perspectives; Whitestream educational leaders appeared to trivialize student concerns regarding school lunches and clean washrooms, issues that students identified as barriers to their learning (Bertrand, 2014).

To create a reciprocal dialogue between students and educational leaders, Bertrand (2014) suggested the establishment of a third space, a space outside the official office territory of educational leaders. In this neutral space, participants come to engage

in authentic dialogue. This third space brings students, teachers, and educational leaders together as collaborators and equal partners in addressing issues impacting the education of all students. The safety of a third space for student-educator discourse is well documented as an impactful opportunity for student voice expression (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999; Bertrand, 2014; Cajete, 1994; Donald, 2012; Kayira, 2013; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015).

In Alberta, the *SpeakOut-the Alberta Student Engagement Initiative* was created to provide an "…opportunity for students to tell us how we can offer education programs that are supportive, flexible and consistent with their needs" (Alberta Gov't, 2010). The online fact sheet stated that *SpeakOut* provides opportunities for "students ages 14 to 19 from across Alberta to reflect on and discuss their education with each other and with key stakeholders." Over the active history of the initiative, only four self-identifying Indigenous students participated. The student participants and their adult chaperones were addressed by political and educational leaders. However, they had no contact with the program staff of the ministry responsible for curriculum design and development. The *SpeakOut* initiative was unable to create the third space needed for authentic, reciprocal dialogue.

Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) sought to determine the characteristics of an ethnoculturally responsive educational leader. Madhlangobe and Gordon determined that for educational leaders to establish an ethnoculturally responsive learning environment effectively, they needed to establish relationships of trust and responsibility with teachers, students, and parents. Positive relationships with teachers facilitated the modeling of ethnoculturally responsive practices being accepted and implemented. When

teachers experienced positive relationships with leadership, they were more apt to transfer components of those relationships to the relationships they established with their students (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012). Leat and Reid (2012) stated that positive teacher-student relationships are reciprocated with positive student-teacher relationships. The process is positive relationships begets positive relationships. Relational circles expand and include all who interact within the school culture. Within a relational environment, caring for others becomes a natural extension (Noddings, 2005). Madhlangobe and Gordon assessed that when school leaders accepted and promoted students' ways of knowing, they become more engaged in their learning, and teachers can facilitate deeper learning for all their students.

Lessard et al. (2015) undertook a narrative inquiry into the ability of Indigenous youth to move between the curriculum making worlds of school and family. Traditional knowledge creation and Whitestream curricular systems appear to be in opposition to each other, but both contribute to the academic development and success of Indigenous youth. What is not always visible to those in the world of the school curriculum is how the familial curriculum (the informal teaching and learning that takes place within the family and community) both expands upon and sets the stage for school curriculum making. In both worlds, relationships impact the acquisition of knowledge and its application. In the familial context, the extended kinship system of traditional Cree (Indigenous) communities provides intergenerational relationships to be established and the sharing of traditional knowledge to happen. Knowledge transfer is relevant and critical to the continuation of the community's well-being. In the school context, the curriculum and those who deliver it, seldom possess the same relationship positions as

those in traditional kinship systems. Lessard et al. (2015) agreed with Noddings (2005) in

that relationships of 'caring for' individuals are far more powerful than relationships of

'caring about.' In caring for one's students, the students are accepted for who they are,

fellow travelers (Lessard et al., 2015), and border-crossers (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999)

across the many systemic realities of school, kinship, friendship, and society. In caring

for students, educators facilitate crossing between realities. They facilitate ways that

focus on the strength of their students while challenging them to explore new skills that

will expand their worlds as they build bridges between the school, family, and

community (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999; Ladson-Billing, 1994/2009; Lessard et al., 2015;

Noddings, 2005).

Lewthwaite, Owen, Doiron, Renaud, and McMillan (2014) consulted with

community members, aged 18 to 82, to identify "teaching and learning practices

characteristic of effective teaching practices (p. 6)." Lewthwaite et al. investigated the

application of ethnoculturally responsive pedagogies and strategies by teachers in a rural

school in the Yukon Territory of Canada. The interviews as stories composed and formed

a booklet entitled *Our Stories About Teaching and Learning*. The booklet was shared

with community teachers, who, in turn, reflected upon the community stories, identifying

things that they could change to be more effective. The community stories revealed

characteristics similar to those identified by Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Gay

(2010). Just as Leat and Reid (2012) found, when teachers change their perceptions of

their students, the students change their perceptions of their teachers, leading to changes

in the self-perception of teachers. These changes resulted in a positive reciprocal change

for both teachers and students. While the community stories were the instigators of

change, Lewthwaite et al. (2014) determined that teachers needed to be open to viewing

their students and their communities from a strength-based position. Deficit theorizing

and positioning (Ryan, 1972/1976; Shields et al., 2005; Valencia, 1997) prevents

educators from being open. Open to the notion that minoritized, racialized, and

marginalized (Cavanagh, 2009) populations are sources and systems of strength and

support for the holistic development of youth.

Oskineegish (2015) investigated the characteristics required to successfully

facilitate active engagement and learning for Indigenous students in First Nation

communities in northern Ontario and Manitoba. Oskineegish found the characteristics of

a positive attitude, open-mindedness, flexibility in pedagogical approaches, and

situational adaptability were essential to the ability of teachers to establish relationships

with students, parents, and Elders. The community voices of students, parents, and Elders

were identified as providing foundational learning and teaching opportunities for teachers

to incorporate into their classroom curriculum. Approaching teaching and learning from a

relational holistic perceptive was found to not only increase student engagement and

achievement but community membership for non-Native teachers who cared for their

students (Noddings, 2005). Stelmach et al. (2017) determined the same relational

characteristics as Oskineegish in terms of what motivated Indigenous youth to engage

with school.

Walker (2019) explored the educational barriers that cause Indigenous youth to

disengage from education in the Northern Territory of Australia. Walker collected the

stories and voices of Indigenous youth to learn that several factors lead to disengagement.

Walker found the main barriers were "Family and community life, relational issues at

school, their feelings, drugs and alcohol and exclusion (p. 69)". While Indigenous youth stated a desire to reengage with education, they were unsure of where to start and faced the same barriers that caused their disengagement in the first place. Walker recommended that educational staff learn about the realities that Indigenous youth face as well as establishing more authentic relationships with them.

A review of three initiatives designed to increase Indigenous student engagement, two in Australia and one in Canada, was undertaken by McMahon, Munns, Smyth, and Zyngier (2012). McMahon et al. found many existing barriers, despite various policies aimed at addressing racism and systemic marginalization. Hogarth (2018a, 2018b) determined that despite established policies that demand inclusion of Indigenous voices, the interpretation of those policies continued to diminish and disregard Indigenous voices. Hogarth found that government rhetoric maintained that the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was important to the partnership of Australia. However, the lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in real positions of political and educational representation and power resulted in silencing their voices.

Minoritized, racialized, and marginalized students (Cavanagh, 2009) are often perceived as the causal factor of their disengagement. This position is determined by the fact that the educational system works for members of dominant Whitestream ethnocultural groups. The initiatives demonstrated increases in student engagement in contrast to the poor engagement levels of Indigenous students, as evidenced by historical high school graduation rates. At their core, the programs, *The Fair Go Programme* in New South Wales, Australia, and the *ruMAD programme* established in 250 schools

across Australia, as well as the *Personal and Social Responsibility Initiative* in Ontario, Canada, shared the element of relationship. All three programs addressed issues such as the lack of respect for Indigenous identities, cultures, and perspectives, the imbalance of relational power, and the authenticity of curriculum content. Each program approached the issues differently to increase student engagement and high school graduation rates. The initiatives challenged teachers to re-access their systemic deficit beliefs and approaches that rely on teaching and learning resources rather than the curricular guidance documents. McMahon et al. (2012) found that systems failed to provide adequate professional development to support teachers' abilities to address the needs of students resulting in lower engagement rates of Indigenous students.

As the first phase of a three-part study Lewthwaite, Osborne, Lloyd, Boon, and Llewellyn (2015) recorded the desires of Indigenous parents and students served by the schools and staff of the Townsville, Queensland, Diocese of Catholic Education. Parents focused on systemic characteristics; that teachers know Indigenous history, not just the Whitestream colonial version. Lewthwaite et al. (2015) found that parents wanted teachers to understand that Indigenous children walk in two worlds and need instruction and help in "code-switching." Code-switching is the ability to travel between social situations where protocols and nuances are very different. Code-switching is similar to the concept of border crossing, as put forward by Aikenhead and Jegede (1999). Coupled with code-switching is the desire for teachers to have an awareness and appreciation of the lived experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of Indigenous students and parents, especially the personal parental experiences that impact their children and their relationship with educational systems. Above all, parents expressed a desire to have the

educational system affirm their children's Indigenous identity (Lewthwaite, Osborne, Lloyd, Boon, & Llewellyn, 2015). From student input, Lewthwaite et al. (2015) found that students desire effective teachers, described by Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Gay (2010) as culturally responsive teachers. Ethnoculturally responsive teachers base their pedagogy in relationship, moving from a relationship of "caring about" to "caring for" (Noddings, 2005). In describing their ideal teachers, students identified several characteristics. Characteristics such as knowing the local community and an ability to incorporate knowledge of it into lessons, holding high expectations coupled with support appropriate to student ability, clear and concise concept teaching and instructions accompanied by relevant examples, influential to their learning (Lewthwaite et al., 2015). Identifying over 20 characteristics of effective teachers, the students constructed models similar to those established by Bishop and Berryman (2009), Ladson-Billings (1994/2009), Gay (2010) and Lewthwaite et al. (2014).

Student voice is being used to impact teacher education, training, and professional development. Kidd (2012) looked at how the use of student voice can add to the development of teacher identity for pre-service teacher trainees. Kidd used audio-taped interviews with youth, 16 to 19 years old, to introduce teacher trainees to student voice. These "unsituated voices" (Kidd, 2012, p. 121), were used in discursive and reflective activities to acquaint teacher trainees with the meaning of teaching from a student perspective. In reflecting on their reactions to the audio interviews, teacher trainees were able to conceptualize how they would become the teachers the youth talked about in the tapes. Kidd stated that at this particular time in the training program of the student-teachers, the grade school students who gifted the audio-interviews had more pedagogical

experience than the trainees. The trainees experienced and reflected upon the youths'

stories, while the youth who provided their stories enjoyed anonymity. This anonymity

was beneficial to the teacher trainees in that their misinterpretation of student voice was

not detrimental to the speaker. In coming to know the students in the interviews through

their stories, teacher trainees experienced the value of establishing relationships with their

students. Kidd suggested that reflecting upon student voice may be a beneficial

professional development activity for in-service teachers as they continue to enhance

their craft for the benefit of their students.

Not all uses of student voice are for educational purposes. Genuis and researchers

from the University of Alberta (Genuis et al., 2015) partnered with youth co-researchers

from Alexander First Nation in a community-based participatory research project,

focused on food security in the community of Alexander First Nation. Alexander First

Nation is located approximately fifty miles north of Edmonton. As community members,

the youth presented unique perspectives of the community and were able to access

information that was closed to the university researchers (Genuis et al., 2015). Genuis et

al. found that when debriefing with the youth co-researchers, a traditional approach that

provided time and space for communal eating and conversation yielded deeper reflection

and understanding of the collected data. The research project was respectful of traditional

community protocols (Genuis et al., 2015). From this study, not only was the method of

Photovoice proven to be useful for younger students, but it also provided them with a

venue for the authentic incorporation of youth voices as well, as they assisted in the

analysis and interpretation of the data. This study used the youth as co-researchers

negating student voice. The youth functioned as cultural brokers or co-investigators, able

to interact with community members on a more intimate level than the non-Indigenous researchers (Genuis et al., 2015).

Elevating youth to the status of co-researchers imposed additional power structures to be considered. In guiding the research and the writing, the senior research team members held the same role of leadership as teachers in a classroom. The youth working as co-researchers became junior assistants in the data collection; the youth are perceived more as data collectors than as data generators. In the investigation of viable research methods for this project, enlisting urban Indigenous youth as co-researchers was considered. As full co-researchers and partners, the youth should have been involved in not only the preconception of the research project but specifics as to how the project should be undertaken. In the pursuit of doctoral studies, the involvement of youth as co-researchers who are fully immersed in the research project presents some concerns. Firstly, the research project is not wholly the work of the doctoral student; while they may direct and oversee the project, they function more as a project manager than a researcher. Secondly, the status of co-researcher implies the youth are committed to the project until its completion; the ability to withdraw is therefore removed or attached to stigma concerning the rest of the research team. Inviting urban Indigenous youth to participate in the project, as storytellers and collaborators, is more in line with Indigenous Research Methodologies as described by Bishop (1999), Smith (1999/2008), and Wilson (2008). Storytelling or collaboration permits the doctoral student to function in a more traditional role regarding academic attainment. The youth chose which aspects of their lived experiences to share and what features of those stories they wish to see included in the collaborative story generated by the researcher and validated by the participants. As

sharers of story and collaborators, the youth retain their individual ability to withdraw

from the project, without stigma, honorably. Providing the ability to withdraw from

participating is also why the reciprocity of tobacco offering was not being followed.

Following the protocol of reciprocity and commitment, one offers tobacco as a symbolic

gift in exchange for the gift of information or service. The offering and acceptance of

tobacco establishes a covenantal agreement between both parties. The agreement honor

binds them to fulfillment; withdrawal from such a covenantal agreement comes with the

price of one's integrity and position in the community.

Relationships, trust, expectations, are negotiated responsibilities determining how

team members will function. Even when such things are laid out, conventional social

expectations and roles are overbearing, as Shultz and Cook-Sather (2001) found in

producing their collaborative work: *In Our Own Words: Students' Perspectives On

School.* While students were significant contributors of information, the presentation of

the work was mainly an adult undertaking; as such, the authenticity of the voices is

blurred. In the work of Genuis et al. (2015) the youth were the data collectors who were

able to go where the university researchers could not, they perpetuated the colonial

concept of the guide in the exploration and exploitation of the new frontier (Chambers &

Buzinde, 2015) or this case local Indigenous environmental knowledge.

In using critical civic inquiry as a vehicle for student voice, Hipolito-Delgado and

Zion (2015) facilitated the hearing of and acting upon student voices. While supportive

adult relationships enhanced the process, discussions focused on racial, social, and

educational oppression. The basis of critical civic inquiry empowered youth and

facilitated the development of ethnocultural identities and civic self-efficacy (Hipolito-

Delgado & Zion, 2015). Critical civic inquiry provided opportunities for youth to address issues that impact them directly. Hipolito-Delgado and Zion found that when students take ownership of the issues through critical civic inquiry, they are empowered to tackle systemic issues. Students were able to take action through community work projects. Hipolito-Delgado and Zion suggested that the incorporation of the principles of critical civic inquiry into classroom practices and curriculum would increase the engagement of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009). Critical civic inquiry, like ethnoculturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009), can directly impact specific students, but it fails to move across the school or jurisdictional environments. For student voice to be effective and long-lasting, its influence needs to move beyond individual classrooms and dedicated teachers.

Kirk et al. (2015) explored the characteristics that lead to student empowerment in large ethnoculturally diverse high schools in a large urban center in the Midwestern United States. Kirk and his associates conducted focus groups and individual interviews with students to assess their self-perceived levels of empowerment. The Student Empowerment Model was derived from the data generated. The full model represents school-wide and classroom characteristics that facilitate and develop student empowerment. The school-wide characteristics centered upon school climate. How welcoming the school was, the acceptance and promotion of ethnocultural diversity, public appreciation and valuing of student leadership, staff empowerment, community relationships between the staff and the communities the school serves and having adequate resources to deliver comprehensive programming. Classroom characteristics centered on teacher-student dynamics, a high success orientated belief in students'

abilities, establishing a sense of community within the classroom, shared decision-making practices, and content delivery through engaging practices that balanced the teacher-student power relationships. Kirk et al. found that ethnocultural issues permeated the school climate. This was due to the ethnoculturally diverse student population, recognition of the diversity facilitated the positive development of individual student identity within the school community. Relationships between teachers and students consisted of authentic bidirectional dialogue; in the Freirean tradition (Freire, 1970/2005), students and teachers were able to switch roles without loss of agency. These relationships enhanced and were enhanced by hearing and listening to student voice. Kirk et al. (2015) concluded that for teachers to empower their students, they first needed to be empowered by the school and jurisdictional leadership. In this way, teachers become real agents of change in the lives of their students.

Speaking with students and authentically listening to their issues and concerns may not always be uplifting for system leadership. However, it is a necessary part of the process towards student engagement. Hare and Pidgeon (2011) spoke with Indigenous youth from communities in northern Ontario and analyzed their lived experiences to determine what common experience they shared. The First Nation youth resided in communities and had at one time or another attended schools both on and off the reserve. Hare and Pidgeon found that most of the Anishinaabe youth experienced racism from non-Aboriginal students and teachers regardless of whether the school was on or off-reserve. Non-Indigenous students were perceived as more overt in their racist demeanor, some even to the point of violence. Teachers were perceived to either be complicit with the racism directed towards Anishinaabe students or actively participated in racist

behavior. Systemic racism was identified by the non-welcoming environment presented in the school and curricular materials. The non-welcoming environment was a causal factor in Anishinaabe youth dropping out of the Whitestream public school. Other scholars (Cerecer, 2013; Whitley, 2014) have found that racism is a common experience of Indigenous youth attending Whitestream public schools. Others (Cerecer, 2013; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Whitley, 2014) suggested that Whitestream educators need greater awareness and understanding of racism and how racism impacts the lived experiences of minoritized, racialized and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009).

This investigation used an Indigenous perspective (Berryman, 2013; Bishop et al., 2003; Genuis et al., 2015; Oskineegish, 2015; Smith 1999/2008), such a perspective places the researcher and the participants on a collaborative, reciprocal journey of discovery. Through the application and enactment of local protocols, participants were asked to share their stories to inform me of their lived experiences and perceptions. In turn, I hold a responsibility to share those stories in an authentic way that honors and validates the telling; as such, the stories do not become possessions of the researcher. I am honor-bound to authentically share elements of the stories, acknowledging that the stories are not theirs but belong to others. The stories reflect only the lived experiences of the tellers and cannot be generalized to others, even though their experiences may share common elements.

Engaging with Indigenous youth, their families, and their communities in research require the observation and practice of specific community protocols (Kovach, 2010; Smith 1999/2008). In Aotearoa New Zealand, Bishop et al. (2003) used Kaupapa Māori Theory as a foundational concept in their investigations. While Kaupapa Māori Theory

has been conceptualized to align with Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory, Kaupapa

Māori is also an approach to research and life in general. In Western Canada, no formal

equivalent exists; however, the Cree concept of miyopimâtisiwin (good living) is similar

to Kaupapa Māori Theory and was used as a guide. Kaupapa Māori is understood to be

knowledge founded on the relationship of Māori people with the land, their ancestors,

and each other, the state of being Māori (Bishop et al., 2003; Macfarlane & Macfarlane,

2013). According to Bishop et al. (2003), to authentically understand Kaupapa Māori is

to be Māori. Likewise, miyopimâtisiwin is based on relationships, one's relationships

with not only humans but all things in the environment (Robinson et al., 2005). To

practice miyopimâtisiwin is to have good relationships with all things. It is to accept that

all things, known and unknown, influence each other over space and time. While

miyopimâtisiwin is specific to Nehiyawak (Cree) people, it is an all-encompassing

manner of conduct just as Kaupapa Māori is. It is this grounding in relationships that

aligns Kaupapa Māori and miyopimâtisiwin.

　　　　Following the concept of miyopimâtisiwin, qualitative methods are more applicable

than quantitative methods. Qualitative research methods provide opportunities for all

involved in the research to form and acknowledge relationships. While quantitative

methods may facilitate relationships, they are more distant. In traditional Indigenous

communities, research projects that simply collect data without individual interactions are

falling into disfavor; these methods are perceived as a continuation of colonial exploitive

research (personal communication, Sherry Letendre, Elder Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation,

March 2015). Grande (as cited in Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008) describes the situation

as follows:

…Native communities continue to be affected and transformed by the forces

of colonization rendering the "choice" of whether to employ Western

research methods in the process of defining indigenous methodologies

essentially moot. By virtue of living in the Whitestream world, indigenous

scholars have no choice but to negotiate the forces of colonialism, to learn,

understand, and converse in the grammar of empire as well as develop the

skills to contest it. (p. 234)

In addressing this concern of colonization, the community Elders of the Alexis Nakota

Sioux Nation request that all research projects be vetted through them before being

proposed (personal communication, Sherry Letendre, Elder Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation,

March 2015). The need to establish a relationship is paramount to conducting research on

the territory or with members of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation.

A case study approach to this investigation was considered as each of the

participants has urban high school lived experiences. However, their lived experiences

are not a "local phenomenon, situated in a relatively specific, well-defined social

context" (Schwandt, 2015). There are many high schools across the metropolitan area,

providing services to urban Indigenous youth. Within each school, diverse social contexts

create situations that do not have clear common boundaries, a desirable characteristic of

case studies (Creswell, 2009). As participants may be from several schools, their social

lived experiences will not be the same. The participants of this study may not have self-

identified as Indigenous individuals during their school experience, again creating

different social contexts. The characteristics of this investigation lack the clear

boundaries of a case study. Each participant brought his/her unique experience(s) to the

project, yet, they are not by themselves case studies; they are, however, able to contribute to a holistic story of common lived experiences.

Searching for an established method compatible with Indigenous Research Methodologies led me to believe that a phenomenological approach was most suitable. The collecting of stories and collaborative construction of a common story brought me into the context of the story. A retelling of the stories from my perspective would bring the analysis into full heuristic inquiry and replace the participants' voices with a singular researcher voice. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. Through qualitative analysis of the stories, the new collaborative story provides insights into what systemic changes may be desired. Indigenous Research Methodologies reinforce and recognize that the separation of individual stories and the active role of the researcher in their collection and comparison of data is counter to the establishment of relationships (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous Research Methodologies are described by the American Indigenous Research Association (2018) (AIRA) as

… methodologies are place-based methods of gathering and disseminating data with attention to the paradigm (world view), and cultural values of the researcher, and the community where the research is taking place. Indigenous Research Methodologies differ from the Western approach because they flow from tribal knowledge. Information is gained through relationship — with people in a specific Place, with the culture of Place as

understood through our own cultures, with the source of the research data,

and with the person who knows or tells the story that provides information.

The researcher acknowledges a personal relationship with the story itself and

how it is interpreted by both the teller and the researcher. In colonial

academic models, the research project and data are separated from the

researcher, who is merely an onlooker.

Though the data collected by Indigenous Research Methodologies can

be analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively, just like data collected by

Western research methods, the acknowledged relationship between researcher

and data naturally challenges Western research paradigms. But Indigenous

Research Methodologies are powerful and worthwhile despite this challenge,

because they provide vital opportunities to contribute to the body of

knowledge about the natural world and Indigenous peoples. (AIRA, 2018)

Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010) found that authentic dialogue with Indigenous

individuals regarding their lived experiences required a method familiar to them. In

Western Australia and Botswana, yarning as a form of narrative is ethnoculturally

appropriate across ethnocultural groups. While yarning or storytelling, as it is known to

Indigenous people in Canada, is a form of conversation, it is also a method of information

exchange in both an informal and formal sense. Yarning, as practiced in Australia and

parts of Aotearoa New Zealand, is considered a form of casual conversation, knowledge

exchange, or even gossip (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010). Storytelling in the tradition of

Indigenous people in Western Canada is a form of information transfer involving

traditional lessons or personal lived experience. Both storytelling and yarning take place

within a relaxed, non-judgmental environment. Storytelling as a method of inquiry aligns

with Indigenous Research Methodologies (Bishop, 1999; Kovach, 2010; Smith

1999/2008; Wilson, 2008). Following Indigenous Research Methodologies and cultural

protocols helped to establish environments where reciprocal dialogue and collaboration

can develop in a third space, outside of home and school (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999;

Bertrand, 2014; Cajete, 1994; Donald, 2012; Kayira, 2013; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015).

This qualitative study, involving the stories of Indigenous youth attending urban

high schools, used narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry using the Responsive Interview

Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and the principles of collaborative storying (Bishop, 1999)

aligns with Indigenous Research Methodologies as established by Indigenous scholars

(Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2010) described sharing

stories as a way of coming to know, a way of collecting knowledge. The sharing of

stories involves a teller and a listener, or as in this investigation: participants, and a

researcher. In the sharing of their stories, the youth, and the researcher become

collaborators in knowledge (Wilson, 2008), not co-researchers in the collection of data

(Genuis et al., 2015; Shultz & Cook-Sather, 2001). The process of collaborative storying

as developed by Bishop (1999), aligns with the Indigenous Research Methodology of

narrative inquiry, as described by Kovach and Wilson (2008). The Responsive

Interviewing Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) aligned with Indigenous Research

Methodologies (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008) and was used in

conducting individual interviews. Statements made by participants guided individual

interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) beyond the scribed interview questions. This method

of interviewing aligned with the concepts of yarning and storying telling. Where the conversation is based on the sense of being with the other to learn from their stories.

Summary and Conclusions

Engaging students to share their perceptions is fraught with challenges. First is the challenge of whose lived experiences, voices, and perspectives are requested and then shared out to the educational power brokers. The invitation list has seldom included minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009). The lived experiences and voices of alternative program students, and special needs students appear far more often than the lived experiences and voices of Indigenous youth. When Indigenous youth voice their concerns, they have included negative experiences of racism, bias, and prejudice, topics that many educational leaders perceive to be the fault of the students themselves rather than any systemic factors. In addressing such deficit thinking, educational systems are required to make a paradigm shift regarding power dynamics and an openness to authentically listen to youth as they share their stories and experiences.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. It is hoped that the results of this study will facilitate the voices of Indigenous youth to be heard and reflected upon by teachers and educational leaders at all levels of education. Following Indigenous Research Methodologies, the stories and lived experiences of Indigenous youth, aged 18 to 21, were collected via individual interviews. The details of this process are addressed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Alberta Education has stated that they are shifting to a student-centric curriculum model; this approach suggested that consultation and collaboration with students would be central to curricular development. However, as Rudduck et al. (1996) has attested, young people continue to be excluded from the conversation. In Western Canada, the voices of culturally located youth are silenced as adults dominate the conversations. This research has sought to give voice to marginalized, minoritized, and racialized youth (Cavanagh, 2009) as they shared stories of their lived experiences within the current educational environment of Western Canada. To effect change, previous researchers have sought out the stories and voices of Māori, Latino/Hispanic, and other ethnoculturally located youth, parents, educators, and community members (Bishop et al., 2006; Cavanagh et al., 2015; Shields et al., 2005). To date, rarely have the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous youth in Canada been included (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lessard et al., 2014; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Stelmach et al., 2017). Through the collection, analysis, and sharing of stories and lived experiences from Indigenous youth in Western Canada, the absence of the unique Canadian lived experiences of Indigenously located youth will be addressed. The resulting knowledge will contribute to the emerging literature addressing the absence of voices of culturally located youth in the development of educational initiatives. This chapter details the research methods of this study. The research design, the Indigenous Research methodical approach, the role of the researcher, and the methods for the collection and analysis of stories shared by participants will be described.

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. The research question it seeks to answer is, "What do the lived experiences of Indigenous youth attending urban high schools reveal about youth-adult relationships in high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada?"

Indigenous youth, urban or rural, come to their lived experiences influenced and impacted by various historical factors, as described in Chapter 2. Indigenous youth as members of a minoritized, racialized, and marginalized population (Cavanagh, 2009) may experience relationships in high school differently from their Whitestream peers. Through analysis of the stories shared by urban Indigenous youth about their high school experiences, perceptions of their relationships may reveal information valuable to educators, information that may facilitate greater overall success for Indigenous youth attending high schools situated within the Whitestream environment.

The phenomenon of lived experiences may be studied using several methods. Phenomenology, as a method of inquiry, is compatible with Indigenous Research Methods. According to Smith (2013), phenomenology addresses the study of perceptions and the internalization of lived experiences, as well as how those perceptions may be influenced by social practices, attitudes, and political systems. Phenomenology facilitates the exploration of perceptions of individuals who have experienced the same series of events or processes. In this study, that series of events occurs during high school. Individuals may experience the same occurrence or event in unique ways.

Phenomenology, as the study of everyday events, affords collection and analysis of individual experiences, as well as the identification of commonalities across shared experiences.

This study follows empirical phenomenological research, as described by Moustakas (1994). The stories and experiences are reflected on through structured analysis to reveal the essence of the overall experience. Stories are collected through interviews comprised of open-ended questions, much like the arts of storytelling or yarning. Analysis of the shared experiences led to the construction of a common story that provided meaning to those who had shared the experiences.

Engaging with Indigenous youth, their families, and their communities in research require the observation and practice of specific community protocols (Kovach, 2010; Smith 1999/2008). In Aotearoa New Zealand, Bishop et al., (2003) used Kaupapa Māori Theory as a foundational concept in their investigations. In Western Canada, no formal equivalent exists; however, the Cree concept of *miyopimâtisiwin* (living a good life) (Robinson et al., 2005) is similar to Kaupapa Māori theory and was used as a guide. Kaupapa Māori is understood to be knowledge founded on the relationship of Māori people with the land, their ancestors, and each other, the state of being Māori. According to Bishop et al. (2003), to authentically understand Kaupapa Māori is to be Māori. This approach to life and research takes Kaupapa Māori Theory beyond the foundations of Critical Theory (Eketone, 2008). Likewise, miyopimâtisiwin is based on one's relationships with not only humans but all things in the environment. To practice miyopimâtisiwin is to have good relationships with all things. It is to accept that all things, known and unknown, influence each other over space and time. While

miyopimâtisiwin is specific to Nehiyawak (Cree) people, it is an all-encompassing manner of conduct just as Kaupapa Māori is (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2013; Robinson et al., 2005). This sense of relationship is also found in the Lakota concept of *miki wiyasin,* "we are all related" (Sykes Powderface, Nakoda Elder, personal communications, February 2016). It is this grounding in relationships that aligns Kaupapa Māori and miyopimâtisiwin. The power and importance of voice and relationships serve as the critical core of this approach to research.

Before settling upon a phenomenological approach, several methods were considered. Following the concept of miyopimâtisiwin, qualitative research methods are more applicable than quantitative methods. Qualitative methods of research provide opportunities for all involved in the research to form and acknowledge relationships. While quantitative methods may facilitate relationships, they are more distant. In traditional Indigenous communities, research projects that simply collect data without individual interactions are falling into disfavor; these methods are perceived as a continuation of colonial exploitive research (Sherry Letendre, Elder Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, personal communication, 2015).

A case study approach to this investigation was considered as each of the participants has urban high school lived experiences. However, each participant's experiences are not contained within a local and defined context (Schwandt, 2015). There are several high schools across the metropolitan area, providing services to Indigenous youth. Within each school, diverse social contexts create situations that do not have clear common boundaries, a desirable characteristic of case studies (Creswell, 2009). As participants are from several schools, their social experiences are not the same.

The participants of this study may not have self-identified as Indigenous individuals during their school enrolment, again creating different social contexts. The characteristics of this investigation lack the clear boundaries of a case study. As previously stated, each participant brings his/her unique lived experience to the project, yet, they are not by themselves case studies; they are, however, able to contribute to a holistic story of common lived experiences.

Searching for an established method compatible with Indigenous Research Methodologies led to a perception that a phenomenological approach would be suitable. Phenomenology, as a study of everyday experiences, fits with sharing the stories and lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth; thus, the project took on a phenomenological approach from a Whitestream (Grande, 2003, as cited in Denzin et al., 2008) perspective.

Heuristic undertones are detectable as the sharing of stories from others and the collaborative construction of a common story brings the researcher into the context of the story. According to Gallagher (as cited in Schwandt, 2015), the hermeneutic circle is inescapable in the cycle of observation and interpretation. The sharing, recording, and re-sharing of stories and lived experiences dwell outside the hermeneutic circle. However, the construction of the collaborative story requires analyzing and identification of common elements bringing the researcher into the hermeneutic circle via interpretation. The reconstruction of the common elements into a comprehensive single collaborative story is reliant on the hermeneutic method, and as such, the project is heuristic. Despite these specific nuances, a general qualitative approach was taken to allow the various

aspects of the differing schools of thought to be incorporated without over-emphasis on any one school of thought.

A retelling of the stories from the researcher's perspective brings the project full into heuristic inquiry and replaces the participants' voices with the singular researcher voice. This replacement of voice is undesirable, but as Grande (as cited in Denzin et al., 2008) has asserted, Indigenous scholars must negotiate with colonial academic institutions in order to be heard. In bringing the lived experiences of urban Indigenous youth into Whitestream (Grande, as cited in Denzin et al., 2008), academic considerations, adaptations, and concessions are required.

Indigenous Research Methodologies reinforce and recognize that the separation of individual stories and the active role of the researcher in their collection and analysis of data is counter to the establishment of relationships (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Relationship with the shared stories and lived experiences of the participants through hearing, recording, analyzing, interpreting, and construction of the collaborative story requires a heuristic approach, albeit an approach that is compatible with Indigenous Research Methodologies.

Indigenous Research Methodologies are described by the AIRA as

> … place-based methods of gathering and disseminating data with
> attention to the paradigm (world view), and cultural values of the researcher,
> and the community where the research is taking place. Indigenous Research
> Methodologies differ from the Western approach because they flow from
> tribal knowledge. Information is gained through relationship — with people
> in a specific Place, with the culture of Place as understood through our own

cultures, with the source of the research data, and with the person who knows

or tells the story that provides information. The researcher acknowledges a

personal relationship with the story itself and how it is interpreted by both the

teller and the researcher. In colonial academic models, the research project

and data are separated from the researcher, who is merely an onlooker.

(AIRA, 2018, para 1)

Conducting authentic dialogue with Indigenous individuals regarding their lived

experiences requires a method familiar to them. Storytelling in the tradition of Indigenous

people is a form of information transfer involving traditional lessons or personal

experiences. Storytelling as a method of inquiry aligns with Indigenous Research

Methodologies (Bishop, 1999; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008).

Storytelling and yarning take place within a relaxed, non-judgmental environment

(Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010). Following Indigenous Research Methodologies and

cultural protocols help to establish environments where reciprocal dialogue and

collaboration can develop in a third space, outside of home and school (Kirshner &

Jefferson, 2015).

This phenomenological study, involving the stories of Indigenous youth attending

urban high schools, used narrative inquiry methods of investigation. Narrative inquiry,

using the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and the principles of

collaborative storying (Bishop, 1999), align with Indigenous Research Methodologies as

established by Indigenous scholars (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008).

Kovach (2010) describes sharing stories as a way of coming to know, a way of collecting

knowledge. The sharing of stories involves a teller and a listener, or in this, participants

and a researcher. In the sharing of their stories, the youth and the researcher become collaborators in knowledge (Wilson, 2008). The process of collaborative storying, as developed by Bishop (1999), is an Indigenous research method of narrative inquiry, as described by Kovach and Wilson (2008). The Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) aligned with Indigenous Research Methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008) and was used in conducting the individual interviews.

In addition, this study followed the tradition of Indigenous inquiry as set forth by Battiste (2013), Bishop (1999), Bishop and Berryman (2006), Kovach (2010), Smith (1999/2008), and Wilson (2008). If Indigenous populations are to be engaged in the educational processes, they need to be consulted (Battiste, 2013; Bishop, 1999; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). As education in Alberta moves to a more student-focused process, the voices of Indigenous youth can help to shape an educational system that meets their unique needs. Few studies have asked Indigenous youth about their lived experiences in the Whitestream education system (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al., 2003; Cavanagh et al., 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Stelmach et al., 2017). To date, only one Canadian study has focused on the high school experiences of Indigenous youth (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). The provincial wide study of Stelmach et al. (2017), while including youth attending high school, also involved junior high youth. For this study, the stories of lived experiences in high school from urban Indigenous youth were collected through individual interviews. The stories were analyzed for common themes, which in turn were to construct the collaborative story that was validated by the research participants (Bishop, 1999).

Role of the Researcher

In facilitating the sharing of Indigenous youths' stories, I recognized my positionality. My status as an Indigenous person, an educator, and a creator and collaborator in the development and production of grade school curricula, as well as learning and teaching resources, brings implied bias to the research situation. I am two generations older than the participants; this generational separation leads to an etic reality of uncommon experiences. The participants enrolled and participating in the Whitestream educational system may describe situations from etic perspectives as they attempt to describe lived experiences in terms of traditional experiences. Many urban Indigenous youths may have little experience with traditional Indigenous realities, and their high school experiences may be described in emic terms, as they describe their experiences from inside the educational system with nothing else to compare them to.

As an Indigenous person, I may share common lived experiences with the participants. I must be mindful that my experiences do not cloud or influence my interpretation of the participants' lived experiences; validation of the collaborative story by the participants is part of the process to ensure that this did not happen. As an educator in the geographic area of the study, there may be the perception that participants in the study may have been my students. For the last four years, I have been assigned to an elementary school. Previously, I was on secondment with Alberta Education as a curriculum manager for seven years except for a five-month stint in another metropolitan jurisdiction; this effectively removed me from area classrooms. Before being seconded, I worked at two different elementary schools over three years of teaching grade five. Given this time of twelve years, there is little possibility that participants may have been my

students. Working as a consultant on teaching and learning resources, as well as being involved in curriculum development, did not establish any prior relationships with students as few would be concerned with who is involved in curriculum development or resource production at this time. Some students have displayed interest that my name appears in some textbooks they used, but beyond that, no relationships are influenced. In sharing the stories of Indigenous youth, I remain the storyteller, honor-bound, and committed to relaying the authentic voices of Indigenous youth as they share their lived experiences.

Methodology

This phenomenological study was to consist of four major phases in the process of collecting and analyzing participant stories. The first phase was to invite potential participants to complete a demographic survey to ensure that that they meet the required criteria for participants and to complete the consent forms for participation in the project. Issues concerning the consent form were to take place at information presentations. The second phase was to have consisted of hosting sharing circles/focus groups to gather stories of lived experiences. Individuals from the sharing circles/focus groups were to be invited to participate in individual interviews to provide more details concerning their lived experiences. The third phase was to analyze and identify themes and trends in the responses provided in the sharing circles/focus groups and elaborated upon in the individual interviews. These responses lead to the fourth phase, the construction of the collaborative story. The collaborative story was constructed from the common experiential elements. The collaborative story was shared back to participants to ensure validity and authenticity.

Once the study was underway, it was determined that the data collection methodology needed to be modified. Sharing circle/focus groups proved impossible to host. Information meetings were hosted, with no participants being recruited. As the sharing circles were not held, data collection was from the individual interviews. Word of mouth informed potential participants of the demographic requirements. Invitation information stated the demographic characteristics required of potential participants, so demographic information was not recorded from participants relying on a verbal statement that they met the demographic requirements; this was more in line with Indigenous Research Methods and protocols.

Participant Selection

Indigenous youth aged 18 to 21, who had attended high school in the metropolitan area of the study within the previous five years were invited to participate in the study.

The sampling strategy was to be a combination of recruitment, convenience, and random selection. Individuals aged 18 to 21 can give their consent; therefore, additional consent from parents, guardians, or school authorities were not required. Therefore, the participant selection could be termed convenient. This method afforded participants from the major educational jurisdictions, as well as charter schools, in the area of study to be potential participants. Individuals within this age bracket would have attended at least one year of high school.

Participants were recruited by word of mouth, despite planned efforts. Participating individuals stated they met the selection criteria: Indigenous youth aged 18 to 21, having attended high school in the metropolitan area of the study within the previous five years as well as identifying as an Indigenous individual, First Nation, Métis, or Inuit.

Documented identification was not required, just self-identifying as an Indigenous person. Requiring documentation of status is colonialistic and not in alignment with Indigenous Research Methodologies.

Individuals aged 18 to 21, as legal adults, can participate in research studies without consent from other individuals. No dependent adults wished to participate in the study

As this study was concerned with the lived experience of Indigenous youth in urban high school settings, participants attended an urban high school in the metropolitan area for at least one year in the previous five.

Determining Sample Size

In approaching sample size, one should know the size of the population under study. There are no accurate numbers reflecting the population size of Indigenous youth in the metropolitan area under study, inference from known data was used. Across Canada, the Indigenous population grew 42.5% in the period 1996 to 2016. (Statistics Canada, 2017) Indigenous peoples make up 4.9% of the total Canadian population. Self-identifying Indigenous people make up 11.4 % (Statistics Canada, 2017) of the provincial population. The metropolitan area of the study is home to almost 75,000 self-identifying Indigenous individuals (Statistics Canada, 2017). The primary educational jurisdictions in the area have a grade twelve high school population of approximately 33,300. Provincial population percentages were used as a guide. There are more than 3,800 individuals who may meet the criteria for participating in this study during the past school year. Given that this study was open to participants aged 18 to 21, a period inclusive of four academic

years, the potential populations of Indigenous youth who may have attended high school in the metropolitan area of study was over 15,000.

In gathering stories from youth for the Te Kotahitanga Research Project, Bishop and his associates interviewed 70 students across five schools (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Bishop's five-year research project involved about 30 researchers (T. Cavanagh, personal communication, November 2015, Adjunct Instructor at Colorado State University). Hare and Pidgeon (2011) interviewed the communitity's entire high school-aged population, 39 individuals, for their study with Indigenous youth in Northern Ontario. Stelmach et al. (2017) held focus groups involving 75 junior/high school youth across the area of study. Mitra's work at Whitman High School regarding student voice involved 30 students over three years (2003). Shultz and Cook-Sather (2001) enlisted the assistance of 28 youth as co-authors in assembling their work on student voice; of these, 28 only one identified as being of Native American ancestry.

Patton (2015) suggested that the sample size in qualitative studies is a tradeoff between breadth and depth. Mason (as cited in Patton, 2015) found that out of 560 doctoral studies, the largest sample size was 95, while the smallest was one, with a median of 28 and an average of 31. Stelmach et al. (2017) gathered the responses from 75 youth, while Lessard et al. (2015) constructed their data around two individuals. Gathering data regarding lived experiences may be shallow or deep depending upon the relationship between the participants and the researchers as well as the number of interview sessions. Morse (as cited in Patton, 2015) suggests that phenomenological studies may involve six to ten individuals due to the amount of data produced from repeated interviews. As the interview questions are open-ended or generated from

previous statements in the case of the individual interviews, the amount of data could vary. For this study, twelve to fourteen participants could have produced sufficient data to address the research question. Should data collection be inadequate with this many participants, additional individuals were to be invited from the original list of volunteers, or another round of recruitment was to be undertaken.

Recruitment and Selection

Participants were recruited through public invitation posted and distributed through Indigenous and educational agencies in the metropolitan area of the study. In researching Indigenous communities, personal contact is desirable. Therefore, those wishing to participate were invited to attend information meetings at a third space location. Notices of the information meeting were posted two weeks before the meeting dates (Appendix B), the study, and requested demographics were briefly described.

Participant identification was protected at each stage of the project. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the project at any time, including having their recorded contributions removed from the dataset. The traditional Indigenous reciprocity protocol of tobacco offering was forgone to allow participants to withdraw from the study at any time. The offering and acceptance of tobacco establish a covenantal relationship and agreement between the participants. Both parties are honor-bound to complete the transaction. Thus, if an offering of tobacco was made and accepted, the recipient would be honor-bound to complete the sharing of her or his story and would be unable to freely withdraw from the study without countering traditional protocols and breaking the covenantal agreement.

Individuals who wish to participate in the study were requested to complete the consent form before participating in the study. Review and signing of the consent form took place at a mutually agreed upon time and location before the first the interviews occurred.

Instrumentation

Researcher-Developed Instruments

For this study, no standardized instrument could be found for either the planned sharing circles/focus groups or the individual interviews; therefore, a researcher-developed instrument was used for collecting data. The sharing circles/focus groups' questions were based on the concept of relationship. A concept that research indicates is essential to student development and success (Battiste, 2013; Berryman, 2013; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al., 2009, Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop et al., 2014; Fryberg et al., 2013; Gay, 2010; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009; Wilson, 2008). The research question and the related discussion questions of the sharing circle/focus group instrument were reviewed by Dr. Thomas Cavanagh, a member of Dr. Russel Bishop's research team and an Adjunct Instructor at Colorado State University teaching courses in culturally appropriate research methods. The original sharing circle/focus group questions were revised on his recommendations (T. Cavanagh, personal communication, May 8, 2018).

Dr. Dwight Harley, Director of Psychometrics, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta, also reviewed the research question and the related discussion questions of sharing circle/focus group instrument (D. Harley, personal communications, May 14, 2018). Dr. Harley stated that the proposed sharing circle/focus group discussion

questions would move respondents towards appropriate responses to the research question. He recommended additional points to Question 3 to gain a fuller assessment of the youths' perceptions of their relationships with adults in high school. The additional items recommended for Question 3 were incorporated to provide more significant opportunities for participants to expand upon their responses. The sharing circle/focus group discussion questions became the interview questions when sharing circle/focus group events could not be organized.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. The following questions were used to guide the interviews and generate data.

Question 1: Would you please describe your overall perceptions of high school?

This question provided information concerning the overall lived experiences of Indigenous youth of high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. Influential factors contributing to overall perceptions, including youth-adult relationships, may be revealed.

Question 2: Please describe your relationships with adults in the high school(s) you attended?

Indirectly asking about adult relationships, youth may reveal the influence of relationships with various adults in the high school setting, not just the teaching staff but office and support staff as well.

Question 3: Please describe what you would like the adults in your high school(s) to know in order to establish positive relationships with students.

This question revealed what youth perceive as important in their relationships with adults in high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada.

     a) What actions would tell you about what adults know about relationships with students?

If youth are desirous of specific knowledge being possessed by the adults in high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada, they need to have a way of observing this knowledge in action. While observable and certifiable professional characteristics are under development as part of Teaching and Leadership Excellence (Teaching and Leadership, Alberta Education, 2016), the youth are not privy to the documentation and, therefore, will no doubt have their standards of verifying the knowledge of the adults they have relationships with.

     b) If adults wished to increase their knowledge about establishing positive relationships with students, how should they do that?

Just as youth can determine the extent of knowledge that adults may have and demonstrate in their relationship. If adults are lacking, then youth may be able to point them toward specific community resources. This question provided youth with an opportunity to direct the knowledge acquisition and professional development of adults in the high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada.

Question 4: Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion that has not been addressed?

This question is to provided participants with an opportunity within the sharing circle/focus group to provide additional comments and responses that may have been triggered by other speakers. It fulfills the sharing circle protocol of having four main

issues to address. A sharing circle requires four rounds, each round dealing with a different aspect of the issue at hand.

Individuals were invited to participate in individual interviews following the Responsive Interviewing Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The Responsive Interviewing Model provides an organic interview protocol whereby questions are influenced by responses; therefore, no predetermined set of questions beyond those set out above could be established.

For this doctoral study and to make the data set manageable, the sample size was initially limited to twelve to fourteen participants. In comparison to the previously discussed studies (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lessard et al., 2015; Mitra, 2003; Shultz & Cook-Sather, 2001) this sample size was to lead to saturation. Twelve to fourteen individuals could each yield approximately 30 minutes of audio recording. Estimating four pages of text for every fifteen minutes of recording, the sharing circle/focus group could have yielded approximately 32 to 48 pages of text. The individual interviews were anticipated to yield denser data resulting in five pages per fifteen-minute interval or 120 pages of text. Throughout the sharing circle/focus group and individual interviews, more than 150 pages of transcribed text could be produced. Given the targeted responses for the sharing circle/focus group and the individual interview questions, this amount of data would lead to saturation.

Changing the data collection protocol to involve just individual interviews eliminated the group discussion responses. The individual interviews, limited to ten, were expected to yield 60 or more pages of text data

Sharing Circles/Focus Groups and Interview Protocol

Participants were recruited through a public invitation posted at and distributed through Indigenous and educational agencies in the metropolitan area of the study. In researching Indigenous communities, personal contact is desirable. Therefore, those wishing to participate were invited to attend an information meeting at a third space location (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999; Cajete, 1994) outside the school and home environments. At the information meeting, the project was described as well as the protocol for both sharing circle /focus group meetings and individual interview sessions. Gifts of reciprocity were described, food and beverages at sharing circle/focus group meetings; each participant was to receive a gift card of nominal value. I was to meet with each potential participant in person at a mutually agreed upon date, time, and location after the initial information meeting. At meetings before the sharing circle/focus group meetings, the potential participants and I were to meet individually to discuss informed consent, and any other concerns the potential participant may have. At these meetings, individual participants were to review and sign the project consent form. Should not enough participants be obtained on the initial invitation, additional invitations were to be extended to the same locations as the initial posting with updated meeting information (Appendix B).

Sharing circles/focus groups were to be hosted using traditional meeting protocols, as described at the initial information meeting. A local Indigenous social services agency graciously offered a meeting and interview space for the project.

Procedures for Data Collection

Two sources of data were to be sought, sharing circles/focus group discussions and individual interviews. It is anticipated that two sharing circles/focus groups consisting of four to six participants each would be hosted. From these sharing circles/focus groups participants, it was hoped that at least two from each group would be interested in participating in individual interviews. It was hoped that a minimum of four individuals would consent to individual interviews. If not enough sharing circle/focus group participants volunteered for individual interviews, additional invitations would be posted for additional sharing circle/focus group with the specific aim of recruiting more participants for individual interviews. There was a possibility that all sharing circles/focus groups participants would wish to participate in individual interviews. If this occurred, individual interviews would need to be limited to a maximum of four to maintain a manageable data set. Sharing circles/focus groups were to follow traditional meeting protocol and were to be between 90 and 120 minutes long; there is potential that due to the nature of the project sharing circles/focus groups could go much longer. Each sharing circle/focus group meeting would be concluded with a review of further actions and potential sharing dates of collected data and the sharing of the future collaborative story. Sharing circle/focus group participants would be free to ask questions of the researcher concerning the project. Audio recordings were to be transcribed verbatim by the researcher using Nuances Dragon Naturally Speaking voice writing software and HyperTRANSCIBE.

Individual interview participants were to be invited from sharing circle/focus group participants. As sharing circle/focus groups proven impossible to host, data collection

protocol proceeded directly to individual interviews with the hope of recruiting 10

participants. A meeting room was available at the business offices of a local Indigenous

service agency, within walking distance of a major public transit station in the area of the

study, for individual interviews.

Should participants not be comfortable entering through the main entrance, other

entrances were available, and interviews would take place outside regular business hours.

Daytime occupants of the building may be aware of the use of the meeting room by me,

but they were not given any details of the individual participants. Interviews could range

from 15 to 45 minutes but may last longer depending on the information to be shared.

Interview questions were derived from the sharing circle/focus group discussion

questions. Appendix A contains the interview questions.

Data Analysis Plan

This investigation used an Indigenous perspective. Indigenous perspectives have

been established in academic research by Cajete (1994), Smith (1999/2008), Bishop, and

his research associates (1999 and onward). In Canada, Hare and Pidgeon (2011), Donald

(2012), and Battiste (2008, 2013) have been the vanguard. An Indigenous perspective

places the researcher and the participants on a collaborative, reciprocal journey of

discovery. Through the application and enactment of local protocols, participants were

asked to share their stories. This story sharing was to inform me of their experiences and

perceptions. I in turn, hold a responsibility to share those stories in an authentic way that

honors and validates the telling. As such, the stories do not become my possessions. I am

honor-bound to authentically share elements of the stories, acknowledging that the stories

are not mine but those of others. The stories reflect only the experiences of the tellers and

cannot be generalized to others, even though their experiences may share many common elements. Elements of the stories formed a collaborative story from which educators can reflect on their practice and how it aligns with the voiced concerns of Indigenous youth.

Each of the interview questions determined thematic content to be looked for in the interviewee's responses. Individual interviews were transcribed verbatim. Verbatim transcription ensured that the stories of each participant were as authentic and accurate to what was said as possible.

Codes and Categories

Moving the data from raw audio recordings to a format that is more easily analyzed involved transcribing the audio tracks for import into the qualitative analysis software program HyperRESEARCH. HyperRESEARCH had been chosen due to its ease of use and flatter learning curve. I had previous experience with the software.

Nuance's Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition and HyperTRANSCIBE software was used to transcribe the audio recordings. The voice recognition program works best with a single voice. Therefore, I repeated the participants' spoken words as the Nuance's Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software writes my voice to the text within the HyperTRANSCIBE text window. Voice writing took place directly into HyperTRANSCIBE. The process of voice writing transcription facilitated reviewing the audio recordings to ensure that a comprehensive transcript was produced. The file produced by transcribing into HyperTRANSCIBE is exportable directly into the HyperRESEARCH software for coding and analysis.

The transcribed text files of the audio were imported directly into HyperRESEARCH. Once the transcribed files were entered into the software, coding of

those statements took place. The software program has the feature of displaying the code names beside the selected text. While the software is capable of coding based on keywords, I determined the appropriate coding of the transcribed text. This maintains an Indigenous approach in that a human connection was maintained with the data rather than relying on an automated process to determine to code. This facilitated a sense of intimacy with the data.

Codes were determined through predetermination and In Vivo coding (Saldana, 2015). In Vivo, coding was derived from the text of the data. Predetermined response codes, Negative, Neutral, and Positive, were used in the initial coding of participant responses. Participant responses were then coded In Vivo for additional codes. Subsequent reviews of the data revealed additional codes for analysis. In seeking out the lived experiences of Indigenous youth attending urban high schools, their own words revealed characteristics of and knowledge about youth-adult relationships in high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. As a more organic method of coding, In Vivo coding aligns with Indigenous Research Methodologies (Kovack, 2009; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008).

In analyzing the data, both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) approaches blend (Patton, 2015). I share an Indigenous ethnocultural heritage with the participants. Some of the analysis tends towards emic realities of shared experiences and knowledge of Indigenous jargon and colloquialisms. As I am older than the participants, an etic perspective of data applied as the researcher views the data from a more separated and perhaps objective vantage point.

Table I illustrates the predetermined codes and the categories derived from them; however, In Vivo coding generated codes and categories not anticipated before data collection and review. This method of coding and categorizing facilitated analysis of common characteristics that were used to compose the collaborative story (Bishop, 1999; Saldana; 2016).

Table 1

Possible Codes and Categories for Responses to Sharing Circle/Focus Group Discussion

Questions

1: Would you please describe your overall perceptions of high school?

Code	Category
Positive experience	High school experience
Neutral experience	
Negative experience	

2: Please describe your relationships with adults in the high school(s) you attended?

Code	Category
Positive relationships	Significant relationships
Neutral relationships	
Negative relationships	

3: Please describe what you would like the adults in your high school(s) to know in order to establish positive relationships with students.

    a) What actions would tell you about what adults know about relationships with students?

    b) If adults wished to increase their knowledge about establishing positive relationships with students, how should they do that?

Code	Category
Interpersonal characteristics	Desired relationship characteristics
Academic characteristics	
Environmental characteristics	

4: Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion that has not been addressed?

    In Vivo coding leading to additional categories

Note. These codes and categories were used as data was collected, reviewed, and analyzed. In Vivo coding revealed different codes and categories.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Indigenous Research Methodologies ensure credibility and confirmability within Indigenous communities. In preparing to undertake this project, local Indigenous academics and scholars, as well as respected Elders and Knowledge Keepers, were consulted to ensure that such a study would be appropriate given the historical relationships between Whitestream education and Indigenous peoples. Additional advice and counsel were sought from respected community Elders familiar with the local educational circumstance of Indigenous youth residing in the urban area of interest. This consultation was not to get permission from the Elders to conduct the research but to ensure that local protocols were observed; conversations with these Elders provided cultural and protocol insight into the project. The collaborative story was taken back to the participants to validate their contributions and ensure that a collective voice was contained and heard within the single voice of the collaborative story.

Credibility

Individual interviews were to be used to expand upon sharing circle/focus group conversations. However, as sharing circle/focus groups were not held, the interviews became the basis of all the data for determining commonalities across shared stories. The use of an audio recording of conversations ensured the authenticity of each participant's voice, not only in what was said but who said it, which allowed for more accurate transcription. The collaborative story was taken back to the participants to validate their contributions and ensure that a collective voice was contained and heard within the

collaborative story. Sharing back the collaborative story is a form of member checking through consensus (Bishop, 1999).

Transferability

Participant selection was limited to Indigenous youth, 18 to 21 years of age, who were either still enrolled in high school or have attended in the last five years. Participants were at different points in their high school journey: still attending, matriculated, attending higher education, or reflecting on their post-secondary options. As per traditional protocol, Indigenous individuals only speak for themselves and did not apply their experiences to others, even if their circumstances appeared similar. Therefore, personal story transferability may be limited; this is not to say that transferable teachings and learnings did not come out of the study, only that the stories apply to specific places and times. The collaboratively constructed story provides a starting point for discussions among educators as to how the shared stories are similar to each educator's circumstances. The shared stories and the resulting collaborative story were comparable to the results of similar international studies (Bishop, 1999; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop et al., 2003).

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative studies is the equivalent of validity and reliability in quantitative studies (Ellis & Levy, 2009). Ellis and Levy (2009) described four types of reliability: equivalency reliability, stability reliability, inter-rater reliability, and internal consistency. Equivalency reliability considers how closely one instrument measures against another. As the interview instrument is unique to this study, equivalency reliability could not be assessed. In comparing the interview questions of this study to

others (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Butler et al. , 2015; Flower et al., 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Horn, 2015; Kennedy, 2011; Lagana-Riordan et al., 2011; Lewthwaite et al., 2015; Smyth & Robinson, 2015; Stelmach et al., 2017), they appeared similar in nature and wording. Stability reliability refers to an instrument's ability to produce similar or consistent data upon retesting or reuse. As this was the first time this series of questions was used, stability reliability could not be established. Inter-rater reliability refers to the agreement of results between individuals exposed to the same instrument. As the interview questions were the basis for the individual interviews, inter-rater reliability could not truly be established. Internal consistency focuses on comparing the instrument with an external standard. No standard set of questions was found to use or to compare the questions of this study before it was undertaken. This internal consistency was difficult to establish. However, the advice of experts in the field of social and educational change and psychometrics was sought out to determine that the questions would indeed yield data that addressed the original research question. In comparing the instrument used to that used by Stelmach et al., (2017), the instruments are very similar. The Stelmach et al. instrument was used to collect data at researcher lead focus groups.

Noble and Smith (2015) suggested several strategies to ensure trustworthiness that apply to this study. As I shared an ethnocultural affiliation with potential participants, existing personal biases were described as well as the position and role of the researcher with the participants. Noble and Smith recommended establishing and maintaining a clear, detailed decision trail (audit trail) so that future researchers and reviews may gain a complete understanding as to why certain events or processes were conducted, and they were and what lead to those changes.

Phenomenological studies rely on descriptions of experiences and events; rich, thick accounts of participants' responses via verbatim transcription provided data for confident reflection and interpretation of shared stories. Ensuring the authenticity of participants' responses and contributions required that the interview transcripts or in the case of this study, the collaborative story, are taken back to the participants for validation and authentication of their contributions.

Confirmability

An acknowledgment of using Indigenous Research Methodologies is that the researcher is not entirely an objective observer or reporter. In listening to shared stories, analyzing them for common elements, and composing a collaborative story, I become part of the story and its retelling. Full and uninvolved objectivity is not achievable; it is, therefore, critical that the collaborative common story was taken back to the participants for validation. By validating the common elements of the shared stories with participants, the collaborative story was authenticated, and the desire for researcher objectivity achieved within an Indigenous research context.

Coder Reliability

I completed the coding myself and was subject to bias due to limited coding experiences. Appropriate counsel was sought out when coding began and periodically after that to ensure reliability and reduce the influence of researcher bias.

Trustworthiness is a perpetual issue in all research, no less so when using Indigenous Research Methods. Wilson (2008) stated:

Research is ceremony…The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger

relationships or bridge the distance between us and the cosmos. The

research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a

raised level of consciousness and insight into our world. (p. 137)

With a good heart and a good intent, all undertakings are conducted rightly in the eyes of

the Creator (the Late Jerry Wood, Urban Edmonton Elder, personal communication, June

2011).

Ethical Procedures

It is with a good heart, good intentions, and adherence to local protocols that this

study was undertaken. Following the intent of Indigenous Research Methodologies,

ethical procedures are based on relationships. Participants were recruited from

Indigenous youth residing within the metropolitan area at the time of the study and who

had attended an urban high school within the last five years or were currently attending

an urban high school. This facilitated youth 18 to 21 years to participate in the study.

Recruitment took place through the metropolitan school jurisdictions in distributing

information regarding the study to students 18 to 21 years old. A local Indigenous service

agency assisted with recruitment via word of mouth.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant. While audio recording

creates disembodiment of voice and person, and while the written text of an interview

eliminates the spirit and person of the speaker, it was the best that could be done in

collecting and sharing the stories of shared experiences. Every effort was made to ensure

that the speaker remained a whole human being, with voice and body remaining intact.

Maintaining intact beings is one of the goals of Indigenous Research Methodologies

(Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008).

Participant identification was protected at each stage of the project. Participants confirmed they met the demographic requirements of the study. The project was fully disclosed to them; they then provided full consent. Participants were able to withdraw from the project at any time, including having their recorded contributions removed from the dataset. The traditional Indigenous reciprocity protocol of tobacco offering was forgone to facilitate a participant to withdraw from the study at any time. The offering and acceptance of tobacco establish a covenantal relationship and agreement between the participants. Both parties are honor-bound to complete the transaction. Thus, if an offering of tobacco was made and accepted, the recipient would be honor-bound to complete the sharing of their story and would be unable to freely withdraw from the study without countering traditional protocols and breaking the covenantal agreement.

Data collected for this project will be secured for seven years. Hardcopy documentation will be secured under lock and key at my residence. Audio recordings were digitized and secured on an encrypted hard drive that will be kept with the hard copy documentation. In no way will the recordings be used to gain profits or to present the participants in an unsavory light, nor will the recordings be distributed to other researchers or individuals for any purpose whatsoever.

At all times, the identity of participants is being protected. Real names were not used in the text. No ethical concerns arose.

To ensure story authenticity and validity, according to collaborative storying and Indigenous Research Methodologies, the new collaborative story composed from the shared stories and experiences of urban Indigenous youth participants was shared back to them for validation of their contributions. This step is more than member checking; it is a

component of protocol that recognizes the knowledge, experiences, and collective wisdom of the participants. This sharing of the collaborative is a way of bringing the research project full circle in the process of reciprocity, the sharing back of story and demonstration of what will be taken into the future.

Summary

Adhering to Indigenous Research Methodologies, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada.

Participant selection was through an invitation to Indigenous youth 18 to 21 years of age, who had attended high school within the last five years. The Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) was used in conducting individual interviews. Traditional covenantal protocols were not adhered to in order to allow participants to withdraw at any point in the study should they wish to do so. Verbatim transcription of audio recordings, In Vivo coding and analysis of common elements and themes across all the shared stories lead to the identification of themes and commonalities. Common elements and themes were used to compose the collaborative story that was authenticated and validated with the study participants. In the next chapter, the analysis of the shared stories is detailed, and the construction of the collaborative story begins.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, changes to the data collection format are detailed. The setting of the interviews and demographics of participants are detailed. Efforts of recruitment and data collection are chronicled. The analysis of the data collection follows the order of the interview questions. Evidence of the trustworthiness of the study is confirmed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results as determined by the analysis.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to determine "What do the lived experiences of Indigenous youth reveal about youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada?" Seeking out the voices of students in detailing their educational experiences has become a way of facilitating systemic change (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, 2009; Bishop et al. 2003). While the voices of Indigenous youth have been sought out in Aotearoa New Zealand (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al. 2009; Bishop et al. 2003), Australia (Carnes & Robinson, 2014; McKeown, 2011; Saggers, 2015; Smyth & Robinson, 2015), and the United States (Cerecer, 2013; Shields et al., 2005), few studies have recorded the lives of Canadian Indigenous youth in terms of their educational experiences (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lessard et al., 2014; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Stelmach et al., 2017). Knowing the lived experiences of Indigenous youth can help educators come to know how the current educational system and its Whitestream practices impact Indigenous youth.

The lived experiences of the participants were determined through their answers to my interview questions. These questions were founded on previous research and

reviewed by a panel of experts. Based on their recommendations, the original interview questions were revised. Interviews followed a sequence of questions (see Appendix A).

The initially proposed data collection methodology could not be executed as planned and required changing. Initially, the study was to consist of two focus groups from which six participants would be invited to participate in individual interviews. After two structured attempts to host focus groups with no participants attending, it was determined by the doctoral committee that data collection should move directly to individual interviews. The focus group questions became the basis for the interviews as there was no focus group data from which to elaborate. The proposed initially, one-on-one interview questions were replaced with the focus group protocol. The same recruitment partners were engaged. Small group presentations were made to individuals who, in turn, were directly invited to participate in the study.

Setting

There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants once they volunteered to participate in the study. The study took place in a large metropolitan center in Western Canada. Initial information presentations were held in a university classroom, a classroom at an alternative high school, and the business office of an Indigenous service agency. Interviews took place in three locations as well. The first three interviews were held in the multipurpose training room of the Indigenous service agency. The fourth interview was held in the boardroom of the same agency. The fifth and last interview was held in an administration office of an ethnoculturally diverse elementary school. The participant who was a single mother brought her infant child to the interview. The child's activities and fussing distracted from the interview. Other

minor interruptions were also experienced in this interview, such as hallway noise and bells.

Demographics

All participants in the study self-identified as Indigenous individuals. Three men and two women participated in the study; all were between 18 and 21 years of age at the time of their interviews. Three participants completed their high school education at an Indigenous-based high school. One participant completed the matriculation program at a Whitestream high school. One was completing upgrading courses to achieve high school graduation requirements. One of the women was a single mother of two. While all participants were provided with the opportunity to choose a pseudonym they would be given for the study, all stated that using their given name was desired. In order to preserve confidentiality, participant names were changed.

Agnus is a 19 year old single mother of two, still completing her high school program at an alternative education program. She became pregnant with her first child at 14. It is interesting to note that Agnus started high school at 14, when the typical age of starting grade ten is 16. She had attended regular and alternative delivery programs such as self-paced and storefront. Storefront school is a form of alternative educational delivery; typically, they are established in strip malls and do not have the same operational hours of traditional Whitestream high schools.

Charlie, 20, had completed high school within a traditional Whitestream public school but had started high school in an advanced placement program.

Jackie, 21, had completed his high school program at an Indigenous-based school.

Ralph, 20, had completed his entire junior and senior high school programs at an Indigenous-based school.

Shannon, 20, had attended two high schools during her high school career. The first was a Whitestream based school servicing minority students, many of who live in poverty. She completed her high school program at an Indigenous-based school.

Data Collection

Two methods of data collection were proposed. The first set of data was to be collected from two sharing circles or focus groups, consisting of six to eight members. From these focus groups, three individuals from each group were to be invited for individual interviews. The sharing circle/focus groups were challenging to organize even though three information sessions were held to inform potential participants of the study. Participants of these information meetings, while willing to participate in the study, did not indicate a desire to be involved in group discussions. As focus groups proved to be impossible to carry out, individual one-on-one interviews were deemed to be more suitable to the study population. Approval was obtained to change the data collection protocol to individual interviews. This revised method of data collection was then used with five individuals participating in interviews.

All data was collected using the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) to conduct interviews in alignment with the sharing circle/focus group questions, as outlined in Chapter 3. Four of the five interviews took place at the business offices of a local Indigenous service agency after regular business hours. One interview took place in the assistant administrator's office of an elementary school. Interviews took place over 5 months. Interviews ranged from 18 to 45 minutes in length.

The one-on-one interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants, and handwritten notes were taken to capture pertinent points. The initial interview questions were scripted; however, additional questions for clarification and detail were also asked as per the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). These clarifying questions were different for each interview participant. The audio-recorded interviews were then transcribed to text with the program HyperTRANSCIBE using Dragon NaturallySpeaking to voice write the conversations.

Challenging Circumstances Encountered in Data Collection

While 28 individuals attended information meetings, several expressed interest and willingness to become involved in the study, word-of-mouth was the most productive recruitment method. Only one participant was recruited through information meetings.

While not precisely an issue with data collection, factors outside my control limited data collection opportunities. The following is a chronology of the data collection process I experienced in this study.

I contacted School Division One (SD1) and School Division Two (SD2) in September 2018 to determine their processes for obtaining permission to conduct research within their jurisdiction. University permission to conduct the study was granted on December 23, 2018. However, as this was the beginning of the scheduled Christmas break, no one was available for contact at the jurisdictional offices. On January 5, 2019, university approval notification was forwarded to SD1. On January 9, 2019, approval to conduct research involving youth enrolled with SD1 was received, with notification to high school principals being forward by the district research manager. Emails of introduction were sent out to the high school principals, requesting arrangements to make

presentations to their Indigenous students regarding the study; no responses were received.

On January 18, 2019, the manager of Indigenous Learning Services was contacted. From there, I was put in contact with a graduation coach who facilitated two meetings with youth attending a local university. Six in total attended presentations, but none committed to participate. Recruitment of active high school students was not permitted at the beginning and end of semesters while students were settling into their classes and when they were writing final exams. This restriction eliminated January and February as well as June and September. A phone call in October of 2019 to a colleague, who teaches at an outreach school, resulted in contact with an individual who participated in an interview. Only one participant was recruited directly through SD1, through the phone call with the colleague who works at an outreach location.

I contacted staff with SD2 in September of 2018 to gain permission to involve youth attending their program. I was informed that the next round of approvals was not until November 2018 and that I could not expect a Letter of Cooperation until my research project had received University approval. All documents required by SD2 were submitted except for IRB approval. No standard application form existed at that time.

IRB approval notification was submitted to SD2, January 5, 2019, in anticipation of January 7, 2019, business offices reopened. A letter of approval was not obtained from SD2 until February 11, 2019, as several members of the review committee had questions that were not contained in the application package. Each committee member's question required individual attention. Notification of the district level approval for my research project was not received until March 8, 2019.

An introductory email was forwarded on March 11, 2019, to principals of high schools where potential participants would have enrolled. One principal responded and provided contact with his Cultural Liaison. I was able to present my project to eight youth on March 19, 2019. While there was interest expressed, none of the youth attending the presentation chose to be involved in the project.

SD2 does not permit research to occur during the beginning and end of semesters, so I was not able to return to SD2 to make presentations until October 2019. The Indigenous students met with their facilitator on October 29, 2019. I made a presentation of my research project to seven youth; each took a consent form with them. Again, interest was expressed, but there was no commitment to be involved. On November 18, 2019, the Cultural Liaison provided me with contact information for four youth who had expressed interest. Emails were forward to each, seeking arrangements that would be acceptable for their participation; no responses were received. No participants were directly recruited through contacts with SD2.

The local Indigenous service agency, which provided meeting and interview space, was most productive in spreading the word about the study among youth who fit the demographic required for participation in the study. In total, four individuals were recruited through contact with the service agency; all four had attended SD2 high schools.

Data Analysis

The transcribed text was imported to HyperRESEARCH for coding and analysis. The text voice written into HyperTRANSCIBE was directly importable to HyperRESEARCH, thus the reason these programs were chosen. The responses from the

interviews were initially coded by questions until themes, and distinct codes emerged.

The proposed categories and codes were in alignment with the basis of the interview

questions and used to create themes. Elaborating responses gained through the use of the

Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) yielded more codes that contributed

a fuller picture of the participants' responses as a collective. Overall, the five individual

interviews provided 133 minutes of audio recording that produced over 49 double spaced

pages of text. Removing interviewer questions, statements, and prompts reduced the page

count of data to 30 pages.

Codes, Categories, and Themes

The initial codes, as proposed (see Table 1), were derived from the sharing

circle/focus group questions. However, going straight to individual interviews, they

became the initial coding for the interview responses. Table 2 displays the categories and

codes used in the coding of the data. Categories and codes will be further detailed, as will

the additional categories derived from the the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin &

Rubin, 2012).

Responses to the interview questions 1 and 2 were coded as to positive, negative,

or neutral rather than using phrases from the responses. This method was employed to

maintain the entirety of each individual response in the tradition of Indigenous Research

Methods. Keeping the responses of the individual respondents intact within a broad

content rather than breaking the responses into a group of phrases honors the whole

person. This process is an attempt to represent each interview participant as a whole

being, not disembodied words as a dissected response would tend to do. Statements made

by participants were often aligned with more than one code, and thus individual

statements are recorded with one, two, or three codes as appropriate to the coding criteria.

Table 2

Categories and Codes for Responses from Participants During Individual Interviews

_____

1: Would you please describe your overall perceptions of high school?

Category	Code
High school experience	Positive experience
	Neutral experience
	Negative experience

2: Please describe your relationships with adults in the high school(s) you attended?

Category	Code
Significant relationships	Positive relationships
	Neutral relationships
	Negative relationships

3: Please describe what you would like the adults in your high school(s) to know in order to establish positive relationships with students.

a) What actions would tell you about what adults know about relationships with students?

b) If adults wished to increase their knowledge about establishing positive relationships with students, how should they do that?

Category	Code
Desired characteristics	Academic characteristics
	Environmental characteristics
	Interpersonal characteristics

4: Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion that has not been addressed?

In Vivo coding lead to the following additional categories: adult-student interactions, challenges, expectations, internal conflict, and supports.

_____

The codebook that developed contained the following categories and codes and their related occurrence:

High school experiences (derived primarily from question one)
    Neutral experiences: 3
    Negative experiences: 8
    Positive experiences: 13

Significant relationships (derived primarily from question two)
    Negative relationships: 12
    Neutral relationships: 0
    Positive relationships: 16

Desired relationship characteristics (derived primarily from question three)
    Academic characteristics: 6
    Environmental Characteristics: 7
    Interpersonal characteristics: 20

Other categories (derived primarily from responses to all questions)
    adult-student interactions: 16
    challenges: 14
    expectations: 8
    internal conflict: 4
supports: 25

Category and Code Descriptions by Question

    Question 1: Would you please describe your overall perceptions of high school? Responses to this question provided information concerning the overall lived experiences of Indigenous youth in their high school settings. These experiences were coded as negative or positive, no neutral responses were recorded. Respondents describe thirteen positive experiences, three that were neutral and eight as negative. Overall, the experiences were positive with negative incidents. Agnus report six positive experiences as did Jackie. Charlie related two negative experiences accompanied by a single positive remembrance; he stated, "…high school was pretty good. I did enjoy junior high a bit

more…" Shannon related six negative and only two positive experiences. The negative experiences dominated her overall high school experience.

> People used to pick on me, all you're dirty, you're savage, your parents are
>
> alcoholics and that. They did not know me, but they had a lot to say based
>
> on first looks, which was bad, and the teachers would let it happen.
>
> (Shannon).

Question 2: Please describe your relationships with adults in the high school(s) you attended? By directly asking participants about adult relationships, they revealed some of the influencers of relationships with various adults in the high school setting. Counselors, Elders, support staff, as well as teachers, were identified as having influence and impact on relationships.

Participants' responses were either positive or negative. Sixteen adult-student interactions were directly reported. Overall, 16 positive relationships were reported as opposed to twelve negative relationships. Negative coding was applied to statements indicating dislike, displeasure, or mistreatment, such as "Some of those teachers would treat me like I was stupid" (Shannon). Statements identified as positive contained affirmative, motivational, and appreciative content, "I was really close to a lot of the teachers at /in that school. Every one of them had helped me throughout the years and getting my education" (Jackie).

Question 3: Please describe what you would like the adults in your high school(s) to know in order to establish positive relationships with students? This question revealed what youth perceive as essential elements in their relationships with adults in high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada. For the most

part, responses were connected to personal interactions. Respondents shared twenty accounts of interpersonal characteristics that were either desired or not.

a) What actions would tell you about what adults know about relationships with students?

Youth have expectations of what adult-student relationships should be. The participants shared eight expectations of the adults they interacted with. While all participants hinted at it, Ralph stated it most succinctly, "One thing it's very important among every living thing every living being is respect." Agnus requested time and attempts at understanding, "They'd like sit down listen to my story, to kind of understand that. Where I'm coming from, and if I'm not here, that this is what I'm doing..." Charlie focused on extracurricular events with staff and students working together as indicative of adult-student relationships.

A lot of it would be the kind of events they put on throughout the year.

But I know at my high school a lot of that was decided by the

leadership group which worked in partnership with the staff to put on

events. (Charlie).

Jackie stated that adults should get to know students," To know well to find out, like what they like to do, what's the goal in life …"

Shannon identified acceptance of culture shock, open-mindedness, and acceptance as critical to indicating what adults need to demonstrate,

expect either a cultural shock or something, don't know like just to be

open-minded. Don't try to treat everybody as one, everybody is (an)

individual. Be willing to learn about that student and make they are

comfortable about their own identity within this opening. That they

shouldn't be afraid like you are also human beings, you have your own

values, and the teacher should respect that and not (say) you can't do

that here are that. Anything like that be open-minded, don't try to put

everybody in one suitcase. (Shannon)

b) If adults wished to increase their knowledge about establishing positive

relationships with students, how should they do that?

This question was to reveal what characteristic adults were to possess in their

attempts to establish positive relationships with them. This question was to build off the

expectations of the previous question and to confirm those expectations. Participants

stated that adults should find out about their students, typically through respectful

conversations. Speaking with Elders was a go-to solution when youth were seeking

knowledge, yet it was not suggested explicitly for adults.

The Academic Characteristic code provided evidence that youth require supports

to be successful in their educational journey. Six incidents of academic characteristics

were shared. Agnus stated, "Help me one-on-one with the specific question that I needed

and /or with a few."

Statements tagged with the Environmental Characteristics code reflected the

desire for youth to have access to cultural and ceremonial programs and spaces. "I would

add like programs that would accommodate cultural groups, (Shannon)" While not

explicitly stated, many desired characteristics of teachers and schools connected to

cultural undertakings that require defined spaces.

The code, Interpersonal Characteristics, was applied to statements indicating what characteristics youth desired adults to possess, twenty statements relating to this were shared. Jackie took a traditional approach to this "I think they should approach them with good intent like knowing how to address them in a certain way like ask them their name or where they're from."

The responses gained using the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) provided the opportunity to expand the analytical coding. When coding for adult-student interactions, events, and incidents that were not directly experienced by participants but influential to them were determined to be significant and were included. Shannon was quite observant of the interactions of others that affected her, "This one girl, she's First Nation girl. She'd always have a meltdown (in) the middle the hallway, and they would just treat her like she was a crazy person on the street."

The participants faced many of the challenges that other minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth face. These challenges were not explicitly stated. Statements identified, and challenges reflect the unique lived experience of each individual. Agnus identified her challenge this way:

> It was hard (baby noises in the background) having to be pregnant at 14,
>
> going into grade 10, and study was hard, keeping on track always
>
> distracted from taking care the baby in trying to mix my teenage life with
>
> it, too. (Agnus).

Each participant held expectations for themselves, the school they were enrolled in, as well as the adults they interacted with. The following statement by Ralph illustrated his expectations and his perception of the expectations of others. "It surprises me to meet

anyone who doesn't know anything about the culture or whatever happened, and its surprises them just as much to see that many Native kids in the school or that many Native teachers teaching."

Some of the participants experienced internal conflict during high school. Ralph was forthright in stating his feelings of internal conflict. "Cause with the whole 60's scoops, residential school, I kind of thought I was like I was betraying some part of myself taking part in … public schools."

All the participants identified the supports they received during their high school years. Direct supports from teachers were identified, as were culturally based programs and the simple invitation to engage. Jackie stated that the relationships and support he received were influenced by request; "They would ask me to sing, I guess the dance and stuff, they know I know how to sing, they asked me to be more involved in the school."

In the repeated review of the interview transcripts, it was found that many statements could and were coded for more than one code. The multiple coding situations can be summed up with a statement from Ralph, "Because communication is like the basic as far as relationships go." That being the case, each code can be said to possess a communicative element.

Discrepant Cases

Participant responses were similar for each interview question. Jackie's responses were unique in that all his responses regarding his high school experiences were positive if he had negative experiences; he did not share them.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Individual interviews were to expand upon sharing circle/focus group conversations, but instead, they became the means of data collection. The collaborative story constructed from all the responses was shared back to the participants in a Word document. The document was emailed to the email addresses provided at the time of their interview. This sharing out of the collaborative story was to validate their contributions and ensure that a collective voice was contained and heard within the collaborative story. This form of member checking through consensus is based upon the work of Bishop (1999).

Transferability

Participant selection was limited to Indigenous youth, 18 to 21, who were either still enrolled in high school or had attended high school in the last five years. Participants were at different points in their high school and life journey: four had completed high school while one was still enrolled in an alternative delivery program. One was enrolled in a local university college program, while two others were actively researching programs for enrollment. As per traditional protocol, Indigenous individuals only speak for themselves and do not apply their experiences to others, even if their circumstances appear similar. Therefore, personal story transferability is limited; this is not to say that transferable teachings and learnings are not coming out of the study, only that the stories apply to specific places and times. The collaboratively constructed story provides a starting point for discussions among educators as to how the shared stories are similar to each educator's circumstances.

Dependability

The interview questions of this study were compared to others, (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Butler et al., 2015; Flower et al., 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Horn, 2015; Kennedy, 2011; Lagana-Riordan et al., 2011; Lewthwaite et al., 2015; Smyth & Robinson, 2015); they appeared to be similar in nature and wording. Interview questions one and three of this study were very similar to focus group questions one and four used by Stelmach, Kovach, and Steeves (2017) in that they investigated the same relational characteristics. Question One of the Stelmach et al. (2017) study had the following wording "Tell us about your school experiences? What do you want to get from your school experiences?" This wording is similar to "Would you please describe your overall perceptions of high school?" Question Four of the Stelmach et al. study asked participants to:

> Describe to us what it is that good teachers do. If you were given the
>
> power and authority to tell teachers what they should be doing to be
>
> awesome teachers what would you tell them? What would you tell them
>
> to stop doing?   (Stelmach et al., 2017, p. 6.)

As this was the first time this series of questions was used, stability and reliability cannot be established. The interview questions had initially been designed for the sharing circle/focus groups. However, as sharing circle/focus groups could not be arranged due to non-participation, the sharing circle/focus groups questions became the basis for the individual interviews. Without the sharing circle/focus groups, inter-rater reliability could not be established. Internal consistency focused on comparing the instrument with an external standard. No standard set of questions was found to use or to compare the

questions of this study with; thus, internal consistency was difficult to establish. However, the advice of experts in the field of social and educational change and psychometrics was sought out and obtained to determine that the questions would indeed yield data that could address the original research question.

Noble and Smith (2015) suggested several strategies to ensure trustworthiness that apply to this study. I share an ethnocultural affiliation with the participants; existing personal biases are described, as well as the position and role of the researcher holds with the participants. Noble and Smith recommended establishing and maintaining a clear, detailed decision trail (audit trail) to provide an understanding as to why certain events or processes were conducted. Verbatim transcription was undertaken, providing data for reflection and interpretation of shared stories, ensuring the authenticity of participants' responses and contributions required that the collaborative story, was taken back to the participants for validation and authentication of their contributions.

Confirmability

In listening to shared stories, analyzing them for common elements, and composing a collaborative story, I became part of the story and its retelling. Full and uninvolved objectivity was not achievable; it was, therefore, critical that the collaborative common story was taken back to the participants for validation. By validating the common elements of the shared stories with participants, the collaborative story was authenticated, and the desire for researcher objectivity was achieved within an Indigenous research context.

Results

Three broad categories were predetermined and aligned with the information sought via the scripted interview questions. The category of high school experiences corresponded to Question 1, significant relationships to Question 2, and desired relationship characteristics to Question 3. The following categories emerged from the analysis of the data; adult-student interactions, challenges, expectations, internal conflict, and supports. Responses to the interview questions and additional probing revealed statements that crossed over more than a single category.

High School Experiences

The category of High School Experiences provided information concerning the overall lived experiences of Indigenous youth in their high school settings. Responses to interview Question One, provided data for high school experiences. There were 24 responses related to high school experiences. By coding for negative, neutral, and positive responses, the overall experience for the collaborative story was obtained. While three conditions, negative, neutral, and positive, were possible, responses fell into either negative or positive. While one participant shared several negative experiences, she also shared several positive ones as well, leading to an overall positive perception of the group's high school experiences.

Agnus stated both positive and negative experiences surrounding her pregnancy. Agnus stated, "In the Gym, teachers really didn't care that I was pregnant." Moving to an outreach program, she felt more acceptance, stating, "D and M were there; they were really understanding of it (the pregnancy)."

Charlie indicated that high school was positive and took ownership of any negativity due to his 'teen attitude.' "Oh, for me, high school was pretty good, I did enjoy junior high a bit more, but that was generally me, my attitude towards it, but overall being in school was positive." Charlie did state that a change of some crucial staff midway through the school year negatively impacted his attitude.

Jackie was overwhelmingly positive about his high school experience despite the loss of his older brother.

> I really liked high school because my first year I was doing really good
>
> until I had an incident, my bother passed away, and I had it really rough
>
> that year. I wasn't able to graduate that year. The teachers motivating me
>
> to come back and just pushed; pushed me to get my high school diploma,
>
> and it really helped me, and it was really helpful as my brother's name is
>
> on a plaque too, of all the graduates and I wanted to put my name beside
>
> him. And now, my name is right beside him, and it's a big
>
> accomplishment. (Jackie).

While positive, Ralph gave a more neutral philosophical description of his high school experience.

> So, my perception of schooling is that it can be a very tough, can be
>
> tough and also be fun as well if you(r) dedicated to your studies and it
>
> also helps having good friends that are around to help you and you know
>
> I don't think it's all that bad. For sure, it's tough, but if you keep at it,
>
> keep studies up, keep yourself busy with something, so that limits your

downtime, you know. And also, like culture to the school that I went to

was very First Nations based. (Ralph)

For Ralph, the culture of the school was an influential factor; "…culture is important, it's

huge, it's going to be a huge driving factor for majority of things I say."

Shannon voiced more negative experiences than the other participants. For the

most part, these negative experiences were in Whitestream schools.

People used to pick on me, all you're dirty, you're savage, your parents

are alcoholics and that. They didn't know me, but they had a lot to say

based on first looks, which was bad, (and) the teachers would let it

happen. (Shannon).

Switching to an Indigenous-based school, Shannon began to have positive experiences.

People who actually supported me, there was the First Nation teacher.

The first one was JT, and then CB, they helped me personally. I would

always talk to them. I was getting frustrated. (They) would take time

(out) of the day to accommodate what I needed and one of the first

principals … he helped me a lot throughout high school. (Shannon).

Shannon's negative experiences were beyond just those Whitestream schools she

attended. While looking fort a school with a more welcoming environment, she attended

some open houses. The following experience was quite impactful as her voice and

physical mannerisms during the response were noticeable.

Well, obviously, you could tell because looking like I am, First Nation.

So, I walk into an open house, you know students will interact with other

people, it's usually the students' job to make sure everybody gets to the

school. … But that wasn't there, I was walking the hallway, and nobody

would stop me like they stopped others to come into this room. Nothing,

they would just let me walk by like I was nothing. (Shannon).

Significant Relationships

Just as overall high school experiences were positive and negative, so too were

the significant relationships and interactions shared by the participants. Encounters of

short and long temporal durations appear to hold significance for all the participants.

Question Two revealed aspects of relationships that were significant to the participants.

There were 28 responses that addressed significant relationships; 12 negatives, 16

positives. Specific student-adult interactions will be addressed later.

For Agnus, her significant relationships, both positive and negative, revolved

around her pregnancy at fourteen. Agnus perceived that they did not care about a

fourteen-year-old pregnant youth; "teachers really didn't care that I was pregnant."

Contrasting with the teachers at the out-reach program who "were really understanding of

it." One teacher, in particular, held a significant memory for Agnus;

> …he actually sat down with me and got to know me before get(ting) into
>
> the school and going to classes. So, when he seen me in the halls or
>
> something, he'd say hi what's up, hi and he would ask how Tye was
>
> doing. He was very thoughtful (of) students, showed he really cared
>
> about them, and wants the best for them. (Agnus).

The significance of Charlie's relationships is evident in that he still maintains connected.

> I still go back, actually this fall, I went to the high school, met some of
>
> my old teachers there. We still communicate. I'm friends with a couple of

them on Facebook. We still stay in touch. staff was always good.

(Charlie)

Some significant relationships had short durations but lasting effects, as indicated by Charlie's statement about supports aimed at Indigenous students.

…in my first or second year of high school, they pulled all the First

Nations, Métis, and Inuit students out of class brought us together. Don't

know exactly what it was, but what it sounded like was: we know you're

not going to do great, if you need help you get a hold of us. Which

personally, I got a little hurt by it, as I was top of the class at that point,

but I didn't take it to personally as a general statement. But you (know), I

don't think it should have been brought across that way (Charlie).

Jackie was an outlier as all the significant relationships he shared were positive. If he had any lasting negative relationships or experiences, he did not share them. Jackie perceived the teachers and adults in his high school as supportive and motivational.

Every time when I would drift away from my classes and stuff, they

would come to me and sit me down and say my education is very

important and motivate me and encourage me to getting my high school

diploma. (Jackie).

The significant relationships that Ralph shared were predominantly positive. Ralph extended this positive nature to all adults in the school.

…from my experience, cause you know, I had teachers that were Native

and teachers that were Métis and there were other people in the building

that did odd jobs here and there, custodial staff or the maintenance

workers or the lunch people; everyone in the school had a good sense of

camaraderie between everybody you know. (Ralph)

The negativity Ralph talked about appears to emanate from stereotypes. Some

students may be:

...too difficult to deal with because that takes a while to get used to us;

you have adults in those teaching areas; they don't understand that fact.

They brand them with like mental disorder or behavioral disorder, they

have some kind of illness or something with that, and then they put them

into a program that isn't actually suited to them. (Ralph).

As this was the only negative relationship or incident of significance for Ralph,

it must have been impactful to him.

Shannon's significant relationships appear to surround various aspects of cultural

protocol and responsibility. While at a Whitestream school, Shannon was required to

attend a ceremony during school time, the response she received when giving notice was

"that's not important, it has nothing to do with here at school, so they were just treat it

like it was nothing." Similar circumstances were viewed differently at the Indigenous-

based school.

When (Shannon) told (her) teacher, they were like okay you take care,

that when you come back, we'll catch you up and when they did that I

just felt more at ease, not stressed out when I'm just trying to take care of

something important back home. (Shannon).

When attempting to establish relationships, the youth participants indicated that

talking to them (the youth) as not necessarily adults, but as individuals, as persons of

worth, was highly desirable. Agnus stated this "…we were good in like relationships were good, the conversations we had we would be having regular conversation, not like teacher to a student it would be person-to-person…"

> For Jackie, positive relationships were accompanied by actions.
>
> Every time when I would drift away from my classes and stuff, they (adults) would come to me and sit me down and say my education is very important and motivate me and encourage me to getting my high school diploma. (Jackie).
>
> Ralph stated that respect was the key to positive relationships.
>
> One thing it's very important among every living thing, every living being, is respect. Whether it be respect for someone above you or someone below you or someone who walks beside you respect is (a) very important key aspect. Yeah, sure you might get attention here, there, because of whatever, but still, that doesn't mean they should just throw that out the window lightly because more often than not, respect is more valuable than money or miscellaneous items or whatever. Because it really shows you how close you are to them, with someone and how much you trust. (Ralph).
>
> For Shannon, cultural knowledge was an essential aspect of forming relationships.
>
> We were allowed to express ourselves, our background, some of us were Sioux, Cree, Dene, and they did have white teachers there, but they were understanding. They took the time to actually learn about our culture and

to be respectful of it and know the boundaries of what to say and what

not say. (Shannon).

While positive conversation appears to facilitate positive relationships, negative

conversation, or perceived treatment, even when not directed at a specific individual,

appears detrimental. "Some of those teachers would treat me like I was stupid. When I

wasn't understanding the concepts of the subject, they were talking about. (Shannon)"

Desired Relationship Characteristics

Interview Question Three sought to gain suggestions on how the educational

process could be improved from the perspective of the participants. Their suggestions

were grouped according to academic characteristics, environmental characteristics, and

interpersonal characteristics. The participants provided a total of 33 suggestions; six

academic characteristics, seven environmental characteristics, and twenty interpersonal

characteristics. Interpersonal characteristics were often related back to positive high

school experiences and significant relationships. Desired characteristics were chosen as

conditions the participants would like to see whether or not they could be a reality. The

desired academic characteristics should be personal, worldly relevant, and grounded in

tradition.

Agnus stated that the ability to received one-on-one help would be an essential

academic characteristic. "Help me one-on-one with the specific question that I needed

and/or with a few."

Charlie has a desire to have it exciting and related to real life. "Find ways keep it

interesting." "Mix it up a few more real-world applications to things."

Ralph equated education and academic characteristic to the concept of the buffalo. Various quotes state that education is the new buffalo. Ralph articulated this concept and importance for Indigenous people.

…they said the new Buffalo had become education. You know I thought

that was interesting because as I went through my education, I saw what

they meant because without Buffalo you know; men and women because

it was a purpose finding that Buffalo to support the family but without

the buffalo, they would look to war to destroy themselves. (Ralph)

Participants approached environmental characteristics in terms of how they provided space for social interaction and support. Jackie desired an official space where he could "talk to an elder, the elder's office and chat them up …". While Agnus preferred a space where students would be able to work in quiet away from distractions, "Because if there are other people talking and beside me and they started a conversation, I would get distracted and would go off track, off of the main subject." When Agnus was asked to describe her ideal environment, she stated, "It's a Fresh Start." Ralph's and Shannon's desired characteristic concerned space for cultural and ceremonial events. Shannon stated, "I think I would add like programs that would accommodate cultural … where they can express themselves as individuals."

The participants' responses regarding interpersonal characteristics were grouped into two main themes, direct supports, and manner of approach. Agnus stated that she would like individual support in gaining an understanding of her assignment then private time to work on the rest once her understanding was adequate. She indicated this with "Help me one-on-one with the specific question that I needed and/or with a few. And

then I would be getting my work done, and then I go sit alone..." Due to Agnus's pregnancy, she felt her needs were more complex than most teenagers. Life complexity was a theme of others, but Agnus stated: "One (teacher) that would understand more because I'm kind of very complicated, especially with school." "They'd like sit down listen to my story, to kind of understand that."

Charlie focused on equality and being adaptable, "For the most part I would say you treated everyone (the) same, but I can't speak for every interaction, but of course every situation is different. Kind of got to play by ear."

Jackie stated that when adults approach students, they should be 'straightforward.' "I think they should approach them with good intent like knowing how to address them in a certain way, like ask them their name, or where they're from." This approach aligns with the general inquiry of nistaweyhtakosiwin, the three basic questions of: what is your name, who is your kokum (Grandmother), and where are you from? Nistaweyhtakosiwin seeks information as to one's identity, in order to proclaim one's identity, one needs to know oneself. In answering the questions of what is your name, who is your kokum, and where are you from, you are stating that you know yourself that you have an identity separate from others.

Ralph focused on the concept of respect. "Whether it be respect for someone above you or someone below you or someone who walks beside you, respect is very important key aspect." The concept of respect was evident in Ralph's desired approach to relationships.

…establishing positive relationships; just talk with them, because that's about as simple as it can get. Because just can't look around and hope

things go okay, you got to introduced yourself, you talk with them asked

them questions… Because communication is like the basic as far as

relationships go. (Ralph).

Shannon desired characteristics address both personal contact and the cultural

context of those contacts. "For me, it's all about how they greet you. First impressions are

very important." Once past the introduction, Shannon indicated that teachers should be

prepared for cultural differences.

To expect either a cultural shock or something, don't know like just to be

open-minded. Don't try to treat everybody as one; everybody is no

individual. Be willing to learn about that student and make (sure) they

are comfortable about their own identity within this opening. (Shannon).

Enquiring as to who 'they' were, Shannon expanded that this applies to both teachers and

students.

Both. That they shouldn't be afraid like you are also human beings, you

have your own values, and the teacher should respect that and not see

you can't do that here or that. Anything like that be open-minded, don't

try to put everybody in one suitcase. (Shannon).

Shannon stated that teachers "should probably like learn more about ethnic

groups, like First Nations or at least read a book or even a newspaper something or

anything just to get like some sort of mindset that's going to be different." Given the

opportunity to help set up a high school, she would:

…try put that in my own school, friendly teachers, I would actually try to

get … teachers of individuals (not) just hire anybody based on the

curriculum. Are you treating their students the way they should be

treated or just putting up this wall to get in here and get money? Most

high schools (are) very iffy sometimes. (Shannon)

While there were anticipated responses to the individual interview questions, the use of the Responsive Interview Method (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) produced additional codes that, while not surprising, were not expected. While adult-student interactions are the concept upon which this study is based, this code identifies interactions outside the teacher-student environment. The participants entered high school and transferred high school programs with a personal expectation of the new environment; some of those expectations are identified by what was not present in their experiential stories. Just as participants had expectations, they also faced challenges. Some of those challenges involved internal conflict, which developed into a code. The participants shared stories of support, program philosophies, Elders, teachers, and ceremonies.

Adult-Student Interactions

While experiences and relationships have been addressed previously, the code of adult-student interactions addresses the more casual aspect of those interactions. Nevertheless, as casual interaction, they hold a significant impact. Participants shared 16 stories of adult-student interactions.

Agnus perceived she was treated like every other student despite her pregnancy and raising a child as a teenager, "teachers really didn't care that I was pregnant." When adults inquired as to her well-being or that of her child, she expressed appreciation.

…to some of my teachers, it did make a difference, they push (a) little bit

harder. And they would ask about my child. And in the school, we were

good, in like relationships were good, the conversations we had we

would be having regular conversation, not like teacher to a student it

would be person-to-person… (Agnus).

While Agnus stated she needed and appreciated being pushed to do more and better, she also had her limits; "there are people, and I'm one of those people, that if you pushed me too much, I'm going to be like, then I don't care, don't want to."

Charlie, while stating he did not take some interactions personally, was still bothered by them.

(T)hey pulled all the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students out of class

brought us together. Don't know exactly what it was, but what it sounded

like was: we know you're not going to do great, if you need help you get

a hold of us. Which personally, I got a little hurt by it, as I was top of the

class at that point, but I didn't take it to personally as a general statement.

But you, I don't think it should have been brought across that way.

(Charlie).

Jackie was appreciative of the adult motivation he received in high school, yet the intrinsic motivation of graduation went beyond.

…my brother passed away, and I had it really rough that year. I wasn't

able to graduate that year. The teachers motivating me to come back and

just pushed; pushed me to get my high school diploma, and it really

helped me, and it was really helpful as my brother's name is on a plaque

too of all the graduates, and I wanted to put my name beside him. And

now, my name is right beside him, and it's a big accomplishment.

(Jackie).

This incident could be classified as family honor and accomplishment, while not coded for it held significant value for Jackie.

Ralph was impacted by the sense of belonging extended by the entire staff.

I had teachers that were Native and teachers that were Métis, and there

were other people in the building that did odd jobs here and they

custodial staff or the maintenance workers or the lunch people; everyone

in the school had a good sense of camaraderie between everybody…

(Ralph).

While most participants related adult-student interactions from their direct personal experiences, Shannon shared her observations of adults interacting with other students. Sharing these stories after the fact appeared to agitate Shannon.

A lot of the First Nation students and like a lot of teachers gave us a

rough time. Especially the disabled youth that are First Nations as their

rooms were beside ours, and we see how they treat them every day. It is

really horrible; they were a younger brother that is mentally disabled, and

we had to go to the school because it was the only school that offer that

that kind of support … for First Nation students." (there was) this one

girl, she's First Nation girl. She'd always have a meltdown (in) the

middle the hallway, and they would just treat her like she was a crazy

person on the street. They would block it off and tell everyone to go

away, and they get upset and frustrated with her and wouldn't try to calm

her down. (Shannon).

Other interactions were not as publicly visible, but to Shannon, they were culturally

inappropriate; "this one boy had a braid, they would always touch it, and you're not

supposed to do that, they would always grab him by his hair. Try to get his attention. It's

very like concerning." Shannon's concern extended to the cultural responsibilities some

young people have to their family and communities.

That's what something I wanted to add. I thought it was very important

because that happens a lot to students. Something important happens at

home, we were told to deal with it on her own time, not during school

hours, and they wouldn't let us leave. When I would say I need to take

these days off, they would say you can't, and I would say well I have to

and if we did, (they) would put our names … on the bottom of the list

and they wouldn't really care anymore; while she's like skipping all that.

When it was important, they would think it was an excuse to leave, and it

wasn't. (Shannon).

Challenges

High school and relationships, in general, are beseeched with challenges, the

participants in the study each had their unique challenges and obstacles to overcome.

Agnus's challenges revolved around her status as a pregnant teenager and a single mom.

It was hard, having to be pregnant at 14, going into grade 10, and

study(ing) was hard, keeping on track, always distracted from taking care

the baby, in trying to mix my teenage life with it too. …the pregnant was

really hard on me growing up because I was still a baby myself, and just

the maturity that came with it. (Agnus).

Jackie was challenged with the death of his brother and trying to complete high school,

"…my bother passed away, and I had it really rough that year. I wasn't able to graduate

that year." Ralph suffered the same challenge as he moved through junior high school,

You could imagine the mindset that I was in at the time. So, this, some

there were some pretty dark days, while I was in junior high. I didn't

really feel looking forward to anything … I was lost for a time then like

emotionally, mentally, I just coasted through from day-to-day. You know

just getting the things done that needed to be done, just focused on my

study and focused cleaning up around the house. But it was like I was on

autopilot for a time there. (Ralph).

Just as junior high challenges impacted Ralph, Shannon was still experiencing adverse

memories from earlier experiences.

I notice a lot of high schools like spaces where you have to fit this profile

to be here. Which is a very bad way to run high school, but it's true, does

happen like that. Especially, Dance and Drama high school, if you can't

dance, sing or draw, you're not welcome. (Shannon).

Expectations

The transition to high school is filled with expectations, expectations of self,

others, and the new programs and schools. Participants shared a total of eight

expectations they had of their high school experiences. Agnus expected to be treated

differently because of her teenage pregnancy, but such was not the case; "they treated me like the same, same teenager but even though I was pregnant."

Charlie's expectations of his academic standing changed.

I got into the advanced placement program. I always did well in school

and then you know big fish in a small pond, me into a big pond, and I

wasn't so special in my own eyes as I wasn't top of the class any more

than my grades slipped a bit, yeah and (I) lost interest with it. (Charlie).

Ralph's expectations were of individuals outside his Indigenous-based high school.

It surprises me to meet anyone who doesn't know anything about the

culture or whatever happened, and its surprises them just as much to see

that many Native kids in the school or that many Native teachers

teaching. (Ralph).

Shannon set expectations for others. "To expect either a cultural shock or something, don't know like just to be open-minded. Don't try to treat everybody as one; everybody is no individual."

Internal Conflict

High school can be a time of conflict and uncertainty; "drama" as Agnus put it. Often this conflict revolves around youth exploring their individuality; however, some of the participants experienced internal conflict as they journeyed through high school. Agnus had difficulties establishing relationships with her teachers, as it required some effort on her part to engage them, "It was weird because I'm kind of a teacher's pet; that's why…" Charlie's expectation that he would continue to be a high flyer created internal

conflict when he discovered he was a small fish in the big pond, causing him to lose interest in his studies.

> I always did well in school and then you know big fish in a small pond,
>
> me into a big pond, and I wasn't so special in my own eyes as I wasn't top
>
> of the class any more than my grades slipped a bit, yeah and lost interest
>
> with it. (Charlie).

Internal conflict was related to the expectations that participants experienced. The internal conflicts appeared to be the result of personal and community expectations. While only four stories of internal conflict were shared, they held significance for the participants. For Ralph, his internal conflict was self-betrayal, "Cause with the whole 60's scoops, residential school, I kind of thought I was like I was betraying some part of myself taking part in… public schools."

Shannon experienced internal conflict at three levels, personal, family, and community. Shannon's internal conflict was in asking for assistance, "lot of students are like that in school. They just won't speak up when they're afraid, they just sit there and struggle and struggle, like that." Shannon's commitment to her family and her position as Elder's helper, resulted in conflict when these duties required her to not be in school.

> Something important happens at home, we were told to deal with it on
>
> her own time, not during school hours, and they wouldn't let us leave.
>
> When I would say I need to take these days off, they would say you can't,
>
> and I would say well I have to and if we did, we would put on our name
>
> should be put on the bottom of the list and they wouldn't really care

anymore, while she's like skipping all that. When it was important, they

would think it was an excuse to leave, and it wasn't… (Shannon).

Shannon's compassion for others, especially ethnocultural minority peers, also created an

internal conflict for her.

(I) felt really bad for them because of something they have to do and a lot

of them to respect that way, and some would even do it (pray towards

Mecca) in the hallway but be … made fun of, it's stressful to see that.

(Shannon).

Supports

The participants were appreciative of the different supports they received while in

high school. The supports that participants received were directly related to adult-student

interaction and positive relationships. Participants listed 25 individual experiences of

supports they had received. The majority of these supports involved relationships and

one-on-one interactions. Agnus related the personal supports she received to individuals

motivating her to complete her high school.

They really helped me get through to realizing I do need my diploma and

just stick to it. That comes my way and get through. So, my teachers

were really supportive of me being a student and a mom at the same

time. They are still pushing me. (Agnus).

Jackie expressed a similar appreciation for the motivational support he

received from teachers.

Every time when I would drift away from my classes and stuff, they

would come to me and sit me down and say my education is very

important and motivate me and encourage me to getting my high school

diploma. (Jackie).

Jackie stated an appreciation for the cultural supports that he received and participated in.

…I got more into my culture, going to sweat... They would ask me to

sing, I guess the dance and stuff, they know I know how to sing, they

asked me to be more involved in the school." "(T)hey offer me

counseling, and I would go and talk one-on-one with the counselor there,

I got really close to them and got a lot of support. (Jackie).

Ralph expressed a similar appreciation for the cultural supports he received in

high school, especially the opportunity to speak with Elders. "…once I started getting

into my culture and everything, I started seeing things in a new perspective. And I spoke

to a couple of Elders and who have really helped me not see things as is." Ralph went

further in expressing his gratitude for the support he received.

…having those things available really helped out, and I was fortunate

enough for the school that I went to because I honestly believe if it wasn't

for my cultural aspects at home and if it wasn't for the adults that were at

my school that were helping me, helping me stay on the right path,

there's probably (a) good chance I wouldn't be here talking to you right

now. Because I'm a Native male, and just the statistically speaking, I

should be in jail or dead by now. (Ralph).

Shannon stated appreciation for the cultural aspects of her high school as well.

They would have sharing circles. They … would take one class (placing

classmates) in a circle, and we just talk either all day, one block, or how

comfortable we were with sharing what. If we were having struggles at

home and after that, we would have a closing ceremony for us, smudge, a

song. We would go on with their day. Yeah, the Elders and teachers

would always take the time, once a day, once a week to talk to us, not as

students but as people with their own lives… (Shannon).

Shannon was appreciative of the cultural awareness of her teachers and staff and how

they would help her with her academics while she addressed traditional responsibilities to

her family and community.

When I told my teacher, they were like okay, you take care, that when

you come back, we'll catch you up and when they did that, I just felt

more at ease, not stressed out when I'm just trying to take care of

something important back home. (Shannon).

Not all supports provided to the participants were appreciated; Charlie related an

incident of the district Indigenous support staff failing to meet his standards and needs.

(T)hey pulled all the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students out of class

brought us together. Don't know exactly what it was but what it sounded

like was we know you're not going to do great, if you need help you get a

hold of us. Which personally, I got a little hurt by it, as I was top of the

class at that point. But I didn't take it too personally as a general

statement. But you (know), I don't think it should have been brought

across that way." (Charlie).

Themes

The interview questions were intended as a means for participants to share their experiences and stories of high school. It is within those shared stories that elements of the youth-adult relationships in high schools were revealed. Each interview question revealed unique aspects of the Indigenous youth's high school experience as shared by the participants. Various themes emerged for the analysis. The first theme to emerge was relationships. This theme of relationships embraced the categories of desired relationship characteristics, adult-student relationships, expectations, and significant relationships.

For the most part, participants reported positive relationships, specifically with adults who motivated them to complete their high school education. The participants shared stories of appreciation when adults, teachers, counselors, or Elders talk to them as individuals of worth. Adverse incidents that were shared were based on stereotypes of Indigenous student and their communities.

The participating youth indicated that respectful conversations were the beginning of positive relationships. To enquire about youth as persons of value and worth who have active lives outside of school. The adults should have a basic knowledge of issues impacting Indigenous communities and urban Indigenous youth

Participating youth suggested that the actions that would indicate what adults know about relationships would be how they conduct their conversations with youth, how they learn more about the youth in their classroom and school. The ways that adults address Indigenous youth and how they interact with them, the mannerisms they project during those interactions, were all noted as indicators of what adults know about establishing relationships with youth.

All youth spoke to conversations being the way to start relationships. As Ralph stated, "establishing positive relationships; just talk with them because that's about as simple as it can get… Because communication is like the basic as far as relationships go." Shannon felt that teachers "should probably like learn more about ethnic groups, like First Nations or at least read a book or even a newspaper something or anything…" While not explicitly stated, conversations indicated that Elders are a valuable resource and source of information in coming to know more about traditional Indigenous culture.

Challenges emerged as a second theme. It included challenges that the participants experienced with adults and systemic regulations during their high school experiences. As well, internal conflict was identified as a challenge. Shannon dealt with the conflict of school policy and adherence to cultural protocols, while attending a non-Indigenous-based high school she described the situation as follows:

> (When Shannon was required to help out with ceremony) they were all
>
> that's not important, it has nothing to do with here at school, so they
>
> (would) just treat it like it was nothing. Yeah. That's was something I
>
> wanted to add, I thought it was very important because that happens a lot
>
> to students. Something important happens at home, we were told to deal
>
> with it on own time not during school hours and they wouldn't let us
>
> leave. When I would say I need to take these days off, they would say
>
> you can't and I would say well I have to and if we did… they wouldn't
>
> really care anymore, well she's like skipping all that. When it was
>
> important, they would think it was an excuse to leave and it wasn't.
>
> (Shannon)

Ralph dealt with the internal struggle of self-betrayal to himself and his ancestors.
"Cause with the whole 60's scoops, residential school, I kind of thought I was, like I was
betraying some part of myself taking part in public schools." Residential School or more
precisely Indian Residential Schools involved the forced removal of children from their
families and home communities; as previously noted the last Government sponsored
Indian Residential School closed in 1996 (Anglican Church of Canada, 2018a). As
pervious described the 60's scoop was a period during the 1960s when Indigenous
children were removed from their families and placed with non-Indigenous caregivers
(Winston Hrechka, personal communications, 2011, a survivor of the 60's scoop).
The third theme of supports emerged from across participants' responses. Supports took
various forms from extra academic attention and mentorship to how adults responded to
the need for cultural protocol and ceremony. Agnus stated appreciation for the extra time
and flexibility in completing her academic work:

> Yeah, they would make time. They would give me a little more time than
>
> the others to get the assignments done in like a day not like a whole
>
> another week, like that so. And then with the school sometimes would be
>
> hard for me to stay in class. So, I would go to kind of like a Fresh Start
>
> room, so it was like in the school but not inside classroom. We would just
>
> go there and get work done, talk and socialize at the same time. Where the
>
> teacher would be, hey do you need help right now need work or are you
>
> going to work by yourself? Like that. (Agnus).

Ralph voiced appreciation of the access to traditional Elders in the school
who were able to support him on his high school journey; "whenever I would be

looking, having my head down or just carrying myself like moodily throughout the day, you know the elder at the school will come by and asked me to talk to them in the traditional room."

Support of cultural protocols was most significant for Shannon.

(T)hey would allow us to take and participate in ceremony especially for the youth boys. The ones that are in lower grades, grade 8, and all that. They offer morning singing; coming in the morning during your prayer and for the girls. They would offer us different ceremonies to partake from school like sweats and pipe ceremony. We were allowed to express ourselves, our background, some of us were Sioux, Cree, Dene and they did have white teachers there, but they were understanding. They took the time to actually learn about our culture and to be respectful of it and know the boundaries of what to say and what not say. Our principal accommodate(d) everybody, if we needed new medicines (traditional) he would organize a field trip for us to go pick it, outside of the city. (Shannon).

These three themes, while part of the overall high school experience, are more generally grouped around the concept of relationship. In addressing the realities of Indigenous youth within the contexts of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Unicef, 1989), the *United Nation's Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2008), and the *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action* (TRC, 2015a), relationships are critical.

Summary

Starting from the original research question, "What do the lived experiences of Indigenous youth, attending urban high schools reveal about youth-adult relationships in these high school settings in a metropolitan center in Western Canada?" results indicate that relationships are complex yet relatively simple. Indigenous youth stated a desire to be addressed and treated as individuals who have value and worth. In addition to the anticipated categories of high school experiences, significant relationships, and desired relationship characteristics, other categories emerged. Coding revealed the following unanticipated categories, adult-student interactions, challenges, expectations, internal conflict, and supports.

The categories, predetermined and emerging, were grouped into three themes. The theme of relationships is composed of the categories of adult-student interactions, desired relationship characteristics, expectations, and significant relationships. Challenges included internal conflict were identified as the second, while the third theme is supports. Overall, these themes address various aspects of relationships between Indigenous youth and adults within the high school setting.

Hearing and sharing the stories of youth is one thing, but what do those stories have in common, and what do they tell us about the relationships between Indigenous youth and the adults they work within an urban high school. In the next chapter, the participants' stories and shared experiences will be discussed in terms of what the literature currently tells us.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study gives voice to marginalized, racialized, and minoritized Indigenous youth (Cavanagh, 2009) as they shared stories of their high school experiences within urban Whitestream high schools in Western Canada. The stories of lived experiences and voices of urban Indigenous youth regarding their high school experiences have not been recorded nor reported to the educational community.

The self-identifying Indigenous youth participating in this study shared their individual stories, which formed basis for the collaborative story. Conducting authentic dialogue with Indigenous individuals requires a method familiar to them. Storytelling is a form of information transfer involving traditional lessons or personal experiences. Storytelling as a method of inquiry aligns with Indigenous Research Methodologies (Bishop, 1999; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008). Storytelling and yarning need to take place within a relaxed, non-judgmental environment (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010); an environment of miyopimâtisiwin, good relations, or living. All but one of the interviews were held in a third space (Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015).

Interpretation of the Findings

In soliciting Indigenous youth to participate in this study, several obstacles were encountered, the least of which were research protocols and requirements imposed by the partner educational jurisdictions assisting with recruitment. Youth, while voicing interest to be involved in the study, appeared to be hesitant to participate. After presenting several information meetings and contacting over 30 individuals, only five Indigenous youth chose to share their experiences and stories. This situation could be a continuation of the suspicion of the colonial history and nature of the educational system in Western Canada.

As participant Ralph stated, "Cause with the whole 60's scoops, residential school, I kind of thought I was like I was betraying some part of myself taking part in … public schools." The silencing of youth compounds the internal conflict of self-betrayal; Shannon voiced this silencing thusly: "lot of students are like that in school, they just won't speak up when they're afraid, they just sit there and struggle and struggle, like that." The source of this fear was not explicitly identified but appeared to be grounded in relationship or lack thereof. Shannon articulated this with her experience of seeking assistance with her learning: "Some of those teachers would treat me like I was stupid. When I wasn't understanding the concepts of the subject, they were talking about." Even when succeeding, participants felt their efforts were disregarded. Charlie described this interaction when the jurisdictional Indigenous support team addressed him and other Indigenous youth at the high school he attended: "…we know you're not going to do great, if you need help you get a hold of us..."

Reflecting on these stories, it is conceivable that this study was viewed as another attempt at silencing Indigenous youth or appropriating their voice despite my commitment to the contrary. This hesitation may be a continuation of the second wave of student voice research (Ruddick et al., 1996). Minoritized, racialized and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009) are not hearing their voices and thus perceive they are being silenced by the voices of the dominant ethnocultural population. This situation continues the perceptions of Robinson and Taylor (2013) in that when students do not adhere to the dominant ideologies, their voices are silenced. While the study attempted to have the voices of urban Indigenous students heard, the continuation of this perception of silence no doubt played some part is attracting participants.

While previous studies have used online surveys (Alberta Gov't, 2010; Rector-Aranda & Raider-Roth, 2015) to solicit responses from youth, current Indigenous Research Methodologies (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Bishop, 1999; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008) indicated that face-to-face communications are more authentic. One individual requested a SKYPE interview; however, this method of interviewing was not considered and, therefore, not an approved method of data collection. Another asked if they could record their answers to the scripted questions and submit the file; this offer was declined as it would have limited the depth of conversation inherent in face-to-face interviews. As all youth and adults become more adept at using communication technologies, perhaps future studies of this nature should pursue digital communication and collection methods.

Czerniawski (2012) indicated that trust is a necessary element in having an authentic dialogue with youth. Individuals who participated came to the interview knowing about me from other individuals; initial contact had been brokered by individuals known to both parties. Perhaps as this is the first study to seek the voices of urban Indigenous youth, there was hesitation to be involved due to uncertainty of relationship and trust, despite the assurance of anonymity and that their voices would still have authenticity. Informing potential participants that their voices and stories would be reduced to a collective common experience may have decreased the desire to be involved as individual voices disappear. Individual reviews and feedback of the collaborative story indicated that it authentically reflected the stories shared and collected, thus providing credibility for the process.

The hesitation of potential participants to be involved in the study resulted in a change of research protocol, moving from initial sharing circle/focus groups with individual interviews to just conducting individual interviews with participants. The participants appeared to appreciate the opportunity to share their stories and experiences in the intimate setting of an individual interview. The single, one-off individual interview also required less of a time commitment; this may have been a contributing factor in recruiting participants. In agreement with Clarke et al. (2011), the voices of some groups are not only difficult to hear but also challenging to listen to, in that those voices are untrusting of the current ethnocultural and educational establishment.

In the initial analysis of the shared stories, it was as if Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Nel Noddings (2005) were sitting at the table. The participants requested relationships with adults that are based on authentic communication between individuals. Participants echoed the findings of Oskineegish (2015) and Stelmach et al. (2017); they requested that adults wishing to establish relationships with Indigenous youth be openminded, engage youth in conversation as equals, and address them as individuals with value and worth. Indigenous youth wish to establish relationships immersed in mutual respect and appreciation for each other's situation and circumstance. In sharing their stories, the participants indicated instances when they perceived a relationship of being 'cared for' as individuals and not just another student (Noddings, 2005).

The colonial history of Canada and its foundational presence in Canadian Whitestream education are still detectable to youth who have had no direct contact with Indian Residential Schools or experiences of the 60's scoop. The 60's scoop was a period

during the 1960s when Indigenous children were removed from their families and placed

with non-Indigenous caregivers. Children were removed using many questionable

methods. Some children were placed in foster care while others were adopted out

(Winston Hrechka, personal communications, 2011, a survivor of the 60's scoop). While

one participant, Ralph, spoke of the impact of Indian Residential Schools and the 60's

scoop impacting his involvement with public education, others spoke about the

educational approaches between "regular schools" and "Native-based school." The

concept of Indian Residential Schools was discussed in Chapter 2. The women

participants, Agnus and Shannon, spoke of being made to feel stupid when seeking

clarification of teachings. This is similar to the experiences of many Residential School

survivors. They imparted stories of harsh treatment for not being able to speak English or

having difficulties comprehending concepts with which they had no familiarity (the late

Gerry Wood and the late Narcissus Blood, personal communications, 2011, Residential

School survivors).

In conversation with the participants, relationships were established in that they

became more comfortable in responding to not only the scripted interview questions but

the probing questions of the Responsive Interview Methodology. They spoke of how they

felt during various interactions with adults and their observation of how adults interacted

with others. In sharing her experiences and observations, Shannon was noticeably moved

by her recall of the incidents. She was not alone in this response; each participant

exhibited discomfort with various incidents shared during the interviews suggesting that

negative experiences linger. Despite his comment on the incident not bothering or hurting

him, Charlie nevertheless was still impacted by the statement made to him and the group

of Indigenous students by the Indigenous support team members. Their presumptive preordained failure an apparent continuation of the deficit approach, as described by Shields et al. (2005).

Members of the dominant Whitestream society predict this situation; however, the jurisdiction that Charlie was enrolled in prides itself with the fact that their Indigenous support workers are Indigenous themselves. Such occurrences would indicate that dominant Whitestream consciousness is still alive and well in education, despite the inroads made by Indigenous scholars and educators. The increased number of Indigenous content professional development opportunities made available to the educators in the metropolitan area of the study speaks to the continued need for knowledge and awareness of Indigenous concerns and issues. While professional development is required, listening to the voices of Indigenous youth, educators, and scholars are still very much in need of Indigenous themed professional development, as pointed out by Battiste (2013). Reconciliation as described in the *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action* (TRC, 2015a) requires dialogue and understanding by all parties involved

Busher (2012) established four concepts regarding student voice; of these, three were indicative of the shared stories. First, each participant has a unique perceptive and individualist story affirming that there is no single student voice. The collaborative story constructed from the participants' shared experiences are used to bring a common story to the discussion; it does not represent each participant and their unique experiences. Secondly, participants were motivated and encouraged to succeed when their teachers and school adults engaged them in respectful and authentic conversations as equals

having value and self-worth. Thirdly, participants made suggestions for improving the educational experiences of other Indigenous students that revolved around the knowledge of teachers regarding Indigenous histories, perspectives, and interactions between adults and Indigenous youth. The Indigenous youth who participated in this study voiced their desire for systemic change that provides opportunities for them to be successful within the educational systems without losing their ethnocultural identities.

The participants stated an appreciation for the adults in the schools who treated them with respect and dignity. Agnus exemplified this sentiment in contrasting how teachers at the Fresh Start program treated her as opposed to teachers in regular school programs. The Fresh Start teachers were considerate of her pregnancy and made allowances for it, in terms of timelines and where she was to complete her assignments. They inquired about how things were going in her life. In this approach, these teachers came to relationships of care regarding their relationship with Agnus (Noddings, 2005). Shannon contrasted the teachers in the Whitestream high schools with the Native-based school and found the staff of the Native-based school to be more accepting of her desire to pursue an education that adhered to traditional values. Enrolling in the Native-based school, Shannon indicated that she appreciated the cultural content of the school. Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) would describe this as immersion in ethnoculturally responsive pedagogies. Ralph and Jackie echoed Shannon's appreciation.

The high school, Shannon, Ralph, and Jackie attended was Native-based, one would suspect that ethnoculturally responsive pedagogies and strategies would be the norm, and therefore the high school would be more accurately described as an alternative program. The school delivers a program based on the Cree philosophy of

miyopimâtisiwin (good living); however, students attending the school claim other First Nation identities. Shannon, Ralph, and Jackie identified as Stoney or Lakota, and yet they indicated they were respected and appreciated for the different Indigenous perspectives they brought to the school.

This study lies between the findings of Hare and Pidgeon (2011) and Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010), as well as corroborating the findings as Stelmach et al. (2017). Lewthwaite and McMillan found that teachers who incorporated Indigenous knowledge into their teaching and sought out collaboration with the community were able to established positive relationships with students, even while they maintained high expectations for their students. Hare and Pidgeon determined that if teachers remained outside the community and adhered to a strict Whitestream educational model, relationships failed to form. Stelmach et al. (2017), while not addressing teacher residency, found that positive student-teacher relationships were established when master teachers were respectful and caring towards their students. Within an urban metropolitan area, it is difficult to become truly immersed in the local community unless residing within the area. Many educators, including myself, reside in communities at a distance from those in which they teach and work. Residential distance does not in itself prevent relationships with youth from forming. Participating youth in this study stated that being approached as individuals of value and worth, being addressed with dignity and respect were critical to establishing relationships. Participants did not indicate if where teachers and school adults reside was of any significance. They were concerned with the interactions with the adults in their schools and those coming in to support them.

Even when adults pushed the participating youth to do more or achieve at a high level, they appreciated the efforts. Jackie credits the pushing, the encouragement, and the motivation provided by teachers as foundational to his achieving high school graduation. These findings are in alignment with those of Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) and Stelmach et al. (2017). Lewthwaite and McMillan found that the Inuit students in their study felt teachers were caring for them when the students were held to a high standard of performance; when the teachers pushed them. Stelmach et al. found that students perceived teacher expectations as a demonstration of teachers caring about their students. This speaks to the concept of 'caring for' rather than just 'caring about' (Noddings, 2005). This situation was mirrored by Agnus, when she was experiencing distraction from her academic work, "So, it was they were quite understanding and would push me if I needed it." Jackie voiced a similar appreciation of being pushed; "The teachers motivating me to come back and just pushed; pushed me to get my high school diploma, and it really helped me…"

This is not to suggest that the findings of this study are in opposition to what Hare and Pidgeon (2011) found in their study of Indigenous youth attending on-reserve and off-reserve schools. Shannon provided several examples of racist and discriminatory remarks and behavior directed towards herself and other Indigenous youth while attending Whitestream high schools. She also commented on how supportive the teachers were at the Indigenous-based high school she attended, not making any distinctions about the ethnicity of those teachers. Ralph and Jackie attending the same Indigenous-based school found all the teachers, First Nation, Métis, or White, to be supportive and understanding of the realities of Indigenous urban youth. This supportive nature would

suggest that adults who have knowledge and appreciation regarding the lived realities of Indigenous youth are more able to establish relationships.

These findings echo the studies of Ladson-Billings (1994/2009) and Gay (2010); in terms of ethnoculturally responsive pedagogy. When educators are aware of the lived realities of their students and make efforts to include that reality into their teaching practice and relationship building, students perceive adults as moving toward relationships of care (Noddings, 2005). The 'caring for' provided by various adults encountered by each of the participants was described as appreciated and motivational.

Shannon talked about speaking to principals about issues that concerned her. At the Whitestream school when she voiced her concern for the treatment of other Indigenous students, she was told that the adults involved were trained to handle such situations, the dismissal was still heard in her voice and words. However, when she suggested that she could share her skill of sewing and making regalia with others, the principal at the Indigenous-based school was supportive and empowered her to establish a group. This same principal demonstrated an understanding of traditional ceremonial protocol and responsibility even though he was not Indigenous. Shannon expressed feelings of empowerment. The opportunity to speak with traditional Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers was critical to Jackie and his completion of high school.

These adults, non-Indigenous and Indigenous, confirm the findings of Bishop and his collaborators, (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, 2009; Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop et al., 2014) that Indigenous youth desire and require opportunities to express themselves to compassionate adults who listen with respect and dignity.

Limitations of the Study

Several factors impact the overall trustworthiness of the study; however, this does not distract from the importance or potential impact of this study to Whitestream education in Western Canada. The stories shared by the participants and the resulting collaborative story are representative of Indigenous youth in Canada, as they align with the stories told by other scholars of adult interactions with Indigenous youth (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Iwasaki, 2015; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Smyth & Robinson, 2015; Stelmach et al., 2017).

Credibility

In order to recruit participants, the data collection protocol was changed to involve only face-to-face interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. From the stories and experiences shared by the participants, the collaborative story was constructed. The collaborative story was, in turn, emailed out to the participants, at the email addresses they had provided, to ensure authenticity with the request to advise if changes, additions, or deletions needed to be done. None of the participants responded to the email; however, a chance meeting with Agnus provided an opportunity to ask her directly. Agnus stated that she felt the collaborative story accurately reflected her contribution, and she was appreciative that it included the diversity of the participants. She stated that it contained and expressed her voice. While there is no direct evidence to suggest the other participants feel the same way, there is no evidence that the collaborative story does not reflect their stories. The lack of feedback may be an artifact of dealing with youth as they continue on with their lives.

Transferability

As previously stated, stories shared by Indigenous individuals are uniquely theirs and are not to be taken as representative of others' experiences. The collaborative story belongs to me and the individuals whose stories it is based on. Thus, the collaborative story has transferability just as the collaborative stories of Māori youth assembled by Bishop (1999) and others (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop et al., 2003). The audience of educators whom this research is aimed at will find commonalities not only in the stories shared but, in the events, and incidents shared as well.

Dependability

There is no standard set of interview questions for a study of this nature. The initial interview questions were based upon the instruments used by other scholars in their collection of data from youth, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous (Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Butler et al., 2015; Flower et al., 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Horn, 2015; Kennedy, 2011; Lagana-Riordan et al., 2011; Lewthwaite et al., 2015; Smyth & Robinson, 2015). Dr. Dwight Harley, Director of Psychometrics, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta, reviewed the research question and the related discussion questions of sharing circle/focus group instrument (personal communications, May 14, 2018). The feedback from Dr. Harley resulted in the expansion of Question 3 to include the sub-questions, which resulted in a more in-depth knowledge of how students perceived the establishment of adult-student relationships. The sharing circle/focus group questions were used as the interview questions when establishing sharing circles become not only impractical but impossible to host. Interview questions one and three of this study were similar to focus group questions one and four used by Stelmach et al. (2017).

The Stelmach et al. study was not available during the construction of the data collection instrument.

Confirmability

Use of the Indigenous Research Methodologies acknowledges that the researcher cannot be an objective observer or reporter. This situation is not to say that objectivity was not attempted, only that it is not achievable. In constructing the collaborative story, I became immersed in the shared stories and what was identified as common among the stories. Unfortunately, in the creation of a common story, some unique and individual aspects are lost. The collaborative story was shared out to the participants using the contact information that each provided at the time of thier interview. The one response back concerning the authenticity of the story was very positive. Agnus, the responding participant, was very appreciative of the accuracy of the collaborative story and how it reflected her thoughts without singling her out. It is only hoped that the other participants feel the same way and that as the story reflected their contributions without change, they felt no need to reply.

Coder Reliability

Following Wilson's (2008) lead to approaching research as ceremony, coding of the participant interviews took on a higher order of accountability. Coding needed to be consistent not only between interviews but within; this required repeated analysis to ensure that predetermined and emerging categories reflected the stories and experiences of the participants. Approaching the task with a good heart and intentions (the late Jerry Wood, Urban Edmonton Elder, personal communication, June 2011) demands that coding and analysis result in a collaborative story that is reflective of each participant's

experiences. There must be an accurate depiction of those experiences, and authentic construction of the collaborative story so that all participants see themselves in it.

The Collaborative Story

The three themes of relationships, challenges and supports formed the basis of the collaborative story. The following is the story as it was shared with the participants.

High school is a time of change and challenge. Youth experience influences from inside and outside the strict school experience. External and internal factors, such the death of siblings, pregnancy, cultural obligations, and adult-student interactions, influence how youth react to school happenings. Within the school environment adult-student interactions and relationships are the most impactful. This impact is not limited to direct experience but also the observation of how adults interact with other youth.

Youth desire to be treated with respect, to be addressed as individuals with value and worth. This is demonstrated by direct communication, talking with youth, not at them or through them. Taking the time to get to know them on a personal level, to find out what is important in their lives. Communication goes beyond words to how adults use body language and mannerism when talking with youth. Following cultural protocols is an influential factor when interacting with youth who are attempting to adhere to a traditional value system.

Providing supports to youth in an appropriate and respectful manner, cognizant of individual circumstances while still maintaining academic expectations is critical. Creating opportunities and provisions for attending traditional cultural ceremonies and meeting family obligations not only instill a sense of worth and wellbeing but forms the basis of understanding leading to relationship. Adults are able to motivate youth when

they explain what is required and how it will impact the future of youth. Real life experiences and occurrences increase the personal learning of each individual. Recognizing the unique challenges that Indigenous youth face and creating effective supports to meet those challenges adds to the establishment of positive relationships. Respect and authentic communication are the foundation of good relationships.

Recommendations

There are many other voices to listen to. While the voices in this study are loud, there are few of them. Additional research concerning the shared experiences and stories of urban Indigenous youth need to be collected and shared. Given that there are only two other Canadian studies to include the voices of Indigenous youth regarding high school teacher-student relationships, there is ample room for this area of Indigenous student voice to be investigated.

The voices of Indigenous youth are not the only ones in Canadian schools to be listened to. There are many communities of minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009) who are not part of the Whitestream dominant ethnocultural society. Their voices, no doubt, have unique stories and experiences to be shared. As more Canadian newcomers enter into Whitestream high schools and the educational system in general, their unique histories and needs will require addressing. Many originate from former colonial holdings; however, this does not mean they share the same history as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Their experiences may be similar, but each will have an individually unique perception and story to share.

As Canadian educational jurisdictions respond to the *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action* (TRC, 2015a), distinctions will need to be made

in how Indigenous concerns are to be addressed. Soliciting the stories of Indigenous

youth and young adults can assist educational leaders to develop programs that more

effectively address the unique learning requirements of future generations of Indigenous

children. Battiste (2013) stated that for Indigenous concerns to be addressed, they must

be articulated; the stories of urban Indigenous youth can contribute to this articulation.

Additional stories, from youth like Agnus, Charlie, Jackie, Ralph, and Shannon, can

provide trustworthy information for the weaving of traditional Indigenous values into

school programming and perhaps even provincial curriculum. The establishment of

Native-based schools, as described by Jackie, Ralph, and Shannon, may increase the

success and graduation rates of urban Indigenous youth who wish to pursue an education

immersed in traditional values while aligned with Whitestream academic requirements.

Perhaps part of the hesitation of Indigenous youth to participate in the face-to-face

interview process could be the research project itself. As Fleming (2013) pointed out,

unless the youth are involved at the onset of the project, it is just another event where

adults wish to hear from youth without consideration of the foundations of their

involvement. In this way, the study is a continuation of the consumerism of youth voices

for the benefit of others, not the youth themselves. Future studies will need to consider

this perception and make design and protocol decisions to overcome what may be a

genuine barrier to the authenticity of student voice.

In seeking the voice of youth, other scholars have used other methods. Bertrand

(2014) suggested that a third space be set up, space neither occupied by the students nor

the educational leadership or, in this case, the researcher, this was the reason behind

using the local Indigenous service agency's business office after hours. While providing

the required third space, this space required participants to deviate from their regular daily routine. Potential participants who resided on the west side of the metropolitan area expressed feelings of dread in going to the east side. To allay these fears offers to meet at locations convenient to westside individuals were made, but none accepted the offer. Perhaps the establishment of third space within the daily environment of Indigenous youth would yield greater participation.

Methods involving anonymous online surveys (Rector-Aranda & Raider-Roth, 2015) have been used to engage youth. However, in engaging minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009), complete anonymity is not entirely possible. Just as confidentiality while strived for may not be achieved with this study due to the small participant pool. Online surveys also lack the level of interaction needed to elicit the stories of youth as each question is static. Other methods of social interaction need to be explored; potential participants made inquiries to use SKYPE or other methods of remote internet-based communication technologies. A request was received to video record responses to the interview questions and submit those. While effective use of time for the participant, it lacks the interactivity of the Responsive Interview Methodology and thus eliminates the ability to seek and gain deeper understandings of shared experiences.

The use of collaborative storying (Bishop, 1999) is a relatively new method for working with minoritized, racialized, and marginalized youth (Cavanagh, 2009). In the combining of common elements from the individual stories of the participants, I was able to present a common narrative that educators can review and reflect on. This method not only provided an additional level of confidentiality but can present information that may be somewhat disruptive to not only participants but potential audiences. As noted, this

method of reporting data aligns with Indigenous Research Methodologies (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008). As the number of Indigenous scholars and the number of studies being conducted with Indigenous populations increases, research methods that seriously consider Indigenous requirements for engagement need to use these methods.

This study continues the use of storytelling and yarning as a method of data collection (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Bishop, 1999; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Stelmach et al., 2017; Wilson, 2008), additional studies should incorporate this method of inquiry to align with Indigenous Research Methodologies. The application of the Responsive Interview Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) aligns with Indigenous Research Methods. The method is also useful in collecting more in-depth data during interviews; as a method of conversation, it is similar to storytelling and yarning, producing a safe and relaxed environment that facilitates the sharing of experiences. These methods have proven effective with Indigenous youth. They have a widespread ethnocultural application, and it is recommended that they be used when seeking the lived experiences and stories of other minoritized, racialized, and marginalized populations (Cavanagh, 2009).

Implications

Positive Social Change

The use of collaborative storying (Bishop, 1999) and Indigenous Research Methodologies (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999/2008; Wilson, 2008) in this study will encourage their use as research involving Indigenous populations increases. Collaborative storying will allow multiple voices to be heard in a single comprehensible narrative. This single narrative is not to silence the contributing voices but to make those voices more

accessible to the listeners. As the listeners have a single story to reflect upon, they can envision how that story mirrors their experiences. Individuals who have similar experiences can point to the collaborative story as a means to open the conversation. Through the sharing of the collaborative story constructed from this study, Canadian educators and educational leaders will have the opportunity to reflect upon their practice and how it serves the unique and complex realities and needs of Indigenous youth across Canada's urban centers.

The participants shared their stories in the hope that Whitestream educators and leaders might hear them and reflect upon their practice. All the participants either completed high school or are working towards completion; they hope that youth who may be at risk of being left behind or disengaging might be the beneficiaries of their sharing. As the process of education becomes student-focused, the voices of youth will need to be heard and responded to.

SD1 is experiencing an increase in the number of Indigenous youths who complete high school with the support of the Graduation Coach Initiative. This initiative is an example of increased relationships as graduation coaches assist Indigenous students in navigating the Whitestream educational system. This success, based in relationship, stands as an example of what participants requested to be involved in, authentic relationships of care where they are addressed and treated as individuals having dignity and worth.

By reflecting and applying the findings of this study to their everyday practice, educators can increase their instructional and relational effectiveness. Moving from

relationships of 'caring about' to relationships of 'caring for' (Noddings, 2005) may take some effort, but as the participants of this study have indicated, the rewards are worth it.

Methodological and Theoretical Implications

The collaborative story is in alignment with Native Theory (Eketone, 2008) in that it presents the situation as experienced by the participant, laying no blame. Native Theory seeks to find balance and work towards the correction of inequitable relationships. Native Theory focuses on the changing relationships that work towards equability. As Native Theory enters the mainstream of ethnoculturally diverse research, the antagonistic status of Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory will decline. Reconciliation is a process of healing for all parties. Reconciliation cannot occur through blame and forget strategies, where the oppressor once apologizing assumes that the events of oppression can be forgotten and removed from recorded history. Reconciliation will only occur when all parties come together and seek a mutually respectful future unconnected to the past. As we move deeper into the postcolonial era, Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory will give way to Native Theory and the balance it seeks. Native Theory will not disregard the past but will work towards an equable future that can be agreed upon by all.

This study fulfills the attempt to bring forth the voices of Canadian urban Indigenous youth into the realm of student voice. While other voices have dominated the conversation, this is the first time the voices of Canadian urban Indigenous youth have been sought out. There are other urban Indigenous voices the need to be heard. The participants in this study were successful in achieving high school matriculation but what do the story of others tell us; those who have not completed high school, those who were

pushed out, those who were called away by other responsibilities, those are the voices to be heard and listened to. Future studies similar to this one need to involve the still unheard voices and unshared stories of many Indigenous youths.

Conclusion

The youth who participated in this study have spoken loudly and clearly that they appreciate positive relationships with adults in high school. Relationships based on equitability between individuals, where each party addresses the other with respect and dignity. Ralph emphasizes the importance of respect "One thing it's very important among every living thing, every living being is respect." Urban Indigenous youth desire conversations with adults who talk to them as individuals possessing value and worth. Conversations that go beyond the subject matter of school to make inquiries of life outside school. Agnus described this as understanding, "They'd like sit down listen to my story, to kind of understand that. Where I'm coming from..."

Extending the desires of the participating youth, they seek miyopimâtisiwin, the living of a good life. A life based on relationships, relationships, not only with other humans but all things in the environment. To practice miyopimâtisiwin is to have good relationships with all things. (Robinson et al., 2005). For true reconciliation to occur in our schools, miyopimâtisiwin needs to be the goal of all involved, students, teachers, and educational leaders. Indigenous youth are not seeking to change the systems in any dramatic way, only how the system and the beings within the system interact with them. As Ralph stated, "…communication is like the basic as far as relationships go."

The relationships described by the participants of this study, like those of other studies involving Indigenous youth (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Lessard et al., 2014**;**

Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Stelmach et al., 2017), fall into two categories positive and negative. Neutral relationships do not exist, for if the interaction is neutral, neither party has reason to engage to the point of a relationship. Negative relationships exhibit racism, bigotry, and discrimination. When school adults establish relationships of expectations, care, mutual respect, encouragement, support, and concern with Indigenous youth, those youth feel motivated to attend school more regularly, to achieve at high levels, and have greater feelings of self-worth as they are treated as individuals having dignity and value.

Indigenous youth continue to experience ramification of Canada's Indian Residential School history as well as the 60's scoop. Ralph, while confident in his being, was still affected by this internal conflict; "… with the whole 60's scoops, residential school, I kind of thought I was like I was betraying some part of myself taking part in … public schools." Until these issues are addressed by not only the Whitestream educational system but Canadian society in general Indigenous youth will continue to experience the specter of Canada's colonial past.

The characteristics that Indigenous youth are requesting from the Whitestream educational system are the same things all human beings desire; respect, open communication, and acknowledgment that every individual has value and worth. The question that education is left with is how to achieve this? How does a colonially based educational system change to embrace all students, teachers, and communities? If educators and educational leaders listen to Indigenous youth with an open heart, they will find that the goals being worked towards are the same. With a good heart and a good

intent, all undertakings are conducted rightly in the eyes of the Creator (the Late Jerry

Wood, Urban Edmonton Elder, personal communication, June 2011).

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Question 1: Would you please describe your overall perceptions of high school?

Question 2: Please describe your relationships with adults in the high school(s) you attended?

Question 3: Please describe what you would like the adults in your high school(s) to know in order to establish positive relationships with students.

a) What actions would tell you about what adults know about relationships with students?

b) If adults wished to increase their knowledge about establishing positive relationships with students how should they do that?

Question 4: Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion that has not been addressed?

Appendix B: Invitation Notice

Stories for Schooling:
What do the stories of Indigenous youth
reveal about youth-adult relationships in high school settings?

A research study exploring the lived experience of youth-adult relationships among Indigenous youth attending urban high schools in a metropolitan center in Western Canada is being undertaken in the Edmonton metropolitan area. The study seeks the participation of individuals who self-identify as First Nation, Métis or Inuit and are attending or have attended a metropolitan Edmonton area high school within the last five years. If you are interested in participating, an information meeting will be held ***month, day, year***, at 7:00 pm in the boardroom of the ██████████████████████████████, Edmonton, AB.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:
- Participate in a sharing circle/focus group addressing four questions. The sharing circle/focus group discussions will be video recorded to ensure that what you say is accurately recorded; you will be asked to sign a model release allowing the video and audio tracks to be used for research purposes and presentations to educators where appropriate.
- You may be invited to participate in an individual interview to expand upon statements made in the sharing circle/focus group.

If you are interested in attending the information meeting, please contact Ken Ealey at ██████████ or ████████████████████

Appendix C: Guidelines for Talking Circles

Talking circles are based on the sacred tradition of sharing circles. People leading a traditional sharing circle will have a blessing from an Elder to do this, and will use special prayers and sacred objects in the ceremony.

The purpose of the less formal talking circle, used as part of classroom instruction, is to create a safe environment in which students and participants can share their point of view with others. In a Talking Circle, each one is equal and each one belongs. Participants in a Talking Circle learn to listen and respect the views of others. The intention is to open hearts to understand and connect with one another.

- Participants sit in a circle. The circle symbolizes completeness.

- Review ground rules with participants. For example: – Everyone's contribution is equally important. – State what you feel or believe starting with "I-statements," e.g., "I feel …" – All comments are addressed directly to the question or the issue, not to comments another person has made. Both negative and positive comments about what anyone else has to say should be avoided.

- An everyday object such as a rock or pencil is sometimes used as a talking object.

- When the talking object is placed in someone's hands, it is that person's turn to share his or her thoughts, without interruption. The object is then passed to the next person in a clockwise direction.

- Whoever is holding the object has the right to speak and others have the responsibility to listen.

- Everyone else is listening in a non-judgemental way to what the speaker is saying.

- Silence is an acceptable response. There must be no negative reactions to the phrase, "I pass."

- Speakers should feel free to express themselves in any way that is comfortable; by sharing a story, a personal experience, by using examples or metaphors, and so on.

Our Words, Our Ways (2005) Alberta. Alberta Education. Aboriginal Services Branch and Learning and Teaching Resources Branch. *Our words, our ways: teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners*. Obtained from https://education.alberta.ca/media/3615876/our-words-our-ways.pdf

The above protocol will be modified to facilitate a focus group format. The focus group format will approximate the process used for classroom instruction. The following modification will be made, but others may be needed as the process unfolds.

- As with any sacred circle, a safe, welcoming environment is required.

- Sharing of personal stories is the objective of the circle not group understanding of a set of issues. It is hoped that a greater appreciation of individual experiences will be a result, but that is not the goal.

- While passing or non-response is acceptable, participants will be encouraged to share their experiences, as this is the purpose of the gather.

- As with all gatherings based on traditional protocol, food will be served as a gesture of hospitality and reciprocity.