

2017

Culturally Responsive Teaching of Indigenous Students in Canada's Northwest Territories

Francis Amprako
Walden University

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Francis Amprako

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Review Committee

Dr. Felicia Blacher-Wilson, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Gary Lacy, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Andrew Thomas, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University

2017

Abstract

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Territories

by

Francis Amprako

MS, Walden University, 2010

BSc, University of Cape Coast, 1988

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

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May 2017

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry was to describe the teachers' perceptions of pedagogy and examine their cross-cultural strategies regarding culturally responsive teaching of K-12 students. Indigenous students of the Northwest Territories (NWT) face academic challenges in a Eurocentric educational system. Tribal critical race theory and Eurocentric diffusionism provided the conceptual framework in this study. Six participants were interviewed and their narratives were triangulated by a 5-member focus group. The research questions focused on the teachers' strategies for building bridges between the Eurocentric and Native ways. Participants were interviewed and their responses created individual stories, which added to the meaning making. Fifteen themes were identified using open and axial coding. The findings showed a teacher proclivity for pedagogy infused with Indigenous thought, and an understanding that residential schooling was intrusive to Indigenous life. Participants presented an anti-Eurocentric diffusionist stance, advocating for schooling that matches Indigenous life and is devoted to a dynamic home-school culture directed at closing the achievement gap with the rest of Canada. This study contributes to social change by providing supporting evidence for the need to involve Indigenous students in the development of their education.

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Dedication

To the two most important women in my life, my late mother, Emelia Ewuraekua Lucy, the wife of my father and mother of my beloved brothers and sisters; and my dear wife, Angela, the mother of my children who has been so supportive throughout this journey.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Felicia Blacher-Wilson, Dr. Gary Lacy, and Dr. Cheryl Keen for their guidance and support throughout my studies at Walden University and during the research phase. Thank you to Dr. Halkias and Dr. Jayasena who introduced me to qualitative thought. I would also like to acknowledge the sacrifices of my family through my doctoral journey, F-Louis, Emily-D, and Angela. When these great people read or hear of the completion of this work, the very first morning when they hear the rooster crow they will remember it is me saying thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study	3
Problem Statement.....	12
Purpose of the Study.....	12
Research Questions.....	15
Conceptual Framework.....	16
Nature of the Study.....	17
Operational Definitions.....	19
Assumptions.....	22
Scope and Delimitations	22
Limitations	23
Significance of the Study	23
Summary and Transition.....	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	26
Literature Search Strategy.....	30
Conceptual Framework.....	31
Summary and Conclusions	65
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	68
Research Design and Rationale	69

Role of the Researcher	74
Methodology	76
Participant Selection Logic	77
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	79
Instrumentation	80
Data Analysis Plan	83
Issues of Trustworthiness	86
Ethical Considerations	88
Subjectivity Statement	89
Agreements and Consent	90
Summary	90
Chapter 4: Presentation of Results	94
Setting	96
Demographics	97
Data Collection	99
Data Organization	103
Part I: Restorying the Lived Experiences of Participants	104
Integration of Focus Group and Individual Interviews	204
Part II: How The Findings Were Analyzed	244
Analysis Source: Participants	248
Analysis Source: Focus Groups	277
Evidence of Trustworthiness	294

Summary	295
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	296
Themes Derived	297
Interpretation of the Findings.....	298
Narrative from the Responses –A Restorying Process.....	301
More Narrative from the Responses –A Restorying Process.....	308
Further Piecing Together Their Words: A Restorying Process.....	313
Limitations of the Study.....	318
Recommendations for Action.....	320
Recommendations for Further Studies.....	321
Implications for Social Change.....	322
Conclusions and Reflections	323
References.....	327
Appendix A: Questions Matrix and Protocols	363
Appendix B.1: An assembly of students in a residential school.....	367
Appendix B.2: A before and after photo of a residential school student.....	368
Appendix B.3: A year photo of Canadian students.....	369
Appendix B.4: An assembly of students in a residential school.....	370
Appendix B.5: Permission For Using B.1 and B.2 Photos.....	371
Appendix B.6: Permission For Using Sir John Franklin School Photo.....	372
Appendix B.7: Permission For Using Appendix B.2 Photo.....	373
Appendix B.8: Interview Protocol for Focus Group.....	374

Appendix B.9: Skype Interview and Schedule with Participants and Focus Group.....375

Appendix C: Participant Invitation Letter.....376

Appendix D: Superintendents’ Letter.....377

Appendix E: A Screening Form for Participants and Focus Group.....378

Appendix F: A Permission Letter from Education, Culture and Employment.379

List of Tables

Table 1. Participants' Years of NWT Experience	98 .
Table 2. Details of First Round Interviews	101
Table 3. Details of Second and Third Rounds of Interviews	102
Table 4. Five High-frequency Themes.....	245
Table 5. Five Medium-Frequency Themes.....	246
Table 6. Five Low-Frequency Themes.....	247

List of Figures

Figure 1. Percentage development of children NWT- rest of Canada.....	5
Figure 2. Student performance at Alberta Achievement Test--NWT and Alberta.....	6
Figure 3. Performance of high school graduation for NWT and Alberta based on whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.....	7
Figure 4. Graduation rates for provinces and territories --ECE (2015c) Factsheet.....	8
Figure 5. Data analysis flowchart.....	85
Figure 6. From personal diary, changing and being changed.....	93
Figure 7. A tree map of codes compared by number of coding references.....	248

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The physical travels of the past, the comforts of the present, the promises of the future and waiting, people. “Where do we come from, where are we going...?” We sang on stage, and the audience listened and for a while, lost in admiration, they applauded. The song was about the old empires of Kumbi Saleh, Gao Moshe, Dagomba, Jenne’ ... and a people traveling in time by some stream referred to as River Volta; from North to South it runs. At a point, it waters the farmers’ fields, at another point ...until at another point; it is restrained by a dam to supply hydroelectric power. But the state of our being holds so much promise and with such we move on. The Promise of a new country; the becoming of Ghana.

Personal Diary, 2 April 1983

Growing up, I desired that economically disadvantaged people will make it, and bid farewell to difficult days of the past. This idea followed me even into my career as a teacher. I have been a natural ally of all people who are working to better their lot. In Canada’s Northwest Territories (NWT), formal education has been uneven and exists in a context of mistrust, marginalization, and cultural discontinuity. Teachers of the NWT consist of a population of non-Native educators mainly from other provinces of Canada. Often teachers from a different cultural background may experience difficulty in their attempt to influence students. Several scholars affirm that teachers remain the most important in-school influence on students and their achievement (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, Pickering, Pollock, 2001; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges 2004).

For K-12 students in the NWT, the saying of a renowned African educator and

sage, Kwegyir Aggrey, seems appropriate: “only the best is good [enough]” (as cited in Ephson, 1969, p. 8). Students grapple with deeply engrained manifestations of marginalization of past policies such as language deprivation and disregard for culture and residential schooling. The educational leaders in the NWT continually seek to correct the mistakes of the past. With the government’s inclusive education initiative, accessibility is being increased to all Indigenous people (Government of Northwest Territories, 2016). Education requires a calibration to suit the epistemological requirement of Indigenous cultures. It could be easier for Canada’s Aboriginal Indigenous teachers who have similar Indigenous background to achieve this than non-Aboriginal teachers. The prevailing situation of low availability of Native teachers leaves the only option is obtain more understanding of what the available cross-cultural teachers do as educators charged with the task of creating knowledge with the Indigenous students. Obtaining high-quality teachers for Indigenous students is difficult in a system that has been historically and systematically calibrated to disadvantage people who have been marginalized through previous generations (Canada Human Rights Commission, n. d.; Dantley & Tillman, 2012). Teachers of the NWT, in carrying out their educational mandate, ought to be heard and understood, and their input should be interpreted and advanced as a matter of social change. The attempts made at adjusting contemporary Indigenous education in an era of education renewal and change (Education, Culture, and Employment, 2013) will form the core of current and future educational discourse in Canada.

This chapter includes the problem statement, purpose, significance, conceptual

framework, and research questions that guided this study. I explain the research tradition and its rationale and present definitions of important terms. I also describe the assumptions as well as the limitations and significance of the study.

Background

There continue to be issues of gaps in educational attainment and achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada (Gordon & White, 2014). Research studies have consistently provided evidence of a connection between Indigenous poverty and completion of high school (Kitchen, Hodson, & Raynor, 2012). The need to modify the current educational system to suit Native sensibilities and culture is an ongoing concern and shall be the determinant of any success of NWT education (Munroe, Borden, Orr, Toney, & Meader, 2013). Other scholars have supported the need for what Battiste termed *decolonization* (Battiste, 1998; Dion, Johnston & Rice, 2010). Among Indigenous youth, there is a suspected barrier to high school completion. There is a need to investigate the causes of student dropout, which appears to be associated with this problem (O’Gorman & Pandey, 2014). Battiste (2009) called for the reclaiming of Indigenous voice in educating the youth. Such a move would advance needed ownership by Indigenous students.

Government of NWT teachers are mainly of European ancestry. As of December 2014, Indigenous Aboriginal teachers numbered 103, Indigenous non-Aboriginals 13, and non-Aboriginals 377 in the Northwest Territories Teachers Association (NWTTA) (GNWT official, personal communication, July 15, 2015). Immigration into Canada from all continents is ongoing (Canadian Immigration and Citizenship, 2017). Although some

teachers are immigrants or first generation Canadians, the ancestors of some of the teachers in Canada may have been part of the supposed perpetrators of the residential school ideology purported to have been the source of abuse and marginalization of Indigenous peoples (Stanton, 2011). Children were sent away from home to distant schools, and the speaking of the mother tongue was banned. The curriculum is seen by Indigenous students as Eurocentric and anti-Indigenous. Indigenous Peoples mainly see contemporary education as a continuation of the era of residential schools (Elder, personal communication, June 20, 2015). People do tell stories as a way of life (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The mainly European cross-cultural teachers may have stories to tell about how they carry out their work and experience culturally responsive education.

In tests comparing the Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures of children who are behind in two areas of development, the NWT had a score of 35.7% while the rest of Canada had 25.4%. For one area of development, the score was 21.2% and 12.4% for NWT and the rest of Canada respectively, as shown in Figure 1.

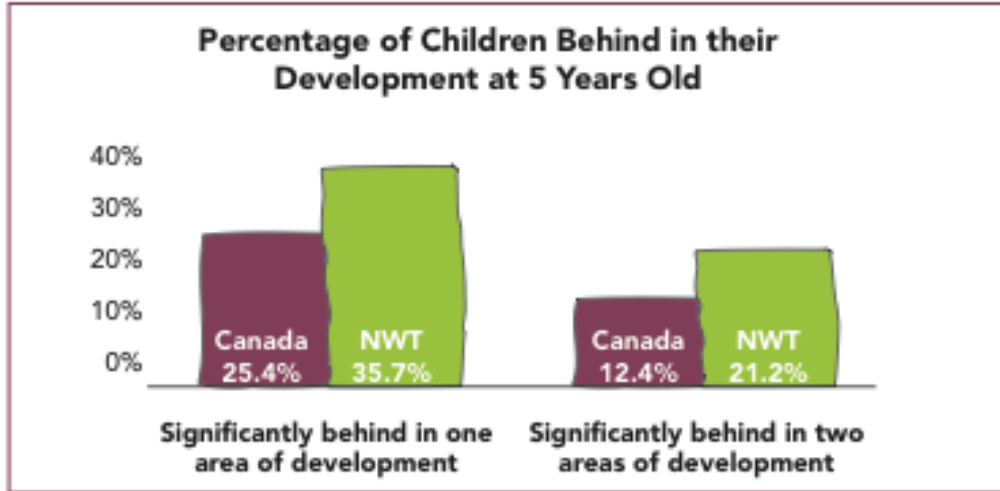


Figure 1. Percentage development of children of NWT compared to the rest of Canada. Excerpted from ECE's Education Renewal and Innovation from ECE (2013)/EDI.

Additionally, the Alberta Achievement and Graduation (AAT) performance for students at or above the acceptable level of English language arts scores for 2012 revealed low average scores of 41% for NWT schools compared to 82% for neighboring Alberta Province covering Grade 3. There was an even lower NWT score for Grades 9 as shown in Figure 2 (ECE, 2013).

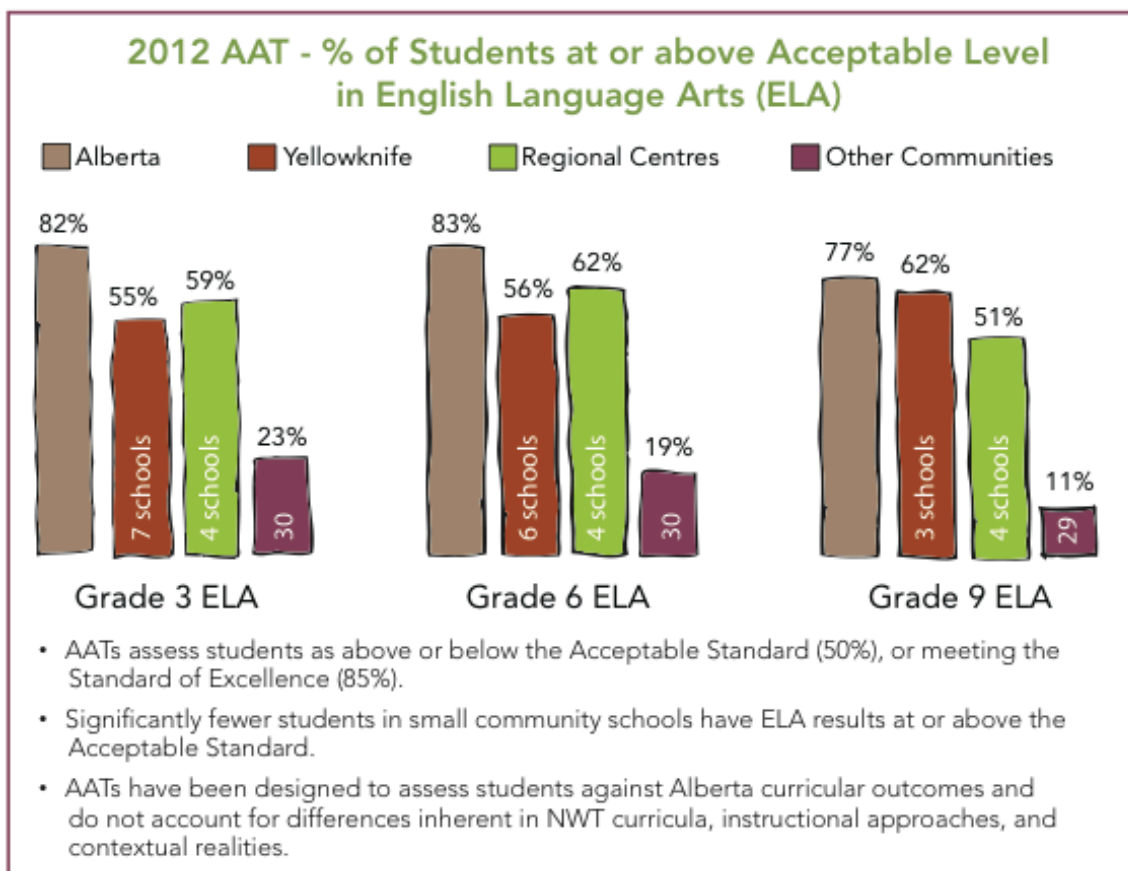


Figure 2. The performance of students on the Alberta Achievement Test for NWT and neighboring Alberta. Excerpted from ECE's Education Renewal and Innovation from ECE (2013).

The graduation rates from 2006 to 2010 present a picture of the acceptable level of English language performance for NWT compared with Alberta, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

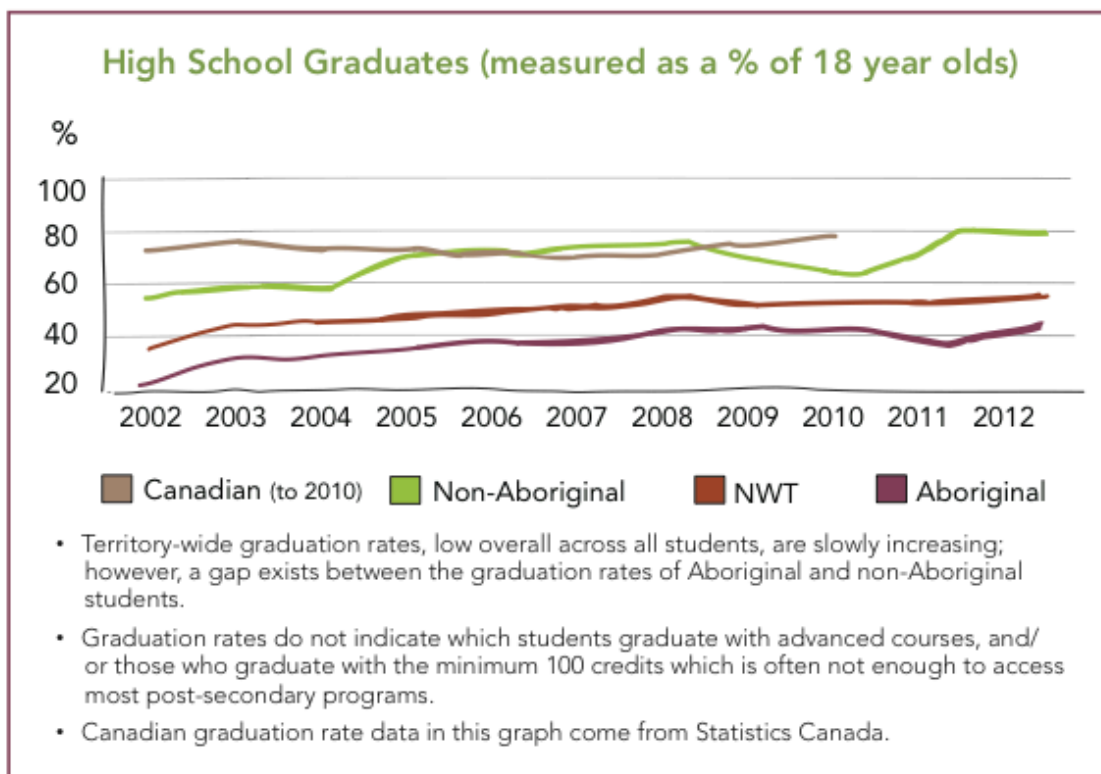


Figure 3. A 10-year performance of students at high school graduation for NWT and Alberta based on whether Aboriginal or Non-Aboriginal from ECE (2013).

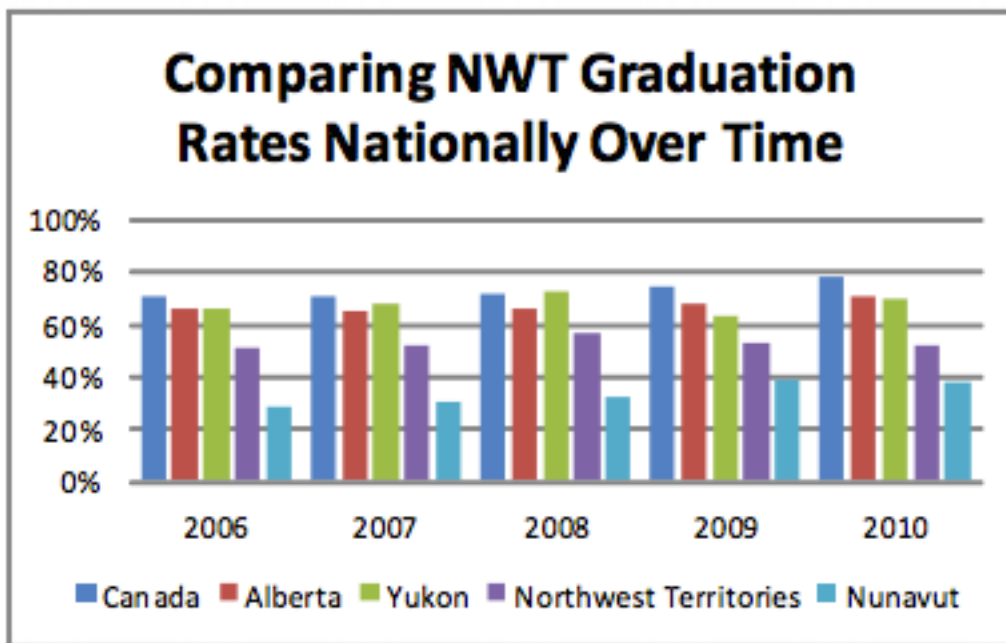


Figure 4. A comparison of graduation rates among provinces and territories from ECE (2015c) Factsheet.

Since the end of the residential school and the establishment of schools in almost every Native settlement in northern Canada, the problem of cultural bias in schools was presumably solved, but the extent of dropout and the existing achievement gap tell a different story. There has not been a robust study devoted to the challenge of education for Northern Indigenous Canadians. This study was needed to establish an understanding of how six non-Indigenous teachers experience their teaching lives in the north of Canada. Findings from the study may be used to update the NWT curriculum.

Given the gravity of the statistics about high school graduation rates among Indigenous populations in the NWT, teachers could play an important role in the needed change in the educational process. They face the challenge of reversing the trend of high dropout rates and low high school graduation rates. This study addressed the teaching

experiences from the teachers' perspectives, which could inform future policy and advance teacher efficacy in promoting student learning and success (Education, Culture, and Employment, 2011).

Jeffries, Nix, and Singer (2002) defined educational disengagement as “a slow and deliberate progression towards a student’s inability to flourish in the educational environment” (p. 43). Educational disengagement is an attribute of northern Indigenous student life. Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) and the National School Climate Council (2007) posited that disengagement can have a direct connection with safe school climate. Davison and Hawe (2012) referred to educational disengagement as worrisome as it was linked to school health.

Current cross-Canada Indigenous governing structures such as the Chiefs of Ontario have identified that the pedagogical approach used by teachers is critical in preserving Indigenous languages and cultures and in effecting a needed influence on the Indigenous student (Kitchen, Hodson, & Raynor, 2012). With the NWT particularly affected by forces of cultural discontinuity (Deer, 2013; Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment, 2011) and low educational attainment, engaging, drawing from, and equipping teachers with culturally responsive teaching skills seems necessary if the prevailing achievement gap in NWT is to be bridged. Further, NWT students are required to choose a cultural mix lying somewhere along the continuum of the culture of their homes and the culture of their schools and teachers. Learning difficulties result, which lower high school graduation rates of NWT students (Education, Culture, and Employment, 2015c). Attempts to ensure cultural continuity are crucial for NWT student

success. Teachers partner in the successes or failures of Indigenous students because there is a professional expectation of them to do so (NWTTA, 2015).

Teachers who teach in the mostly isolated northern regions of Canada have attributes of dedication, commitment, and care regarding the successes of NWT students (NWTTA, 2015). Considering the existing achievement gap between NWT students and the rest of Canada, such attributes are justified. The Education, Culture, and Employment (ECE) (2013) has made a compelling argument for the need for change in the NWT as substantiated by the AAT results for third, sixth, and ninth grades between NWT and neighboring Alberta Province. Particular mention may be made of NWT communities as well as the NWT territorial capital, including the regional centers and small rural communities of the NWT as shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The 2011 National Household Survey reported 1,836,035 people with Aboriginal ancestry (5.6% of Canada's population). In the Indian Register there are 901,053 Registered Indians living in Canada. About 47.4% of the First Nations live off reserve and 52.6% on reserve and in communities on Crown land (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2014)

In the jurisdictional areas of the schools in North Canada, Indigenous K-12 students tend to operate from a more dominant and stronger home-culture-school-culture differential, to distinguish them from Indigenous students of South Canada (O'Gorman & Pandey, 2015). Home culture has a more powerful, noticeable influence over the students of the North. Teachers of First Nations students confront the task of seeking best ways to undo the influence of the effects of previous dealings with First Nations culture-sharing groups by the Canadian government. These teachers come from the dominant

group of Euro-Canadians with diverse cross-cultural orientations. How NWT teachers handle this cultural disparity and ensure that students meet the targeted learning outcomes of the curriculum was the core issue of this study. The unique learning needs of Northern Indigenous students require cross-cultural teachers to apply culturally sensitive pedagogy in curricular implementation (Raas, 2012).

Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) used the expression “funds of knowledge...to refer to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). There are funds of knowledge to indicate the presence of barriers and tensions in schooling and graduation in North Canada, which tend to place an extra responsibility on educators to work for students (O’Gorman & Pandey, 2015; Toulouse, 2013). There is reasonable suspicion that current student performance has been affected by a historical predisposition, intergenerational influence, and the effects of Canada’s residential schools (Elder in Hamlet, personal communication, March 2015; ECE, 2011). With a graduation rate of 65% trailing the national average of 78%, graduation rates of students from NWT high school must increase by at least 13% to meet the Canadian average (ECE, 2015). As a treaty right, the schooling of Indigenous peoples requires an effort to ensure the removal of low self-esteem and substance abuse, as well as manifestations attributable to the history of their culture-sharing groups (Carr-Stewart, 2009).

From a capacity point of view, predominantly cross-cultural teachers who are also mediators of the two-worlds concept (Kitchen et al., 2012) could exhibit more educational capability brokered through sustained (TKI/Te Kete Ipurangi, Education for

Sustainability, 2015) cultural continuity. Mitigating educational disengagement among Northern Indigenous youth would reduce their dropout tendencies (Seidman, 2005). Teachers of Indigenous students remain the single most powerful change agents in nullifying the achievement gap. The teacher can narrate best how students undergo change (Kegan, 1994), the challenges of low attainment, notwithstanding. NWT teachers could ensure an update of current research literature regarding teaching Indigenous students in a culturally responsive way. Though several scholars have addressed the dropout rate of Indigenous students, limited research has been done on the culturally responsive teaching by cross-cultural teachers in the NWT.

Problem Statement

Students in the NWT tend to be challenged in their schooling. Circumstances contributing to this struggle include students coming from a First Nations culture, teachers coming primarily from another culture, and the disconnect between cultures. No one has invited teachers to describe their experiences providing culturally sensitive education in the NWT.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative study was to describe, analyze, and retell the story presented by six cross-cultural teachers of K-12 Indigenous students in the NWT. The restorying activity focused on certain aspects of the data to identify themes used to make meaning of the story. The way teachers mediate their cross-cultural background while teaching culturally responsively curricula was central to the study. The study provided an opportunity to learn from these educators and to present a clear picture of how they cope

with and experience the phenomenon of educating students of a different background in a culturally responsive manner. I sought to explore the meaning of the six teachers' individual experiences through their narration. Insights from the study could be a source of educator best practices for beginning teachers. Findings may expand existing understanding of the way cross-cultural teachers use culturally responsive teaching to support the education mandate. Other provinces tend to have low Indigenous student populations but have more teachers of their culture and so do not have the same cultural discontinuity as in the NWT. Teachers in the NWT face the challenge of having to match the way they teach with the culture of students and make formal education more attractive to their Indigenous students. The study revealed stories told by teachers from different cultures to address this challenge.

Teachers mediate the content of their culture, the culture of the curricular documents, and the culture of the Indigenous students in their instructional approaches. Learning could be achieved more effectively if teachers considered the Indigenous students' perspectives, generated intercultural dialogue, and embraced the background of students (Munroe et al., 2013). The narratives of teachers were restoried as propounded by Clandinin and Connelly (2004) and Riessman (2008). The research provided a thick, rich description (Patton, 2002) of how teachers who are predominantly Euro-Canadian and cross-cultural engage students as they carry out their classroom work. Storytelling through narrative inquiry was the most appropriate approach to explore the experience of teachers of Native students. Cross-cultural teachers' have a unique function of teaching an ethnic group as they broker Indigenous culture and their culture along with the

curriculum.

Clandinin's (2013) concepts of an image makes narrative inquiry more concrete. For one teacher the image of "classroom as home" embodies professional and personal experience and its expression in classroom practices and the participation in community life. Such images emerged as teachers provided different stories to describe their professional identities (Elbaz, 1983) and practices. Later researchers added the element of personal and private experience to serve as the platform for the image (Clandinin, 1986). The question remained as to whether the teachers' personal, practical knowledge connected with their previous experience and ongoing work with their students. The results from this study not only portrayed the potency of a Kovach (2010) conversation but also borrowed from Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism to link the context of the conversation and exchange resulting in the process of the interviews. The study provided an opportunity to produce meaning in accessing the point of view of the six participants and the focus group. It was a way to examine the NWT mandate of educating Indigenous students by exploring the experiences of cross-cultural teachers.

The Hawthorn Report (1967) explained that "children on reserves may have had rich experiences in the culture and language of their group. However, this early experience, rich as it may be, has not prepared the child for school routines and activities" (Hawthorn, 1967, p. 109). Additionally, several reports from the Auditor General of Canada indicated the present challenges that impede educational achievement (Auditor General Report, 2000, 2004, 2013/14). These problems fall under social health and economic order and tend to impede students' success in school (Drummond &

Rosenbluth, 2013). Negative results in educational output may persist if the education of Indigenous students is intergenerational, land based, narrative-related experiential, and transferred from one generation to the other (Villegas, Neugebauer, & Venegas, 2008). Agbo (2004) mentioned the inadequacy of the Euro-Canadian teacher in attending to the needs of the First Nations children, referring to the attempt as a classic failure. Similarly, the Canadian Education Association (CEA) Report of 1984 indicated the inadequacy of non-Native and non-Indigenous teachers for this purpose as they have little understanding of the lifestyles and values of Indigenous peoples. Teachers and counselors who are Native would be ideally suited to the needs of the student, but the non-Native teacher who is available is not adequately prepared to deal with the existing cultural and linguistic differences. There is, therefore, a need for extra work in establishing the performance and influence of the cross-cultural teacher.

Narrative inquiry facilitates the understanding of experience in studying the participants' stories. As a methodology, narrative inquiry allows researchers to shape data by applying a recursive and reflexive process of moving from starting point of transcribing and handling texts to the final research text in ways that other research approaches may not (Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

Research Questions

Central Question

What are the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of non-Native cross-cultural teachers regarding curricular implementation in Indigenous schools in the NWT?

Subquestions

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of a culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?
2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in culturally responsive teaching?
3. In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

Conceptual Framework

Indigenous peoples have forgone some benefits they deserve as the First Peoples of Canada. Brayboy (2005) presented the tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit), which connects to Eurocentric diffusionism (Blaut, 1993). Both theories encapsulate the elements of marginalization associated with encounters between the Canadian Settlers and Canada's Indigenous populations. The study was grounded in the lens of the TribalCrit to answer questions related to the intricacies of educating Indigenous youth. The framework provided an understanding by which cross-cultural teachers who may be Indigenous non-Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal can employ culturally responsive teaching. Chapter 2 includes a more detailed description of this theory. TribalCrit builds on the notion that colonization is endemic and rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and material gain. Practitioners aligned it to the process of self-determination and making institutions of formal education more understandable and user friendly to Indigenous

students and Indigenous students more understanding and accepting of the educational process. Such theories are used to explain the structures of societies and communities while also serving as guidelines that emphasize the responsibilities of individuals to the survival of Native communities.

Though TribalCrit has been used to address the issues of Indigenous Peoples in the United States (Brayboy, 2005), its application to the NWT is explained in Chapter 2. Its potential to address the complex relationship between the Government of Canada and the First Nations peoples cannot be overemphasized. The participants narrated their life experiences regarding culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to understand how cross-cultural teachers use culturally responsive teaching with Indigenous students. The study provided an opportunity to examine teachers' experiences as reported in their own words and retold through the "researcher's experiences" (Creswell, 2009, p. 64) and lens. This narrative inquiry study revealed the participants' voices with the intent of exploring the perspectives and pedagogical views of individual participants. I conducted in-depth interviews and reconstructed stories to identify central themes and create common meaning of the participants' stories. The participating teachers presented their culturally responsive teaching experiences in the schools in the NWT. Teachers' actions drew the students closer to the let-us-share principle propounded in the two-worlds system symbolized by the Haudenosaunee Two row Wampum principle (Muller, 2007; Saunders & Hill, 2007). I collected the teachers' narratives through interviews guided by the

conceptual framework and research questions.

Aspects supporting the use of a qualitative approach included the need to interpret and derive meaning from participants' experiences using inductive data analysis. The qualitative approach required me to be aware of the naturalistic setting that I worked in. I was the principal instrument in setting up the study, gathering data, and interpreting the data to make meaning (Creswell, 2009).

The study took place in a three-dimensional inquiry space including temporal, spatial, and human relationships as a way to investigate how cross-cultural teachers conduct their practice in a culturally responsive manner in a postresidential school era. I used the study to seek an understanding of the way cross-cultural teachers devote professional resources to teaching Indigenous students. I applied the interpretive biography method to consider my personal experiences side by side with those of the interviewees. When referring to the metaphysics of presence Derrida (as cited in Denzin, 1989) asserted how "real, concrete subjects live lives with meaning and these meanings have a concrete presence in the lives of these people" (p.14). As an instrument in the interpretation, I uncovered the participants' subjective meaning regarding the experiences in their lives (Ajiboye, 2012; Schutz, 1967). In the naturalistic setting of this study, I adopted and adapted the qualitative approach of narrative inquiry as it afforded a chance for participants to present their stories.

I interviewed six participants and conducted focus group discussions with three- and two-member groups following the protocol shown in Appendix A. Data recorded in audio, text, and journals were analyzed to identify themes.

Operational Definitions

Cross-cultural teachers: Those who interact in a two-way metaphorical process. Such teachers attempt to reconcile the divergences in the metaphorical structures of their native cultures, and other acquired culture(s) through mutual projection and accommodation to create a common ground and facilitate understanding (Xiao, 2014; Xiao, personal communication, July 1, 2015). The phenomenon underscores the existence of multiple views of the world.

Culturally responsive teaching: A pedagogy for enhancing student achievement, pointing to it as a tool for shaping and implementing curriculum to maximize learning and self-esteem (Aceves & Orosco, 2014) “Culturally responsive teaching is about teaching, and the teaching of concern is that which centers classroom instruction in multiethnic cultural frames of reference” (Agbo, 2004, p. 1).

Eurocentric diffusionism: A belief of past or present superiority of Europeans over non-Europeans with a critique permeating many fields of social thought. Diffusionism connotes the idea that all civilizations originated from somewhere since most human beings are imitators and not inventors. Eurocentric diffusionism implies that all change occurs from a superior European origin and in successive outward waves from this center (Blaut, 1998). According to Blaut (1993), the ideals of Eurocentric diffusionism could be antagonistic to the ideals of Indigenous epistemology. Eurocentric diffusionism’s containing ideal of tunnel history presents a thought like “[‘outside’] plays no crucial role and [‘inside’] is credited with everything important and everything efficacious” (Blaut, 1993, p. 8).

Indigenous non-Aboriginal teachers and students: In the educator population, there are Indigenous Aboriginal, Indigenous non-Aboriginal, and non-Aboriginal teachers (GNWT official, personal communication, July 2015). There are similarities of definition as applied to students. In this study, *Indigenous* referred to the Indigenous Aboriginal Canadian.

First Nations: This is the name of people previously called *Indians* who are the original inhabitants of Canada before the arrival of the European explorers. First Nations people include groups such as Mohawk, Cree, Oneida, and Dene. These groups are termed Aboriginal in this study, or are referred to as Indigenous people (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2014).

Narratives: Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek (2006) presented a narrative of how Bruner (2004) pointed us toward narrative as a mode of knowing, and Lieblich (1996) pointed toward narrative inquiry as a methodological response to positivist and post-positivist paradigms. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) linked the methodological aspects of narratives to ways of thinking about experience.

Photo-elicitation: A visual ethnographic (Schwartz, 1989) method involving a social transaction in which the primary concern is the accuracy with which the subject of study is recorded on film, and in which the subject is the source (Byers, 1964) of unique data.

Researcher reflexivity: The ability of the researcher to stand outside the research process, or the landscape the researcher will form part of, (Silko, 1977) to critically reflect on the process. Reflexivity involves a constant consideration of the researcher, the

researched, and the integrity of the process (O’Leary, 2004). Adopting reflexivity was like “[walking] the hall of mirrors” (De Fina, Georgakopoulou, & Riesmann, 2015, p. 221). In this study, I wove an autobiography of the order of self-versus-other typology (Sunwolf & Frey, 2001) to portray reflexivity using my past experiences as a cross-cultural teacher.

Storytelling: In the parlance of Sunwolf and Frey (2001), stories are ways of self-making as people through their lives are forever telling stories about themselves. Storytelling is supported by the ideal that humans are storytelling animals (Swift, 1983, p. 53). The storytelling in this study facilitated a practice-based, interactional perspective, which projected reflexivity to the forefront (see De Fina & Georgakopolou, & Riesman, 2015). Storytelling promoted knowledge through the ordering of experience to represent each participant’s reality according to the bits and pieces of lived events (Sunwolf & Frey, 2001).

Two-worlds concept: Two worlds (Orr & Olson, 2007; Polite, 2014) refers to the Two row Wampum principle of the Haudenosaunee Treaty (Muller, 2007; Saunders & Hill, 2007), which allows Indigenous and Western principles of education, understandings, and concepts to be combined with ideals related to land, healing, and nature (Kitchen et al., 2012), implying knowledge sharing and know-how transfer of different worldviews from a constructivist perspective (Panasuk & Lewis, 2012).

Personal Diary: I had throughout my career kept a diary, which reflected my career experiences as a cross-cultural teacher. In this writing I have used some highlights from this document to help me think narratively. I found this record useful and have had

to draw from it in my experiences ranging from 1984 as typical flashbacks – chronotopes; my kind of connectedness with the past.

Assumptions

The assumptions made in this study included an understanding that TribalCrit and Eurocentrism permitted meaning making and inferences about the participants' experiences. Anderson (1999) recognized that in an interrelated system, little shifts could lead to significant changes. I restoried the teachers' stories to reflect culturally responsive teaching by recognizing that even small contributions by teachers lead to massive changes in the future of Indigenous students. Teachers contribute significantly to learning in the NWT, as in other places. In spite of egoism and self-interest typical of human beings, the teachers selected for this research were agents for safeguarding Indigenous students' welfare, and were trusted for their work. All teachers in this study had some ability to teach culturally responsively and had taught in the NWT for 1 day or more. I anticipated that when interviewed, the teachers would feel little or no intrusion into their professional practice and would answer the questions truthfully and accurately.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations and scope indicate the boundaries of a study and influence the inability to generalize findings to larger populations (Nugent, 2007). I sampled all teachers of Indigenous students in the NWT, not only those from the reserves. The study did not address Indigenous students living outside the NWT. Data were obtained from six teachers chosen from the jurisdictional divisions of the NWT. The perceptions of these participants may not represent those of other teachers from their divisions or other

divisions. My preconceptions and biases may have influenced the interpretation of the results (see Nugent, 2007). However, the results of this study may represent the ideals shared by the teachers who travel to NWT with the possible influences of their different backgrounds to teach Indigenous students.

Limitations

The main limitation was the purposive sampling of participants and focus group members. The results may not apply to Indigenous Canadians located elsewhere in Canada who may be affected by the factors considered in this study. Because the stories were being made and were not found as readymade, I did “analytic re-descriptions” and “co-authoring” and engaged in “transforming texts derived from others’ texts and discourses” (Cavendish, 2011, p. 116). Some challenges that usually exist in following a narrative inquiry were faced in this study. Obtaining a clear understanding of the context of the participants’ lives to provide an understanding of their story and make meaning of their lived experience was difficult. It was important to uncover the figure under the carpet in the multilayered context of participants’ responses and narratives (Edel, 1984). As I sought to interact with the participants, I was only able to understand their presentations as I looked into a narrative lens and lived narratively in the restorying process. I contended with issues such as who owned the story, who can tell it, who can change it, whose version is convincing, what happens when narratives compete, and what would stories do among us as a community (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

Significance

While in Maun, Botswana, the Botho, value through respect for the other person,

formed the number one principle that our teaching had to conform with. This principle, earning respect by giving the same, was seen in the community, at places of worship and we carried it into the classroom for learning to occur during lessons.

Personal Diary, June 17, 1996

I sought to describe, analyze, relive, and retell the narratives presented by six cross-cultural teachers of K-12 Indigenous students of the NWT. By restorying the narratives, I developed an understanding of the experiences of teachers regarding their contributions toward reducing dropout rates among Indigenous students located in the NWT. This understanding could be used to solve the problems that result in the education of people who have had a forcible exposure to Eurocentric epistemology. Northern teachers like other teachers are instrumental in reducing the achievement gap between Indigenous students of the north and students of the south by the work they do (ECE - Factsheet, 2015; NWTTA, 2015). This study provided ideas about educator beliefs and existing practices in educating Indigenous students of North Canada. In this era of education renewal and innovation (ECE, 2015) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report (TRC, 2015), the results of the study may be used to support culturally responsive education for the Indigenous students of NWT.

Summary

This chapter included the background of how cross-cultural teachers manage to teach Indigenous students in a culturally responsive manner. The chapter also included the conceptual framework, research question, and assumptions of the study. In Chapter 2, I describe how researchers have addressed the problem in this study and how narrative

inquiry provided an opportunity to understand the participants' lived experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A Background of Becoming Cross-Cultural

After graduation from the University, there were two things that I needed. A wife and a job away from home that I can build a family on. I found the first one and with some familial negotiation, I completed the celebration with a woman of my heart. The realization of the second one found us traveling through Zimbabwe to our Government of Zambia Ministry of Education Youth and Sports appointment in Lusaka, Zambia. The ultimate peace of mind for family building, however, was to be found in Maun, Botswana, eighteen months afterward with a three-month-old boy in my arms and crossing the river in Kazungula. This appointment was to impart to me the socio-cultural consciousness as I begin teaching a People from a distant culture, namely, Bayei, Batawana, and Basarwa predominated students in the town's only government senior secondary school.

Personal Diary, November 7, 1989

The purpose of this narrative study was to describe, analyze, relive, and retell the story and thus restory the narratives presented by six cross-cultural teachers of K-12 Indigenous students of the NWT. These teachers, who are of European descent, told the story of how they mediate the curriculum in their teaching of Indigenous students using culturally responsive methods.

Erickson and Mohatt (1982) suggested how culturally responsive pedagogy may be a beginning step in bridging any existing gap between schools and the homes they serve:

It may well be that, by discovering the small differences in social relations which

make a big difference in the interactional ways, children engage the content of the school curriculum, anthropologists can make practical contributions to the improvement of minority children's school achievement and to the improvement of the every-day school life for such children and their teachers. Making small changes in everyday participation structures may be one of the means by which more culturally responsive pedagogy can be developed. (p. 170)

This study presented a narration of the teaching experiences of teachers from their cross-cultural perspectives. I investigated the connections and the concomitant challenges with the education of high school students. Findings from this study could inform policy that would advance teacher ability to mitigate disengagement in schooling among K-12 Indigenous students. In Northern Canada, students contend with an intensity of cultural discontinuity existing between the home culture and the culture of their schools and teachers. This situation leads to learning difficulties and lowers the tendency for high school graduation. With the present state of low educational attainment, engaging and equipping teachers with culturally responsive teaching skills is necessary. Learning difficulties in the K-12 system tend to lower the likelihood of high school graduation for students. An understanding that will foster cultural continuity is crucial to student success in the NWT.

I needed to make an assumption after reading from Anderson (1999) on small changes to establish the need for this study. Given the achievement gap that exists between Indigenous students and students of other parts of Canada, the performance of the educational system can never improve without changes in educator understanding

(Kauffman, 1993). Although changes in educator understanding from hearing the narratives by other teachers could be minimal, large attitudinal changes and continuity between the Native ways of knowing and Eurocentric curricular understanding could result. Even small changes in understanding should not be neglected. According to systems thinking (Kaufman, Oakley-Browne, Watkins, & Leigh, 2003), with every barrier to graduation comes the justification of the need for every effort to boost student performance as every effort could lead to colossal result (Senge, 2010). The challenge of teaching in the NWT requires matching school culture with the home culture of the student. This study addressed stories from teachers from different cultures to generate an understanding of how to mediate the content of other cultures during teaching. The premise of the study was that teachers manage the classroom culture in wakefulness (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2008) of the fact that at each cross-cultural teacher-Indigenous student meeting, there are at least three cultures that the student's mind has to mediate: (1) the culture of the teacher, (2) the culture of the curriculum, and (3) the student's Native culture. The narratives of teachers in this study were restoried to explore how teachers from other cultures educate northern Indigenous youth.

There remain issues of gaps in educational attainment and achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada (Gordon & White, 2014). There is also a connection between poverty and high school completion, which is relevant to the Indigenous population of the north of Canada (Kitchen et al., 2012).

The need to examine the current educational situation to suit Native sensibilities and culture has been an ongoing matter of concern and the main determinant of the success of

northern education (Munroe et al., 2013). Some scholars have pointed to this situation as the need for decolonization (Battiste, 1998, 2009). Among Indigenous youth, there is a suspected barrier to high school completion (O’Gorman & Pandey, 2014). Against this background, Battiste (1998, 2009) called for the reclaiming of Indigenous voices.

Teachers in the NWT are mainly Caucasian whose ancestors may have been the perpetrators of the residential school, which was purported to have been the source of abuse and marginalization of Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015). During these reported atrocities, children were not only sent away from home but were banned from speaking their native tongue. These events could point to the alienations of Natives associated with the current education. Indigenous students see the current curriculum as Eurocentric and against Indigenous culture or essentially a perpetuation of the era of residential schools (Elder, personal communication, July 9, 2015). The mainly European cross-cultural teachers have a story to tell about how they carry out their work and experience culturally responsive education, and whether it affects their individual cultural identities.

This chapter contains a description of the literature search strategy as applied in searching the databases to obtain information to buttress this study. It also includes the theoretical foundations and conceptual framework as well as literature review related to key variables and concepts of the study. Information presented in this chapter illumines the TribalCrit conceptual framework and how it guided the understanding of the way cross-cultural teacher participants teach Indigenous K-12 students in a culturally responsive manner. I also explain the process of data collection and how the meaning making was carried out in the restorying process.

Literature Search Strategy

I used Walden University's library to access databases such as ERIC, Science Direct, ProQuest, EBSCOHOST, and SAGE. I also used Google Scholar links to Walden University to retrieve relevant studies related to the research topic. I used links with index, topics, more, or more search options. Clicking the links allowed me to search the indexes using commands like (a) go to more search options and select an individual index and (b) click the topics tab and search all directories at one time. In addition, I used Boolean terms such as AND, OR, and NOT with specified date ranges to refine the search (The University of New Brunswick Libraries, 2017; The Library Te Whare Pukapuka The University of Waikato, 2017).

As I reflected on an ongoing basis about the importance of words and terms, I sieved various terms and decided which could be included or excluded during the search (Walden University Library, 2014). Due to the historical nature of the conceptual framework, articles selected for review spanned publication dates from 1985 to 2016. Only articles written in English were searched. Key terms in the search included *cross-culture* and *culturally responsive teaching*, *narratives*, *narrative inquiry*, *Eurocentric Diffusionism*, *marginalization*, *dialogue*, *conversation*, and *critical race theory*. More peer-reviewed articles used in this literature review were found using the Walden University Library database system. All articles relevant to the research topic were retrieved. Further exploration of *culturally responsive schooling*, *TribalCrit*, and *residential school* was done.

Conceptual Framework

“My native English, now I must forego; And now my tongue’s use is to me no more Than an unstringed viol or a harp...And dull unfeeling barren ignorance Is made my jailor to attend on me...What is thy sentence then but speechless death, Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?” —Richard II

The theoretical base of this study was the tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005), which presented parallels with Eurocentric diffusionism. TribalCrit provided an excellent framework to answer the research questions for this study. However, aspects of Eurocentric diffusionism are subtly embedded in TribalCrit. I used elements of culturally responsive teaching in an environment with TribalCrit and undertones of Eurocentric diffusionism. Both of these theories are marked by insinuations of marginalization, which has roots in the way Indigenous peoples have been treated by the White settler populations (Barsh, n. d.).

Critical race theory (CRT) was a response to the critical legal studies (CLS) that had earlier presented on how the law focuses on and matches its application to particular groups and circumstances. However, critics believed that CLS could not achieve its intended goal and replaced it with CRT. CLS was intended to expose contradictions in the law and the way the law creates societal hierarchy (Gordon, 1990), but CRT does more to center on race and racism with elements of gender types and class relations (Solorzano, 1998). Like CRT, TribalCrit puts high value on experiential knowledge as a way to inform thinking and research in addition to its precise outlook on the deeply ingrained nature of racism in society. In spite of these attributes of CRT, it does not

address the needs of tribal people. Despite the original use in civil rights cases in the United States, its span has not fully reached other ethnic groups such as the Indigenous peoples of the north of Canada who may also have been neglected. Battiste (2002) argued that “Eurocentric thinkers [have] dismissed Indigenous knowledge[s] in the same way they [have] dismissed any socio-political cultural life they did not understand: they [have] found it to be unsystematic and incapable of meeting the productivity needs of the modern world” (p. 5). The process and influences of colonization in the experience of the Indigenous student constitute the heart and the purposes of TribalCrit, which addresses marginalization and Eurocentrism.

Culturally responsive teaching and how teachers from different cultural origins can negotiate an existing student culture and influence a better acceptance of a Eurocentric curriculum can be a challenge to teachers. The suspicions and historic social exclusion of Indigenous Canadians by European Canadians may be compounded by the fact that cross-cultural teachers may be related to the perpetrators of the marginalization and supposed atrocities of the residential school. Teachers are tasked indirectly through their practice to remove any thoughts and animosities as presented through institutionalized Eurocentrism underlying the curriculum. Additionally, analyzing and applying the principles of TribalCrit and Eurocentrism, I obtained insights concerning the perceptions of successes with schooling and how to reach targeted outcomes using available supports of school administration in teaching Indigenous students of the NWT. As a critiquing approach (Kitchen et al., 2012), TribalCrit led supported the narrative inquiry and storytelling used in this study. The scope and extent of application of

TribalCrit and Eurocentrism as the contextual lens of this research is explored later in this chapter.

I applied the narrative inquiry approach and insights to restory the lived experiences of teachers mediating acceptance of the Eurocentric curriculum using the lens and ways of knowing of Indigenous Canadians (Goulet, 1998). Using narratives guided by this conceptual framework led to a deeper understanding of teaching as seen and understood through such narratives. (Bruner, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Coles, 1989; Wortham, 2001). I learned of the interchangeability of life and narrative—“life imitates narrative and narrative imitates life.” (Bruner, 2004, p. 692). The nature of the framework presented a compelling reason for choosing narrative inquiry; other approaches such as ethnography are only applied to a culture-sharing group, while this approach allowed me to explore the lived experience of teachers who are non-Indigenous to share their perspectives through storytelling.

The application of TribalCrit allowed me to explore the meaning behind educating a generation of Indigenous students in contemporary times. With an in-depth understanding, educators may move forward in implementing culturally responsive alternatives respectful of Indigenous peoples. As a framework, TribalCrit offered a deeper look into colonization, imperialism, White supremacy, and personal gain (Brayboy, 2005). Applications of Eurocentric diffusionism (Blaut, 1993) may bring to light any influences on the current schooling of the systematic displacement of Aboriginal languages and knowledges (Ryerson University, 2015), the loss of culture, and the accession and possession of the ancestral land that the ancestors of cross-cultural

teachers may have participated in. The teacher of today in the classrooms of the NWT may also encounter challenges regarding the assimilative approaches of contemporary schooling, which lacks needed cultural responsiveness in educating today's Indigenous students in the NWT.

Literature Review and Key Concepts

Students at the Center of a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Dialogue

The likelihood of high school graduation among Aboriginal individuals in Northern communities differs from elsewhere in Canada. There are barriers to graduation in the North of Canada, placing an extra responsibility on educators regarding increased support for high school graduation (O’Gorman & Pandey, 2015; Toulouse, 2013). The background laid for northern education has the reflections of marginalization and anti-Eurocentrism in its history (Battiste, 1998, 2009; Blaut, 1993;). Northern K-12 students are more exposed to the phenomenon of cultural discontinuity as it occurs between their home culture on the one hand, and the culture of their schools in a mix with that of teachers on the other. Such a mix-up leads to learning difficulties and a lower tendency for high school graduation among northern students (ECE - Factsheet, 2015). Continuity is a trait, which is crucial for northern student success, as they tend to operate from a much stronger home-culture-school-culture influences than Indigenous students of the South (O’Gorman & Pandey, 2015). How NWT teachers handle this still ensures that students meet the expected learning outcomes of the curriculum and presents a demand on their pedagogy and style. The unique learning needs of Indigenous Canadian students require their cross-cultural teachers to apply culturally sensitive instruction. Native

students enter their classrooms with social, economic and cultural characteristics couched in a peculiar history not devoid of the specter of the residential school and marginalization in contemporary Canadian society (Henry, Tator, Mattis Rees, 2000).

From the lens of an outsider, the plight of the Indigenous student has connections with the history of their parents' and earlier generations. That 67% of Aboriginal children attend non-Aboriginal controlled schools may be a cause for concern requiring redress, if these students are expected to refrain from dropping out and seeing themselves as without guardians in the school staff. This lack of school staff guidance could serve as an ingredient for non-participation in the schools especially as there exists a tendency for low parental support from home (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2000). To engender participation of students, there is a need for a teacher-student relationship to be secured in the schools in conformity with the framework as defined by the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association and the documents of Education, Culture and Employment (2015). It is "culturally appropriate" when educators teach with the home and community cultures of students of color in mind, making efforts to infuse the students' cultural background into their education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 466). Similarly, when teachers used students' home cultural patterns in their practice, students experience more academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teaching Indigenous students presents a beyond-the-regular need for educators to be well trained in curricular implementation and culturally responsive teaching (Raas, 2012).

The terms, *culturally appropriate*, *culturally congruent*, and *culturally compatible*, used at different degrees, all express the extent of accommodation made with

due consideration of the students' culture with mainstream culture. Also, the term culturally responsive tends to refer to a more dynamic relationship between home and school cultures. The implication of education with cultural relevance connotes the following: (1) ability to develop students academically, (2) a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and (3) the development of socio-political or critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Accordingly, a culturally relevant pedagogy ought to see any teaching of Indigenous students from a platform of a Eurocentric curriculum as a problem. Such a problem would require encouraging teachers to seek ways to foster more a student-teacher relationship. There is a unique need for steps to be put in place to operationalize the curriculum in a manner where students' knowledge is considered in the instructional process as integral and authorized knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

As the education of the Indigenous students is done, this process should be exercised with the thought about Aboriginal people. They ought to be celebrated and recognized in their languages, cultures and traditions for the historical value they represent to Canada (Battiste, 2002; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Cajete, 1994; 2000; Kawagley, 2001; Burnaby, 1996) and as an *inside-outside* phenomenon (Blaut, 1993).

The Ontario Education (2013) capacity building documents pointed to how mainstream Canada has portrayed various Aboriginal points of view from positions of disadvantage in line with the precepts of Eurocentrism (Blaut, 1993). Culturally responsive pedagogy involves acknowledgment, respect and an understanding of

difference and how it is complex. It comprises three dimensions (1) Institutional (2) Personal and (3) Instructional. Further, Bishop, O'Sullivan and Berryman (2010) defined culturally responsive pedagogy of relations as:

education in which power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spiral; and where participants are connected and committed to one another through the establishment of a common vision of what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes. (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007, p. 15)

Additionally, the term “culturally relevant teaching” connotes integrating the background knowledge and community experiences of the student in the curriculum, the teaching, and learning experiences taking place in the classroom (Ontario Education, 2013). Villegas and Lucas (2002) advised taking an asset-based approach and stated that the knowledge brought to school by students and such knowledge as could come from personal and cultural experiences is central to any learning that occurs in the school. This assertion by Ontario Education will still linger in many minds: “To overlook this resource is to deny children access to the knowledge construction process” (Ontario Education, 2013, p. 25).

Connections with the Indigenous student. Thinking narratively at this stage, when teachers meet their students in the classroom the first time, and in subsequent days, they face the option of seeking connections and laying the groundwork for relationship and learning. They exhume a consciousness of where the students have come from and

their history, which could be a starting incidence for conversation and sharing. However, one might not know how different teachers may see this as an opportunity for the supposed connection. No meaningful relationship with the Indigenous student gets realized unless the *truth* is established with past dealings (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). With the past and the present, Canadian institutions desire to build a legacy that racism is not a problem in Canada (Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 2000). That there is racism in certain sectors of Canada's education system is no secret. There is a need to address this canker with urgency, as its tendency to fail Native children in the schools is also no secret (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2000).

Antidiscrimination mandate in indigenous education. Schools ought to build capacity to mitigate possible discriminatory tendencies visible in the milieus that serve as biases and barriers to Indigenous student achievement and wellbeing. Such trends affect Indigenous ethnicity and race, faith, family structure and socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ability and mental health (Ontario Education, 2013) in a negative manner. It may be worthwhile for the teacher to acknowledge the cultural uniqueness of the student intentionally and nurture this thought to create conditions for learning (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011) and to foster the full mandate of anti-discrimination in education.

Cross-Cultural \Teachers

The *cross-culture* phenomenon develops on the basis that when different individuals meet, artifacts and ideas cross boundaries (Phillion, 2002) and become mutually exchanged or absorbed uni-directionally and *asynchronously* in the three-dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The phenomenon connotes the

existence of multiple ways of viewing the world. It sets up the machinery of conversation as long as what is taken as *natural* and what is presumed *normal*, both exist. In the study, an assumption made is “what we take to be natural and normal is merely parochial and habitual ... [as] Habitual ways may not be the ways designed by nature for all times and persons.” (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 53)

Ontology of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Brown (2007) presented summaries indicating that effective teachers are identified through “(a) their character traits, (b) what they know, (c) what they teach, (d) how they teach, (e) what they expect from their students, (f) how their students react to them, and (g) how they manage the classroom.” (p. 59)

According to Ladson-Billings (2001), culturally responsive pedagogy involves:

- focusing on the student’s academic capabilities using clear goals and assessment policy
- exhibiting attainment and helping students to reach cultural competence
- developing a sense of socio-political consciousness (Brown, 2007).

Additionally, Gay indicated that teaching culturally responsively means developing culturally relevant curricula and demonstrating cultural care in building a learning community (Gay, 2002). Earlier, Villegas and Lucas (2002) had argued that culturally responsive teaching is about engendering a sociocultural consciousness, and recognizing that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality in affirming students with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) background and welcomes cultural difference (Bennett, 1993) as a resource for learning. It deals, as well with using their knowledge of

their students to design instruction, building on what they know while stretching them beyond the familiar (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Also, earlier researchers had pointed to developing a favorable disposition and attitude to learning using personal relevance and choice. Fostering competence and creating an understanding that students are effective in learning things they value (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Human Development Index (HDI) in Indigenous Communities

The Indigenous peoples of North Canada experience a kind of impoverishment that has led to their excessive dependence on Canada's social welfare programs (Neegan, 2007; Satzewich, 1991). How has contemporary education affected the parents, guardians, and if any, shifted societal dynamics of the process of education in a culturally sensitive manner? A question such as this requires further exploration. The storytelling mode used in this study could not be complete if the economic state and general well-being of Indigenous Peoples in North Canada are little considered as part of the broader framework of advancing and advocating for social change regarding the Indigenous cause through the closing of the achievement gap (Richards & Scott, 2009). Amid Canada's high global ranking in the UN's Human Development Index (HDI), data indicate feedback such as poverty, adverse health and social structure of Aboriginal Peoples in the HDI (Barsh, n. d.). In these considerations, Indigenous Canadians are disadvantaged compared to other Canadians, though recent HDI measures present a rapid improvement. In 1993, the HDI for Canada's Indigenous Peoples was as low as for countries like Albania, Cuba, Paraguay and Iraq (UNDP, 1993).

The Canadian government's mitigation efforts have led to social welfare and national financial programs, which have not only helped outwardly to reduce the inequality of income but also created a dependency, powerlessness and identity crisis among Indigenous peoples (C. Weber-Pillwax, personal communication, June 16, 2015). Barsh (n. d.) reported of the manifestations of social disintegration and a self-destructive process not suitable for self-governing Indigenous nation building.

Using culturally responsive pedagogy may require an alignment of three aspects namely the *institutional*, *personal* and *instructional* dimensions (Ontario Education, 2013). At the personal dimension – culturally responsive educators possess a mindset that leads their practice towards supporting the academic development of all students.

Tracing the historical occurrence of low HDI. Why would HDI have to connect with Indigenous education and this storytelling? Low HDI among the Indigenous Peoples was attached to the existence of an economy dependent on natural resources and resulting from keeping Indigenous people separate and unequal (Barsh, n. d.) among other Canadians. Aboriginal Peoples remained in reserves or a kind of *internal colonies* resembling the former Apartheid South African *self-governed homelands* (Goebel, 2007). Indigenous Peoples live not only in mainstream Canada but also on reserves. When they mix with the rest of the country, some tend to lack the educational resources to compete equally in contemporary Canada. Such a situation does not produce the required incentive for their educational engagement (Eeyou Istchee Grand Council of the Cree, n. d.). This storytelling process fostered a discussion that addresses this lack from a culturally responsive education perspective in the NWT.

An improvement in HDI scores for Registered Indians was recorded between the years 1981 and 2001 (Cooke, Beavon & McHardy, 2013; Cooke, 2013). Categorized as *Registered Indians*, they continue to have shorter life expectancy, both lower educational attainment, and average annual earnings than do other Canadians. It was during this period, however, that the gap in average annual incomes was reported to have increased. Still, Canada's Indigenous Peoples have lower than average incomes, education, and employment rates (ECE- Factsheet, 2015). Additionally, they have poorer health than other Canadians. Robust research is required to document the disparities and uncover the mechanisms driving such Aboriginal disadvantage (Cooke, 2013) for Indigenous students to obtain the expected educational gains.

Outside the schools, everyday occurrences have had a domino effect, which ripples to the schools. Family violence and break-up and ill health link up with poor nutrition, chemical dependencies, and depression, which again, ripple back to the student in the contemporary classrooms in North Canada. The resulting manifestations in the daily lives of Indigenous Peoples in the context of the North cannot be dealt with justly. Attempts at justification ought to be connected with integration policies such as the effects of women enfranchisement in the Indian Act, residential schools and the weakening of local Indigenous institutions or their replacement with current Canadian structures of local government. Government remediation targets would only result from an understanding of the history of the hurts done by the mediators of this issue. Sequel to this would be restorative efforts for Indigenous self-respect pursued by the Aboriginal people, themselves (Freire, 1970) in an empowering environment (Battiste, 1998, 2009).

It may be gathered that unless required educational input is made, the loss of the contribution of Indigenous culture and Aboriginal ways of knowing will dwindle the human capital of Canada, irreversibly (Barsh, n. d.).

At the current stage and platform, an understanding of the historical perspective would help explain the high rates of domestic violence, substance abuse, which resonate on the rates of school dropout (Crooks, Chiodo, Thomas, Hughes, 2010) among Indigenous people of North Canada. During the residential school era, Indigenous children had available to them a proliferation of schools that were unequal in quality compared to schools in Canada at the time (Barton, Thommasen, Tallio, Zhang, & Michalos, 2005). Schooling the young Native allowed being taken away to boarding facilities from home at a tender age and under conditions that do not support their culture, language development and wellbeing (Elder in Fort Liard, personal communication, July 14, 2015). Again, another elder refers to his story of being carted away as a captured pre-school student in a cage to one of the residential schools (Elder, personal communication, April 12, 2015).

Based on the views of Morrison, Robins and Rose (2008) and Kanu (2005), there is a need to set up a culturally relevant pedagogy in realizable and everyday terms. Gay (2010) iterated that low achievement among children of color is “too devastating to be tolerable” (p. 1). Other workers considering the demographic implications refer to the need to find suitable approaches to teaching to foster the success of these increasing numbers of students from diverse groups in the school system. Seeking new strategies is important (Banks, 1995); a typology of a critical mass of brokering of cultures involving

two worlds relevant to Indigenous Canada is required (Muller, 2007; Saunders & Hill, 2007). Indigenous students in the NWT perhaps more likely come to school with more pressing issues that may be a manifestation of a history of marginalization that ought to be reduced with high quality teacher instruction. Such expertise calls for the establishment of academic rigor with appropriate supports and scaffolds (Callins, 2006; Willis & Harris, 2000).

The *Dene Kede* Curriculum (Education, Culture, and Employment, 2015a, 2015b) holds the center of attempts to infuse Native ways of knowing in classroom instruction to create a more equal education (Reimers, 2000), which respects Indigenous cultural background. It is still observed that Indigenous epistemologies have been ignored in mainstream Canadian society accounting for the “inequities in power relationships” with Aboriginal peoples (Cherubini, 2008, p. 222). Several scholars have indicated that power inconsistency and tensions have been the cause of the placement of Indigenous people into what exists regarding self-esteem, issues of income, unemployment, and Indigenous student dropout. Both mainstream and Indigenous rights movements attest to the growing evidence by International Indigenous education research that culturally responsive model for Indigenous education can improve academic success (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009).

The call for providing democratic and equitable education is a social justice proportion entailing taking care of the language and cultural backgrounds of students (Morrison et al., 2008). Questions arising from this study include whether harmonies exist between Aboriginal ways of knowing, *knowledges* and the tenets of 21st-century education (Munroe, Borden, et al., 2013). Faced with a choice between proper nature’s

caretaker decisions and gainful employment, Indigenous people would require both the scientific background and Indigenous values and beliefs. It is important to note that Indigenous languages contain adequate substance reflecting 21st-century educational ideals, only achievable through decolonizing approaches (Munroe, Borden, et al., 2013). Again, there is an alignment between these Indigenous knowledges (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007) and the ideals of 21st-century education.

There are deleterious effects of the residential schooling on the socio-economic and cultural wellbeing of Indigenous peoples (M. Battiste, personal communication, June 4, 2015). Post-colonial motives have excluded and marginalized Aboriginal languages and knowledge (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007), which form the backbone of Aboriginal worldview and identity (Cherubini, 2008). This disregard has caused a lowered influence of Aboriginal culture (Battiste, 1998, 2009) in Territorial education and curricula. Without the reinstatement and inclusion of languages and knowledge, the coming into being and the ways of knowing, the much talked-about healing process (Snape & Spencer, 2003) would be long in being realized by North Canada's Indigenous communities.

Eurocentric ideals are arrayed along the lines of hegemonic exclusion of Native Peoples – an act requiring a resolution involving the conscious inclusion of Indigenous people at various levels of education to facilitate the healing of post-colonial wounds (Battiste, 1998). In the aftermath, the loss of language through banning at the residential schools is not merely of a linguistic nature; it involves more than the sounds since it has the proportion of “socialization of language and knowledge, ways of knowing, nonverbal

and verbal communication.” (para. 31)

Garnering resources for the healing of Indigenous Peoples draws teachers to the center of a long awaited process. Educators who work with Indigenous students require certain traits in their practice for their efforts to be successful as enumerated by Wilson (2001). Such educators ought to be sensitive to the cultures of the Indigenous students with whom they work. Culturally responsive educators according to the Ontario Education (2013) need to have a heightened socio-cultural consciousness, high expectations of their students and be constructivist in approach. These educators build upon the existence of difference in the lived experiences of all students to bring the current curriculum to life. Besides, educators should desire to make a difference, have in-depth knowledge of their students and use culturally responsive teaching practices. To be effective, such cross-cultural teachers ought to be explorers of practices, processes, and aware of the ideologies of racialization that point to how racism advantages some and disadvantages others against the backdrop of the superiority of one group of people (MacIntosh, 1998). There is a need for such educators to have the ability to examine how some groups and national identities are “othered” (p. 26), or “marginalized, denigrated, violated in society” and others “favored, normalized, privileged” (p. 35). As they practice, teachers’ mindfulness of how certain views and processes are allowed as normative (Kumashiro, 2000) also require investigation.

The Meriam Report (Meriam, Brown, Cloud, Dale, Duke, Edwards, Mckenzie, Mark, Ryan, & Spillman, 1928; Prucha, 2000) called for certain inputs and shifts for change in educating the Indigenous student. These include adding more teachers of

Indigenous origin, early childhood programs, and the infusion of Native ways of knowing in schools. Indigenous teachers are more available for teaching Aboriginal Languages and Culture than other core subjects (personal communication with Government of Northwest Territories official, Month, 2015). Except for the teaching of Indigenous culture and Indigenous languages, Native teachers rarely teach core subjects.

In the absence of such numbers of Native teachers as would be required by the Meriam Report, there is pressure to have a more Native thinking or mindset and acting across cross-cultural teacher populations. Teachers combining core subject professional credentials with competency in language and culture are rare in the context of education in the north of Canada. Most educators of the Indigenous have credentials other than for teaching Indigenous language and culture. The thought of obtaining Aboriginal teachers for educating Indigenous students is challenging, making the need for mediation and assistance of cross-cultural teachers in the direction of culturally responsive teaching severe.

Eurocentric Diffusion: A Form of Marginalization

How much of Indigenous education needs transformation from the old ways of doing school can be understood as TribalCrit is applied to the context of the NWT. Writer (2008) expatiated that TribalCrit “offer[s] the possibility of unmasking, exposing, and confronting continued colonization within educational contexts and societal structures, thus transforming those contexts and structures for Indigenous Peoples.” (p. 1)

How much of resistance to any needed change of the current education system can be related to the extent to which Eurocentrism has eroded Indigenous knowledges and

ways of knowing. White talk (McIntyre, 1997; Webb, 2012) could be the cause of anti-Eurocentric education. It may be difficult to indicate the students we teach are not exposed in text or speech to such denigrating talk. For example, certain day-to-day statements in text form, discourse, and thinking experienced in schools contain partial truths only. These include direct or indirect ones like (1) *democracy was invented in Europe, in ancient Greece*; (2) *Most of Pure Science, Mathematics, Philosophy, History, and Geography originate from Europe*; (3) *Europeans are uniquely “venturesome,” were the great explorers, resulting in “discoveries” and*, (4) *Europeans invented industry and created the Industrial Revolution.*

Similarly, thoughts like the following formed a basis for smothering Indigenous ontology and epistemology; *all or some of Native knowledge is anti-progress, slow, and must be discarded, replaced with superior European ideals* (Blaut, 1993). While it is my aim as a writer not to discard such statements, reading from William (2015), at the least, I saw that such talk requires critical thinking by those who propound it. Proponents of such talk would need to “think anew” (p. 157) and re-structure certain ways of thinking and shake the origins and bases of such thoughts in ways that can be supported by more research into the “categories that loom in [the] psyche” (Ponterotto, Utsey & Pedersen, 1993, p. 6) and all suspected areas of thinking. “The European worldview which values rugged individualism, dominance over nature, competition, materialism, and aggression is congruent with White supremacy orientation towards relations with others.” (p. 48) Should such talking White just be ignored as mere “social construction?” (Webb, 2012, p. 16). In this research, the teacher participants were allowed to freely present their lines of

thinking as they carried out their brands of cultural responsiveness in their dealings with students in the NWT.

Characteristics of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

The following features foster positive teacher–student relationships: allowing student’s voice, humanization, engendering trust, openness, developing respect and personal connections. Also, there are three areas of school support including community circle, time to connect, and opportunities outside the classroom, which educators could aim at for a positive relationship (Pasto, 2014).

Underlying Culture and Rationale for Culturally Responsive Schooling

While scholars like Cazden and Leggett (1981) and Erickson and Mohatt (1982) have used the term culturally responsive as a way to describe similar language interactions of teachers in dealing with linguistically diverse and Native American students, Jordan (1995) had used a similar term *cultural compatibility* as:

Educational practices [that] must match with the children’s culture in ways, which ensure the generation of academically important behaviors. It does not mean that all school practices need be completely congruent with natal cultural practices, in the sense of exactly or even closely matching or agreeing with them. The point of cultural compatibility is that the natal culture is used as a guide in the selection of educational program elements so that academically desired behaviors are produced, and undesired behaviors are avoided. (p. 110)

Cultural. The usage of ‘culture’ in the CRS implies “a form of production that helps human agents, through their use of language and other material sources, to

transform society” (Giroux, 1988, pp. 116-117). McLaren’s (2003) ideology of *hegemony* was defined as “the struggle in which the powerful win the consent of those who are oppressed, with the oppressed unknowingly participating in their oppression” (p. 203). Statements like these provide a justification for Battiste’s (1998) call for a decolonization of education for Indigenous learners.

Dardar (1991) revealed how invading the culture and dominating the language shape and reflect on the quality of education for non-majority groups. Such cultural invasion was considered anti-dialogical and tended to result from a sustained socio-political and economic oppression of subordinate groups (Dardar, 1991). Parallels occur for contemporary Canadian Indigenous schooling and education. As stated by Dardar, a language domination exists, that students are taught beliefs and values that present a continued emphasis on the inferiority of their non-majority learning styles and their languages; subtly supporting ideologies of the dominant group while such non-majorities are reduced to subordination. These seem to resonate in the Eurocentric principles reflected and exposed in Blaut’s (1993) writings.

There exists the belief (Battiste, 1998, 2009) that traditional forms of education given to Indigenous people by the dominant European cultures bequeath little hope for Indigenous Peoples’ progress. This belief is the basis of Battiste and Henderson’s call for a renewed sense of respect for ethnic knowledges and cultures in Aboriginal education. In most cases, the curriculum used in educating the Indigenous student does not have the required relevance to the community. Such curricula tend to have regionally mandated elements needing modifications to match the realities of the students (Paquette, 1986).

The economic, social and political structure of Indigenous schooling had the characteristics of Eurocentric societies and measured with a Eurocentric gauge. The idea of schooling is not only to develop but implement a two-way education with “cross-fertilization” (Agbo, 2012, p. 28) of insights, practices and mental prototypes of both Eurocentric and First Nations cultures. The need to reformulate First Nations education with the aim of building capacity that would lead to students’ (Agbo, 2012) progress should be a priority. Also, Agbo (2012) mentioned that there is a gap between the expected and actual idea of schooling for First Nations students to catch up with the standards of Euro-Canadians. Agbo mentioned the need for developing a culturally responsive curriculum within a context that is conscious of Indigenous epistemology and world-views rather than being smothered by Euro-Canadian ideals and values. The aim of putting into action such a curriculum is to open the students’ mind and equip them to think critically and conceptualize with an Indigenous worldview, history, and epistemology in what Paolo Freire termed *conscientization* (Freire, 2000).

There is a need for a reformulation of First Nations education with the aim of building capacity for Indigenous students. This venture would equip them to respond positively to economic, technological, social and political changes happening around their settlements (Agbo, 2012). There exists a gap between actuality and the expectation in the idea of schooling, seen as an attempt to prepare First Nations youth to catch up with the living standards of Euro-Canadians. To develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum, First Nations epistemology and world-views rather than Euro-Canadian ideals and values should provide the context for the curriculum (Agbo, 2012).

Education should open students' minds so that they can think critically and conceptualize appropriately, using Indigenous worldview, history, and epistemology. Consequently, the home culture is at odds with cultural and school expectations, creating a mismatch resulting in perennial achievement gaps. Hence, calling for schooling to be designed and practiced to match the cultures students bring with them from home.

Being responsive. The use of “responsiveness” in this study offered an archetypal way to view the Indigenous student in the connotation of having a dynamic nature. It suggested the ability to acknowledge the unique needs of diverse students and which acts to address the needs and adapt to the approaches of students (Klump & McNeir, 2005). Castagno and Brayboy explained cultural competence as “complex awareness and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that taken together underlie effective cross-cultural teaching” (Castagno and Brayboy, 2009, p. 5). For most White middle-class teachers who take up the teaching of the Indigenous student, it may require time for exploring the school's environment and being involved in the community to acquire the needed skills. This is so because culturally responsive teaching demands the ability to “infuse the curriculum with rich connections to students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds within family and community contexts.” (Belgarde, Mitchell, and Arquero, 2002, p. 43)

Ismat (1994) had earlier characterized a culturally responsive curriculum as that which according to Klug and Whitfield (2003):

- (a) Capitalizes on students' cultural backgrounds rather than attempting to override or negate them;
- (b) is good for all students;
- (c) is integrated and

interdisciplinary; (d) is authentic and child-centered, connected to children's real lives; (e) develops critical thinking skills; (f) incorporates cooperative learning and whole language strategies; (g) is supported by staff development and pre-service preparation; and (h) is part of a coordinated, building-wide strategy. (p. 151)

Connecting with the experience of the cross-cultural teacher Castagno and Brayboy (2009) reviewed Gilliland's (1995) assertion that certain learning, thinking styles and interests characterize students who share a common cultural background. Indigenous students tend to be visual and hands-on. The Indigenous students connect to real-life with a direct real-world experience. These students see the overall picture before the details, are creative and have other traits such as "holistic, reflective, collaborative, circular, imaginal, and concrete" (Castagno & Brayboy, 2009, p. 954). Further, they process simultaneously and observe before they perform, tending to be more naturalistic (Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Davidson, 1992; Gilliland, 1995; Goin, 1999; Hilberg & Tharp, 2002; More, 1989; Sparks, 2000; Swisher & Deyhle, 1989; Tharp & Yamauchi, 1994). These bring to the fore the learning styles that I shall be looking for in the explicit or implicit answers given by the participating teachers in the interview. Again, More (1989) presented more dimensions of learning styles namely global/analytic, verbal/imaginal, concrete/abstract among others such TEF (trial, error, feedback)/reflective, and modality. Butterfield (1984) stated, "many American Indian and Alaskan Native students show strengths in visual, perceptual, or spatial information as opposed to information presented verbally and frequently use mental images rather than

word associations” (p. 4). The evolving question is whether the practice of cross-cultural teachers would match these requirements.

Such educators tend to develop self-awareness they have an in-depth knowledge of their students and how the students learn best. In the broader sense, the institutional dimension – the administration and leadership of school systems; values pursued and reflected in board policies and practices followed by schools needed to be considered to expose which patterns need to be deliberately curbed or changed. These form the underlying basis of the inclusive school culture (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2006). On the other hand, the instructional dimension calls for closely associating with students and considering the classroom practices that result in culturally responsive principles (Ontario Education, 2013). In the arena of teacher practice with Indigenous students, there is a core set of values and cultural norms that educators could draw on as advised by Skinner (1999). These include “generosity and cooperation, independence and freedom, respect for elders and wisdom, connectedness and love. Additionally, Skinner stated courage and responsibility, indirect communication and non-interference, silence, reflection, and spirit.” (Skinner, 1999, p. 17). These have some direct connections with the 9 Dene laws (Blondin, 1997). Again, when Indigenous cultures are neglected students get “robbed” of their cultural pride and personal identities (Skinner, 1999). Cultural compatibility theory posits that schooling becomes effective when a match exists between the norms of culture and the expectations of both school and students.

Similarly, scholars have identified educator characteristics that ensure the success of CRS with Indigenous students. Teachers’ attitudes and ideologies toward their students

and Indigenous communities and cultures are paramount. Also Demmert (2001) reviewed that “teacher attitudes about students, knowledge of the subject matter, and understanding and knowledge about the culture of students are all shown to promote improved academic performance and student behavior” (Yagi, 1985, p. 26). This hints of the requirement for the development of certain dispositions toward students (Pewewardy & Hammer, 2003, p. 1).

As American Indians in the USA were forced to assimilate into the mainstream school culture of the dominant population, so was it in the context of Canada. The residential schooling experience preceded this episode in the entire story of Indigenous student’s education. The result was cultural discontinuity and low self-esteem, which affected their contemporary academic performance (Belgarde et al. 2002). Additionally, when schools neglect Native cultures and existing curricula that are biased or lack cultural relevance, Indigenous students get stripped of their cultural pride and personal identities (Skinner, 1999). In contrast, cultural compatibility theory posits that schooling accrues substance when a match exists between the cultural norms and expectations of both school and students.

What the Researcher Can Achieve With Narrative Inquiry

Through a narrative inquiry, this study takes the stance that we construct our identities and “ways of knowing” through stories (Riessman, 2008, p. 6). A narrative inquiry about culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous Peoples echoes the voices of a culture-sharing group and draws from the methodological and research design of ethnographic traditions (Cavendish, 2011). The process of narrative inquiry allowed data

triangulation from classroom observations in a wakeful manner (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008). It also permitted field texts and notes to be used to record information from the participants. The research design included narrative interviews of the six participants and discussions by two focus groups, allowing the application of ethnographic research techniques from data collection to analysis. Again, in the design of this study, was aware of the sensitive nature of presenting my knowledge while writing, and of my personal biases.

A narrative inquiry may serve as a *method*, a *mode* of inquiry into the human realm of thinking and the actual study phenomenon (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Clandinin and Connelly add more substance as they point to how the narrative inquiry begins typically with the researcher's autobiography during the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The idea of narrative can be employed in the context of *theory* about some aspects of the human condition. These conditions may include cognition or personal identity. While narrative can be considered in the context of *practice*, it also gives form, displays form, or imposes form as well as various human dealings (Sartwell, 2000, p. 9). By so narrative "runs the risk of deforming those very persons, those very lives it is thought to disclose" (Georgakopolou, 2015, p. 24). Further, Sartwell (2000) indicated that "to narrate an event is to divest it of its presence"(86), with the result that "nothing is happening now, ... what is happening today cannot be known until tomorrow, but the interpretation given tomorrow of today is indeterminate until the day after tomorrow and so forth." (Freeman, 2015, p. 24)

Narrating does not change the conditions of marginalization that underlie access

to speaking for one's self or that assign some events to public and others to hidden status (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2015). On the contrary, giving voice to the voiceless can just as often reproduce the power relations underlying a group's or a speaker's status (Freeman, 2015).

A Study Powered by Narrative Inquiry

Tracing the existence and the ways of knowing of what is currently known and understood, Clandinin and Connelly used the Deweyan theory of experience as the central point of narrative inquiry in explaining the differences and similarities between narrative inquiry and other areas of study (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). From the Deweyan perspective, *the experience* is a fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry proceeds. A narrative of the stories of cross-cultural teachers is a commentary on their individual stories imbued with “anthropological traditions” (Cavendish, 2011, p. 43), backings and personal experiences. Though narratives are shaped by existing contexts, they also create new contexts by shifting and transforming understandings of the world through the changing of power relations existing between peoples through constituting new practices (Freeman, 1993). Again, narratives in the view of Clandinin are the form of representation that describes human experience unfolding through time (Clandinin, 2006) in a dynamic manner.

Further, Holland et al. (1989) and Wortham (2001) taught that identities develop through narratives while stories shape these organizations' identities and also contribute to the spreading of knowledge (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2015). The narrative may be seen as plots, since they [present] episodic events, are in the retrospective dimension and

entail looking back from some present moment (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2015, pp. 6-7). Because the stories they present are attuned to a cultural context woven into the fabric of living and telling, drawing from the power of language in conveying the nature, the beauty and messiness of people, narrative researchers are referred to as ethnographers by scholars (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2015).

The power of using storytelling. Scholars have argued that story is fundamental to our human nature, we are story, we speak it, think it and form the meaning of our lives by it. Ricoeur indicated “the form of life to which narrative discourse belongs is our historical condition itself” (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 285). Stories give us our roots that connect and direct us – an indication of how the stories of the six participants and the focus groups in this study form the basis of direction for a northern pedagogy in the schools. According to Atkinson (1995, 1998) and Gubrium and Holstein, (1998, 2008, 2009), a story validates our experience and restores value to our lives. Stories are ubiquitous and widespread since everyone has them and will have a tendency to understand them as they come from others (Atkinson, 1995, 1998; Clandinin, 2006). As it is, a person enters, experiences and interprets the world making the world meaningful through the use of stories. Narrative inquiry is the study of experience as *a story* and a way of thinking about experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Stories are told as ways of capturing and sharing the high and low details of everyday life. They may also be considered as illustrations of the layers between communicative practices and the media from which they come (source). By so, a new research mode emerges which gives rise to “creative application and synergies outside of the immediate analytical concerns of a

sociolinguistic study of narrative and identities.” (Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 267)

The experiences in the stories settle the complexity at the confluence of the teachers’ individual culture, the students’ culturally influenced backgrounds (Cavendish, 2011) and the growing demands of the Northwest Territories curriculum to match the achievement gap with the rest of Canada. This complexity fuels the flow of the dialogue in narrative interviews (Bakhtin, 1981, 2000). As a methodology, the narrative inquiry used offered the cross-cultural teachers’ stories as a way to portray their ways of knowing (Cavendish, 2011) and their functions in facing the challenges of culturally responsive teaching.

Drawing in some important ideals of narrative inquiry to provide more in-depth understanding. Three *commonplaces* of narrative inquiry, temporality, sociality, and place, specify dimensions of inquiry and help develop the conceptual framework (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Pursuing the narrative inquiry methodology ensures that the relating of the events is embedded in a temporality-sociality-place commonplaces continua which need to be first defined and then balanced (Clandinin & Huber, 2010), in the research as explained in the next paragraphs.

Temporality. Events and people being studied and presented in the stories all do have a *past, present* and *future*. People and events are essentially *stretched* processes, which at their *instance* of being considered are in transition. This brings to the fore a need to consider what teachers have contributed in the past in making teaching the Indigenous student what they are *currently* doing in the present time and also what they are likely to contribute to resolving the achievement gap in the not too distant *future* (Clandinin,

Pushor, & Orr, 2008). According to Strawson (2004), the narrator may choose to be “diachronic” (a continuous being in time) or “episodic” (a discontinuous being in time) in their experience of *being* in time in narrative (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 25).

Sociality. What are the influences of the teacher in the concern of the feelings, hopes, moral conditions and aesthetic conditions of the students, Indigenous students in this case? As long as there is a tangible inquirer-participants relationship, as well as their environment and people who form the context of individuals, the researcher, the teachers and their students and the communities where the culturally responsive learning-teaching is taking place, this commonplace prevails in the narrative inquiry.

Place. *The place* is the locus of action, the location of characters, the cradle of stories, constrained and enabled by cultural and social context (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It has the endowment of surface, takes the imprint of man’s hand and foot and mind; it can be tamed and domesticated. Again, borrowing from Connelly and Clandinin, *place* in the narrative may be described with such words as “the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place ... all events take place some place” (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, pp. 480-481). Also, Clandinin and Huber (2010) mentioned a narrative ideal of how human experiences are linked with human identities because they relate to the place or places and the derived stories for the experiences. Using the concept of *place*, it would be possible to tune the atmosphere and temperature, and be nursed and nourished and instructed by the same *place* idea. It can be felt and smelt (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) by the storyteller.

One capability of narrative inquiry is its capture of experiences as human beings living in time, space, in person and relationship referred to as the *three-dimensional inquiry space*. This virtue of narrative inquiry is what shall be tapped in this study. It shall be used to cover the temporal, the spatial and the personal-social wings of human existence. The element of *space* draws on Dewey's criterion of experience as well as the notion of *situation* (Clandinin, 2006). It also combines Bakhtin's "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" and denoted by the term "chronotope" (Bemong, Borghart, De Dobbeleer, Demoen, De Temmerman, & Keunen, 2010). An entity that belongs in the realm of time long ago, was true then, and as much true now in the present situation "as everything in this world is a space-time (Bakhtin, 1987; Baxhtin, 1985). Additionally, narrative inquiry works from both the theoretical position and what critics refer to as the *reductionist* tradition and captures the phenomena as guided by the research questions and conceptual framework into analyzable parts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

A built-in capacity. As mentioned, the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space would allow this narrative inquiry to travel (1) *inward*, using responses of the teachers to examine their pedagogical practices, (2) *outward*, looking back at the field texts and at responses, (3) *backward* (4) *forward*, looking at transformations in our practices to better transformative possibilities and situated within place such as the classroom or school premises (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

More use for chronotope in the storytelling process. Forms of Time (n. d.) referred to chronotopes as the "organizing centers for the narrative event... a place where

the knots of narrative are tied and untied ... to them belong the meaning that shapes narrative” (p. 250). Similarly, Brown and Renshaw’s (2006) presented on *positioning students as actors and authors: a chronotopic analysis of collaborative learning activities*, in which Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope is seen to offer a way of viewing student participation in the classroom as an ongoing process entailing the interaction of past experience, ongoing involvement and future goals and accomplishments (Brown & Renshaw, 2006). In other words, the teachers deal at any particular time and place with students who have come into school without forgetting their background and home culture – the past and current home and school tensions and feats seeking a unified flow experience or harmony (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Also, the attempt to restory the teachers’ experiences is defined as retelling a narrative. It entails retelling and reinterpreting a personal narrative by placing it in a different context (Wiebe, 2010). According to Kelly and Howie (2007), the process of restorying entails (1) making connections with the participant’s story, (2) paying attention to Dollard’s criterion for life history. The criterion was originally intended as a tool for assessing life history (Dollard 1949). However, Polkinghorne (1995) suggested it could be used in narrative analysis as a guide to the development of the narrative (Polkinghorne 1995; pp. 16–18).

Narrative scholars have advised having to make certain considerations including: (1) contextual features like the cultural context, values and meaning systems, (2) the nature of the central character and factors that influence their goals and life concerns, (3) the influence of other people in affecting the characters’ goals, and (4) the characters’

choices. Other elements of the criteria included configuring the data elements into a meaningful explanation of responses of the character, verification of the shortened story and obtaining the whole narratives (Kelly & Howie, 2007).

In the storying activities, I identified plots, subplots, and theme fragments while putting them together in the creation of the core story. I did not examine elements of plot structure (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Also, the stories were reconstructed to create the narratives for each of the contributing narrators. There was a need for a review of the emplotment or a series of laid down historical events in the narrative chart for the participants, and reordering of experiences in the story to show a needed connection to final outcomes (Kelly & Howie, 2007). Additionally, the retelling produced social change after creating meaning from the teachers' stories (Orr & Olson, 2007).

Bakhtin's Dialogism: Application to Interview

In the study of narratives, Shepherd (2005) mentioned how the account of a dialogic discourse of Bakhtin had proved attractive due to its ability to provide a complete description of aspects of fictional narrative such as *point of view* or perspective and *speech representation* or voice (Shepherd, 2013). Bakhtin brought in the idea of *multivocality* in life and explained it that what we say is not necessarily what we mean during conversation; instead, words and statements can have a plurality of meanings. Due to this, Bakhtin indicated that *context* is vital for *meaning* (Christian, 2015). Again, he explained how a gap exists in all communications. This gap, he said makes two speakers never to completely understand each other absolutely, mentioning that the flow and continuation of dialogue are dependent in part on neither of the communicators knowing

exactly what the other means – making the gap in understanding, *narrow-able* but not *close-able* (Bakhtin, 1981, 2000, 2010).

The interview process is a form of communication to transfer the participants' teaching experience. The underlying aim of the interviews and ensuing conversation was to make them effective. Like typical interviews, they took the nature of Bakhtin's dialogism as multilayered, ever-unfolding processes to get to the lived experience of the teachers. Some of the interview features in addition to multivocality, include *heteroglossia* or the co-existence of numerous voices or *polyglossia*, or socio-ideological contradictions that intersect one another in a single language (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 291). As expected, different worldviews were revealed as one idea and understanding of culturally responsive teaching allowed accommodation and ideological interactions to happen (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 271 - 272) in an open-ended discourse.

The ensuing narrative was made of two parts, according to Bertaux and Kohli (1984). In the first part, a little restriction was instated as the flow of narration was allowed. In the second, I questioned the participant more purposefully through active engagement to create clarification of the topics, which may have been earlier overlooked or left out (Bertaux & Kohli 1984; Rice & Ezzy 2001). The interviews were recorded using audio and transcribed as soon as possible after the interview was over to ensure that the details were not overlooked.

A Photo-Elicitation

“Photo- elicitation is a method in which spoken words and images are combined so that interaction between them can occur as the interview proceeds” (Tani, 2014, p.

371). There are disadvantages of using this method; though photographing is not illegal, not all photos taken are ethical (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Photo-elicitation allowed the study to look underneath nooks and corners, and possibly bring out stories that teachers have which the normal required conciseness of the questions for this study may not allow.

Summary and Conclusions

The characteristics of the relationship that teachers foster involve being responsive. Teachers are accepting of the Indigenous student as being dynamic in nature. Teachers address and adapt to the different needs and approaches of the student. This idea is parallel to the definition of a culturally responsive way of dealing with such students. The study presents the capabilities of narrative inquiry as a research approach and places the events in the research with a special capability, including the dimension of inquiry such as temporality, sociality, and place around the conceptual framework. The uniqueness of the student as they come to school from their homes combines their past present and future as we jointly seek harmony of with them and with their classmates as they are taught culturally responsively.

While certain aspects of the literature are well understood, there remains a lot to be sought and understood. In the article *Canada's Aboriginal Peoples: Social integration or disintegration?* Barsh (n. d.) reviewed the current statistical data to present the inequalities and the extent of their effect on poverty, health and social structure. Barsh's study indicated that gains had been made since the 1960s in areas where fiscal efforts produce a direct effect such as school enrollment, modernization of housing and physical

infrastructure, access to medical facilities, and income levels, which have not much to do with correcting the educational achievement gap as in this study. The expressed idea of social integration in the article means strengthening the capacity of Canada to equalize the distribution of its resources for its diverse groups (Barsh, n. d.) including quality education. Again in the article *Aboriginal identity, misrepresentation and dependence: A survey of the literature* by Cherubini (2008), reveals the points of view of Aboriginal sources represent positions of disadvantage that are purposefully degraded by mainstream positions regarding dominance over their linguistic and cultural traditions. The findings presented in the analysis of literature do not point to the work being done by teachers to remove the gap in achievement or existing pedagogical efforts at producing culturally responsive education. Making connections as teachers in an anti-discriminatory environment is important. The current low HDI has a direct relation with Indigenous educational attainment. Though, Munroe et al. revealed how all students would benefit from a revitalization of Indigenous knowledges (Munroe et al., 2013), the stories told by the cross-cultural teachers gave a more direct account of teachers' experiences that can be useful to educators of the North Canada Indigenous students. The study used various conversations and instrumentation of qualitative methods to draw input from the participants in restorying their experience.

In this chapter, I have presented the meaning of culturally responsive pedagogy with the student at the center. The chapter has traced the historical underpinnings of the current situation of the educational process of the Indigenous student as a foundation for the research method used. Also, the account focused on the culturally responsive

practices of teachers in their relationship with the student from their cross-cultural perspective, a foundation for the research method used.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Today, I overheard Keofe talk about whether there is a need to learn how to grow pastures at all, with her friends. She said "... why do human beings have to bend their backs in the sun and sow pastures for beasts when it should be the other way round?" Obviously, this whole pasture in the school field for the school cattle thing sounds to my students like it is a joke. Teaching the concept of humans taking responsibility for what animals would eat sounds like a fiasco, a waste of time when weighed against the cattle-post idea and lifestyle that the Batswana students are so used to.

Personal Diary, February 11, 1993

The purpose of this narrative study was to describe, analyze, relive, and retell the story and thus restory the narratives presented by six cross-cultural teachers of K-12 Indigenous students of the NWT. The Indigenous student population ratio is low in other provinces, and there is a high ratio of non-Indigenous teachers in the NWT compared to other provinces of Canada. Therefore, the level of cultural discontinuity in other provinces may not be as intense as in the NWT. Teaching in the NWT involves challenges of matching pedagogy with students' way of life. This study included stories from teachers coming from their various cultures regarding how they mediated the content of their culture, the culture of the curricular documents, and the culture of the Indigenous students in their instructional approach. The teachers' narratives included the perspectives of Indigenous students and generated intercultural dialogue while embracing the background of students as they taught (see Munroe et al., 2013). The narratives of teachers were restoried to explore how teachers from other cultures educate Northern

Indigenous youth. The aim was to find meaning from the encounters with these teachers as they taught students from the Indigenous culture.

In this chapter, I describe the research tradition as applied in this study. Also, I explain the methodology including data collection methods and issues of trustworthiness. Additionally, I present the research questions, rationale for the research design, role of the researcher, participant selection, instrumentation for data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

The main issues explored in this study were categorized under central and subquestions as follows:

Central Question

What are the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of non-Native cross-cultural teachers regarding curricular implementation in Indigenous schools in the NWT?

Subquestions

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?
2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in culturally responsively teaching?
3. In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

I used a combined conceptual framework of TribalCrit and Eurocentric diffusionism. The narrative inquiry method allowed the participating teachers to express their stories through interviews.

Facets of the Interviews: Multivocality, Polyglossia, Heteroglossia, and Dialogisms

During the interviews in this narrative inquiry, I was aware that as a rule of life, what we say has multiple meanings, described as heteroglossia. Also, polyglossia or the existence of numerous voices existed whenever discussion developed; unless there was an expression by the parties involved the meaning making of the communication, the exchange will not be understandable. I respected the ideal that people can have differing voices and opinions on similar or same issues. I recognized that multivocality existed in life; in that what we say may not be what we mean (Bakhtin, 1981; Irvine, 2012). I exploited the numerous and diverse voices of participants. Although they were cross-cultural and Caucasian, the teachers' views were not monolithic; each had their unique identity as part of Bakhtin's dialogism. The situation facilitated the required dialogue for soliciting the views and narratives of the lived experiences of the teachers. The analysis of these contrasting or corroborating views was ongoing in the study, and the aim was to confirm and disconfirm what was known before and during the interviews as a way to validate the perceptions and beliefs of the participants (Asbrand, 2012; Suri, 2011).

Justifications in a Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry includes the reasons why the study is important. I considered the personal, practical, and social aspects of the responses. As the inquirer, I situated myself through my journal and the narrative beginnings to portray the researcher's "relation to

and interest in the inquiry” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2008, p. 25).

Another justification for the inquiry involved how this study changed my practice and thinking, as well as that of other colleagues in a territorial school system prompted by the need to move the Indigenous education agenda forward.

Reflectiveness in the Research

During the study, Dewey’s (1910/1997) suggestions about being reflective were considered. Reflective thought was described by Dewey as an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it...” (p.6)

During the period of the study, I developed the habit of going to bed each day thinking about new and old things of the study to obtain a better understanding.

Additionally, Bandura (2006) presented four core properties of the human agentic functions, which may be associated with the teachers in the study. These included (a) intentionality or making plans for action with attached strategies, (b) forethought or setting goals for the anticipated outcomes with needed visualizations, (c) self-reactiveness or regulating the course of execution of the action plan, and (d) self-reflectiveness or engaging in close self-examination of thoughts and actions, including the meaning of pursuits (Bandura, 2006).

The teachers of the NWT apply such perceptions and ideals in their functions as change agents. From the teachers’ narrated experiences, I examined how successfully the participants were able to teach the Indigenous students in culturally responsive and reflective manner. I looked for themes that confirmed or disconfirmed (Asbrand, 2012;

Landreneau, n. d.; Patton, 1990; Wise, n. d) Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995) ideals of culturally responsive teaching. I also sought to identify what teachers could have done better (Popp, Grant & Stronge, 2011).

Storytelling in Narrative Inquiry as a Vehicle for Relaying Teachers' Experiences

Narratives serve as beginning points for examining the influence that experience has on cultural understanding and identity. Narratives are a mode of thinking and communicating, and they also provide counter perspectives as a mode for self-understanding and reaching a unique post-critique verdict (De Fina & Georgakopolou, & Riessman 2015). Narrative inquiry provided lens through which the experiences of the six cross-cultural teachers of Native Northern Canadians were examined. According to Dewey (1997), the aim of research is to study human experience as experience originates from a narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A narrative inquiry approach permits storytelling as a way of gathering participants' experiences.

Storytelling as a narrative. Through narratives, actions may be linked to meaning making and create an understanding of lives. A narrative allows the participants to provide the researcher with insights into the sociocultural core of teaching (Sikes & Gale, as cited in Dickinson, 2012). Narrative inquiry as a methodology includes survey, ethnography, and experimentation, as well as interview and questionnaire tools in reporting forms like film and written texts (Sunwolf & Frey, 2001). As informed by Clandinin and Connelly (2004), "experience happens narratively, and therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively." (p. 19).

Other traditions considered. I considered other qualitative designs such as phenomenological and ethnographic, but none had the capability of making meaning as effectively as narrative inquiry. According to Creswell (2013), ethnography focuses on a culture-sharing group; however, the narrative allowed me to explore the lives of individuals and the stories of their respective teaching experiences. Though a narrative is similar to phenomenology in studying individuals, the latter focuses on the essence of shared experience. The decision to use narrative inquiry was based on how a well-told story can place the reader in the perspective of the narrator and how stories can bring the readers into the moment of the experience being described (Ellis, 2004).

Benefits and Justifications

I considered the benefits gained from hearing the stories of the teachers in re-shaping and possibly removing the tensions that can occur in the teaching of Indigenous students by cross-cultural educators in a culturally responsive manner. I also considered whether such justification was enough to answer the *so what* of research (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Narrative inquiry's commonplace elements can be used to address these issues. Place is "the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). The key to commonplace is recognizing that "all events take place some place" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 481). On this basis, I considered whether the same experience would be felt if the direction of marginalization were reversed. I considered the effects if the atrocities had been committed by Indigenous peoples on Whites instead of Whites on Indigenous peoples. I had instances where objectivity led me

to entertain that no matter what, a spade was a spade, and whether a harm was done by Whites to Indigenous People or vice versa that harm was still harmful, no matter to whom or by whom and needs to be spoken about. If storytelling was the mode, then so be it.

The analysis and interpretation process draws in the description of the commonplace in the study. Also, the element of positioning the narrative to other research with different epistemological and ontological assumptions helps to calibrate the essence of the study. I sought to establish the uniqueness with the phenomenon of study that could not be known by others.

Role of the Researcher

I was responsible for filing documentation and seeking permission from the institutional review board and other bodies, as needed. Other functions I performed included sampling, interviewing, journaling, analyzing and interpreting data, and writing the report to derive meaning. Listening to, recording, and interpreting the stories was a possible asset for nurturing the researcher-participant relationship, though it was also a source of bias requiring care because I taught with the participants for the same employer. I attempted to minimize such biases through purposive sampling methods. I identified and navigated away from possible clashes between my personal story as a cross-cultural teacher and the narratives of the participating teachers (see Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). Also, notes taking and memoing helped in reducing biases. Memoing was a creative activity that tended to be less constrained by the need for logic and corroborating evidence. As a technique it allowed me to make notes about the happenings in study. Memos represented the direct recording of my ideas, which prepared the ground

for further analysis as the study proceeded.

The six-participants and the two focus group members are all fellow members of the Northwest Territories Teachers Association (NWTTA). A few of them were fellow teachers who co-participated with me in conferences in my region and the NWT as a whole. The composition of this group broadened the base of discussion, diversifying the responses to the questions and leading to a triangulation of data collection. While restorying, there was a comparison of the information from these diverse responses with other researchers and dissertations in the same area of study from different regions of Canada and the world. I kept a reflexive journal to report the perspectives and assumptions that propelled my personal values, which may likely have influenced the interpretation and meaning making of data. Again, my task as a researcher was to use the narrative inquiry to present an exposition on the six teachers' lives, interests, concerns and passions (Phillion, 2002) as confirmed or disconfirmed (Dey, 1993) by contributions from the focus group members who are seen to have had comparable career experiences in the region. By this action of the focus group, I added to the validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000) of the study. I adopted and adapted as I applied the tradition of narrative inquiry to the stories told by the teachers (Cavendish, 2011). Each step on the way, I looked for ways to eliminate or declare my personal biases and authenticate the story (Malterud, 2001). Also, I was cognizant of my functions in the research process as I restoried and wrote to present the teachers as characters in the story they told. The stories covered the world they form a part of and about their teaching and classroom instruction they author daily (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 12).

As a researcher, my role was also to recognize that what the participant *said* may not have been all that *they meant* as described in Bakhtin's multivocality concept (Bakhtin, 1981, Liang, 2013). Similarly, what the researcher heard may not have been what they wrote. The explanation was that though stories are heard as are told by the participants, their meaning as understood by the researcher may differ, and discrepancies may exist. With this in mind, I made an effort to adhere to the perspectives of the participants during the interview.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) pointed to the interchangeability of the use of narrative inquiry as both method and phenomenon:

It is equally correct to say "inquiry into narrative" as it is "narrative inquiry." By this, we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study... . Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (p. 2)

Methodology

A narrative inquiry is a methodology of stories, lived and told, and relived and retold, and *of* the people who live and tell them (Crowell, 2011). "To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). In this study, the methodology was of the *self-other* narrative typology (Sunwolf & Frey, 2001). The interview used some photo-elicitation techniques (Plunkett, et al., 2012) for certain questions, as they seemed to be

the most suitable for the category of the question being asked. The photo-elicitation was expected to lead to a sharpening of memories of how much the teachers had understood about Native Canadians through their experience. It would also be deemed fitting to clarify misunderstandings (Harper 2002), which may otherwise be experienced through the use of direct questioning in the interview on the idea of residential school, marginalization, and TribalCrit in the study.

Participant Selection Logic

Here, sampling for interview participants and focus group was considered. A criterion sampling logic was used to select participants (Patton, 2002). Such a method was intended to lower the ability to broadly generalize. The sampling was a purposeful sampling or purposive sampling (Palys, 2008; Suri, 2011). Both the participants and the focus group were required to be cross-cultural. An email was sent to all teachers using the territory-wide email system for the Department of Education called FirstClass. In this email, I invited those who were interested in responding as indicated in the letter in Appendix C. An initial telephone invitation followed up to would-be participants. During the conversation, I asked them questions to verify whether they have an Indigenous ancestry, if they did not, I asked them directly if they would be willing to be interviewed. It was going to be possible that more than the number needed for the interviews and focus group discussions was obtained through this step. In such a case a further criterion for gathering information about their experience of teaching the Indigenous student and their teaching qualification was applied through the use of a screening form as shown in Appendix E. The aim was to select the six participating teachers and five focus group

members who are cross-cultural, teaching in schools with predominantly Indigenous student populations and who have the most impressive credentials.

The teacher pool falling under this description of cross-culture tends to be predominantly Euro-Canadians and perhaps about five African Canadians of the professionally certified NWTTA teachers. Non-Aboriginal teachers far outnumber other ethnicities in the Northwest Territories; Indigenous Aboriginal students outnumber all other ethnicities, especially in the rural community schools in the NWT. There are 800 educators that teach in the 49 schools across the Northwest Territories (NWTTA, 2015). Of this number, 493 work for the government and the remaining are with the Catholic school system and other. The GNWT recognizes 377 as non-Aboriginal, 13 as Indigenous non-Aboriginal, and 103 as Indigenous Aboriginal. Six cross-cultural participants were sampled for this study to allow a needed depth and wider scope of the examination. This six-member group afforded an easy attainment of saturation of data in the two 90-minute interviews for each participant. For purposes of triangulation, a 2- and 3-member focus groups were formed for this study. These were differentiated from the interview participants by the possibility of some of them being previous classroom teachers but still serving their divisions in various capacities; for instance, as Program Support Teachers (PSTs) or administrators. Both groups were drawn from the 13 Indigenous non-Aboriginal and 377 non-Aboriginal (GNWT Official, July, personal communication).

The purpose of the focus groups was to build upon and develop a clearer understanding of what the participants recounted in their narratives during the interviews (Marczak & Sewell, n. d.). Though they were a useful group for the insights mentioned,

they could not be used to assess individual participant responses and their views and perceptions were not taken as representative of other stakeholders who may have different characteristics (Marczak & Sewell, n. d.). Also, the *tyranny of the few* could result, if care was not taken to create an open system which allowed introverted members of the group to make an input with the same propensity as the extroverted members (Bunker & Alban, 2006) in the groups.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation and Data Collection

Seidman's (2013) outline for contacting and recruiting participants was followed. Further, Seidman cautioned about the possibility of an inequitable relationship arising during recruitment and actual interview processes due to elements of "sexism, racism, classism, and institutional politics" (p. 29). Recruitment was with the idea of avoiding such inequitable relationship in mind while recruiting. I endeavored to steer away from recruiting friends and acquaintances. A letter was written to the superintendents of the divisions of education in the Northwest Territories informing them about the study and requesting access to their population of NWT teachers as in Appendix D. Based on their direction, potential participants and focus group members were contacted directly with care and thoroughness. Again, FirstClass email as in Appendix C was used to contact participants spread over the Northwest Territories. The intent of this initial contact with potential participants was to set a time to explain the research for which I needed their participation and to introduce myself. I used both email and telephone to confirm interview appointments, do follow-up arrangements, and maintain contact. At this point, it was necessary to maintain a friendly tone, show purposefulness and have an open

concise presentation and demeanor. Reaching them in a subsequent period, I looked into issues of informed consent. I then sought their confirmation to participate in the study (Seidman, 2013). Due to a logistical limitation of the Internet platform and the intricacies of timing the members, the focus group was units of two members and three who will be combined as and when they are available instead of an originally intended 5-member group.

Instrumentation

Interviews formed the major and important instrument in this study. As designed by Dolbeare and Schuman, the series of interviews allowed me to work with the participants to set their experience within the context of the research (Schuman, 1982) as guided by the conceptual framework. There were 12 semi-structured interviews of 90 minutes in two rounds for the participants. One participant had an extra session of interview for 45 minutes to complete unfinished dialogue. I interviewed one of the two focus groups three times for 45 minutes as scheduled. With the second group I interviewed for a single session of 162 minutes. In the first interview, the context of the participants' experience was established; in the subsequent, the participants were allowed to reconstruct the details of the experience as tailored to the context. I encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning their experiences held for them (Seidman, 2013). The interview protocol included questions about (a) the participants' autobiographies, (b) what stood out for them in their first encounters with living in the Indigenous community and (c) their stories of teaching among Indigenous students and their follow-up ideas on the Indigenous student views on Native knowledge source and use. There was a flexible

plan of an interview, aimed at excavating the individual personal stories of the teacher participants (Seidman, 2013). The goal was to create a way for each participant to live their lives and still share the core meaning of the steps of their lives. Such expected collaboration itself was the first ideal as for a typical narrative inquiry where stories are told by participants, retold and restoried by the interviewer. The interview and discussion protocol for the participants and focus groups are shown in Appendix A and Appendix B.8 respectively. I also presented a matrix of relationship between the interview and research questions used in this study

I went in with a medley of understandings for conducting the interview portion of the study. According to Seidman (2013), and as applied to this study, using phenomenological interviews was not focused on answers to interview questions, but obtaining an understanding of the experience, context, and meaning-making processes of participants (Asbrand, 2012; Cavendish, 2011). Thus narrative unearthed reflective thinking. The interview questions invited participants to recount their teaching life experiences as they applied the culturally responsive teaching ideology to their practice in the Northwest Territories. As indicated by Riessman (1993), conversations aimed at developing meaning together with each participant. I enabled the participants to take me along on a journey in their life experiences as teachers and so formed a *dialogic* partnership with them in conversation (Bakhtin, 1981, 2000; Kovack, 2010). Further, some questions used photo-elicitation to draw more story responses, which could not be achieved with any other method of questioning. The photos chosen for this type of questioning formed the basis of the teachers' depth of understanding of the current plight

of the Indigenous student based on their ethnic history and residential schooling. I attempted to work elements of *Native ways of knowing* and the *Eurocentric curriculum* in the interview without posing questions in many words. I could not afford to generate a bigger volume of writing for this study than I anticipated. During the second interviews, a photo-elicitation (Collier, 1957; Harper, 2002; Plunkett, Leipert, & Ray, 2012) of an Indigenous student's 'before' and 'after' images were shown to the teacher participants for comments about the effects of Eurocentric education on existing Native ways of knowing as shown in Appendix B.2. Also, other photographs as shown in Appendices B.3 and B.4 were used to request the views of participants about the residential schools' phenomenon. The technique of photo-elicitation could lead to a sharpening of memories of how much the teachers have understood about Native Canadians through their experience. The application of this method was also to clarify misunderstandings (Harper 2002), which may otherwise have been experienced through the use of direct questioning in the interview on the important ideas of residential school, marginalization, and TribalCrit in the study.

The nature of the interviews. Though the sessions were not to be a repetition of questions, Strawson's (2004) idea of diachronic and episodic *beings* in time were explored at each encounter of the process to verify overlaps of the content of their responses. The questions asked were escalated in the process of the interview. These questions were fashioned after Bakhtin's dialogism. By applying Patton's (2002) interviewing techniques, the questions were sequenced and structured to provide an open, non-dichotomous and non-directional dialogue involving feeling, opinion, knowledge and

sensory, and behavior and demographic or background in their possible arrays of past, present and future (Patton, 2002). Each participant had two sessions of interviews. As in Appendix A, questions assigned for the first interview aimed at establishing the context of the participant's experience, with little restriction to allow needed flow. My task was to questions participants' personal experience and the topic, up to the present time (Seidman, 2013). Part two took on a more purposeful approach to questioning for the clarification of the topic, allowing details and reconstruction of experience. It took question forms that covered what the teachers do on-the-job, leaving out their opinions. For example, I led them to construct an account of their day at school from wake-up time to sleep time as teachers of Indigenous Peoples (Seidman, 2013). Participants were urged to reflect on the meaning of their experiences addressing "the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' work and life" (p. 18). As per the consent agreement, participants who desired to opt out could be allowed to do so though none did. The details of interviews including the participant, date and duration of each of the two rounds of interviews for the participants and focus groups are found in Tables 2 and 3.

Data Analysis Plan

The goals of the plan of data analysis include connecting the data to the research questions and the guiding conceptual framework. The summary of the plan can be seen in the flow chart in Figure 5 (Stutzman, 2011). This was detailed in a systematic manner by an *NVivo* procedure for coding and analysis from the transcribed data of the interviewed educators.

The phases of research design included an open-ended two sessions of Seidman's three-interview stages for each participant (Seidman, 2013), during which note-taking, memoing, re-reading, data analysis was done. I kept looking out for data saturation as I conducted the interviews, both between two interviews of the same person and across interviewees. As the participants were in isolated schools, telephone interviews (Salmons, 2014) and, or SKYPE were used. Responses from interview questions, which were derived from the teachers' lived experiences and perceptions as they taught Indigenous students were collected. After collection, data organization was done focus was turned on the meaning making to obtain a coherent account of participant educators' stories. Analysis of the data was done concurrently as data collection (Merriam, 2002). The procedures entailed data management, transcribing, memoing and chunking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, Dey, 1993). I undertook work to do theme determination, re-reading of transcripts, describing and representing data visually. I also used *NVivo* to organize the data into themes and to produce visualization perspectives. I followed a detailed, systematic manner of *NVivo* procedure for coding and analysis.

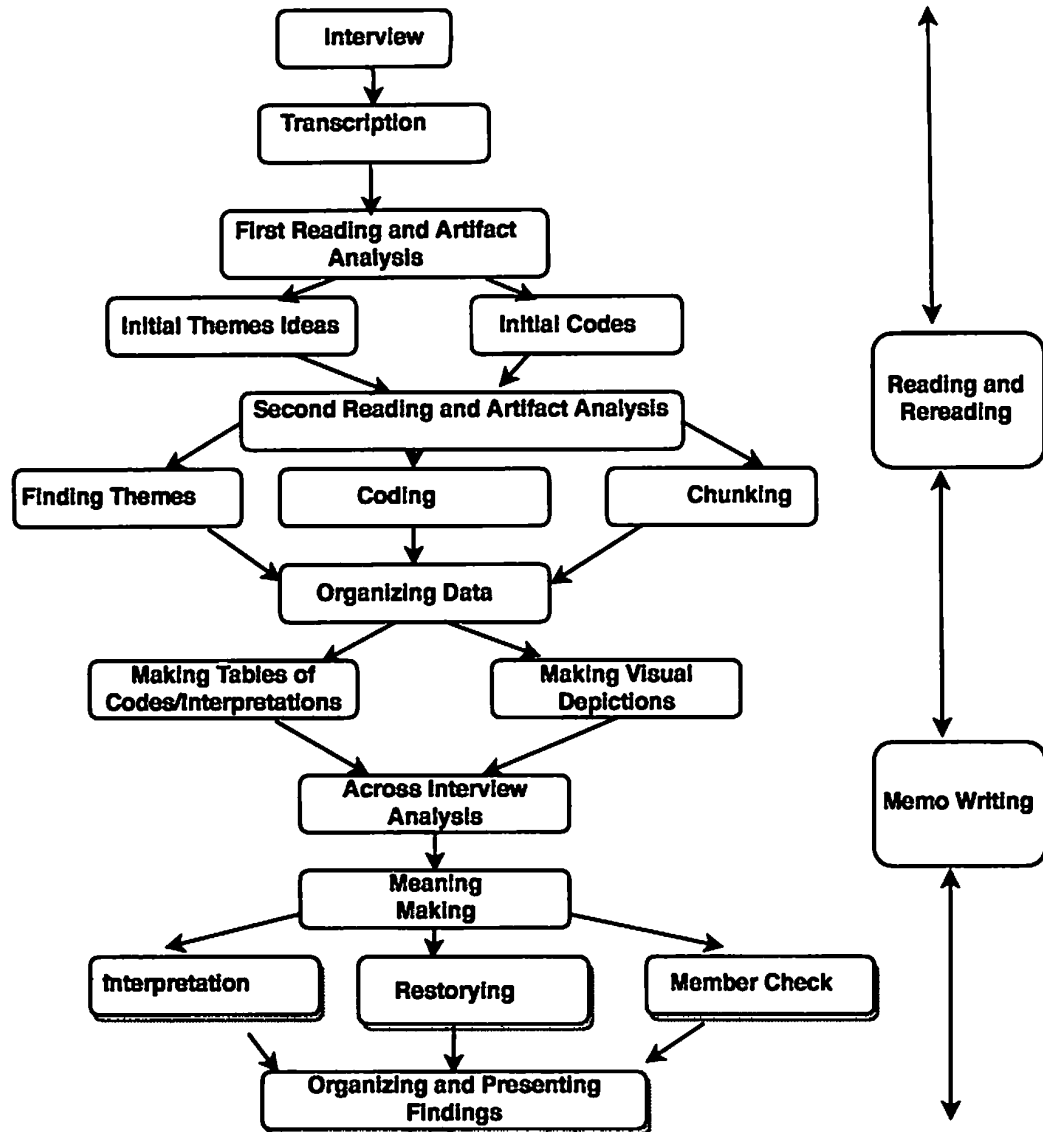


Figure 5. Data analysis flow chart (Stutzman, 2011).

The phases of research design took the form of two open-ended sessions of Seidman's suggested three-interview stages for each participant (Seidman, 2013); during process, note-taking, memoing, re-reading, and ongoing data analysis was done. I kept looking out for data saturation as I conducted the interviews, for repetitions between two interviews of the same person and across interviewees. As the participants were in isolated schools, telephone interviews (Salmons, 2014) and, or SKYPE were used. After collection, data organization was done and focused on making meaning to obtain a coherent account of participant teachers' stories. Analysis of the data was done concurrently as data collection (Merriam, 2002). The procedures entailed data management, transcribing, memoing and chunking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, Dey, 1993). Theme determination, re-reading of transcripts, describing and representing data visually was done. *NVivo* was used to organize the data into themes and to produce visualization perspectives.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Confirmability, the qualitative counterpart to objectivity is established through strategies such as researcher reflexivity and the triangulation of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the paths of ensuring the believable applicability of the findings, which include credibility, transferability, and dependability. Creswell and Miller (2000) enumerated nine ways to trustworthiness. These ways were relevant to this study and included member checks, providing a thick, rich description, and producing a reflexive journal (Ledger, 2010). In line with this, summaries and findings of the interviews will be shared with the participants through a network of northern researchers at the Aurora

Research Institute of the NWT, as well as through the NWTTA website. I maintained needed contact with the participants and focus group members as I wrote the final report. The triangulation through the focus group confirmation and cross-data validity check, subject matter expert examination and reflection continued as portrayed in this study through personal communications. All effort was used to establish multiple ways of approaching the truth (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam, 2009).

Also, Malterud (2001) hinted that researcher background affects what is in the investigation, the angle of the investigation and the methods that the researcher judges as most appropriate in the framing of the conclusions. This has called for thoughts about developing the attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction in the different stages of the research in this study (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). Additionally, my experience of preparing to tell the stories of fellow teachers has brought me to consider Silko's (1977) comments. These indicated that in considering the 'landscape' the concept of "a portion of territory the eye could comprehend in a single view does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and [their] surroundings. Viewers are as much part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on to see the landscape." (Silko, 1997, p. 27). As narrative inquirers take their positions to inquire, they too are positioned on the same landscape, and while agentically shaping, they are also being shaped by the landscape. I can find this in a similar manner as I strove to tell the stories of teachers objectively (Clandinin, 2006).

Additionally Clandinin (2006) had this to say:

Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need

to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. This makes clear that as narrative inquirers, inquirers, too, are part of the metaphoric parade [and are part of the landscape]. (p. 47)

Ethical Considerations

The assumption that “preconceptions are not the same as bias unless the researcher fails to mention them” (Malterud, 2001, p. 484) was applied in considering ethical procedures in this study. An effort was made to declare possible sources of bias. As a human research instrument, I calibrated my perspective, beliefs, and values as the participants' share their experiences in a grounded theorizing manner between interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 2012).

As in narrative inquiries, the context determined the ethics of each situation since each was unique (Josselson, 2007). The reflexive guideline for the research ethics was used rather than a procedural approach to ethics (McLeod, 1994). It is to be noted that restorying leads to the exposition of experience and the consequent interpretation of the practitioner's theories, vision, and worldviews of education could be intrusive. Confidentiality, privacy, and possibilities of conflict of interest were considered in the study design. An inbuilt capability to ensure this was done by the approval that was required by the institutional review board (IRB) in the stages of the study. I sought the consent and ethical approval from all relevant bodies such as Walden University's IRB before data collection (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011; O'Leary, 2004). Unconditionally, I was responsible for the integrity of the research process (O'Leary, 2004, p. 50). Further, I

established the following: (1) responsibility for the production of knowledge, (2) recognizing, understanding, and balancing of subjectivities, (3) acting within the law, (4) accurate reporting, and (5) responsibility for the production of knowledge by myself. Other measures in the set of responsibilities included developing appropriate expertise and experience, assuming responsibility for the researched, respecting the rights of cultural groups and designing and conducting equitable research. Additionally, as the researcher, I ascertained that no harm came to respondents as well as ensure confidentiality and appropriately, anonymity (O'Leary, 2004). Participant anonymity was established in the design through the use of pseudonyms. Any part of the data that revealed participant identification was deliberately omitted or blurred (Kelly & Howie, 2007).

Negotiating research texts creates a space where participants' narrative authority is honored. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality take on added importance as the complexity of lives are made visible in research texts. Strategies such as fictionalizing and blurring identities and places are often used. Narrative inquiry research texts often call forward increased attentiveness to ethical matters.

(Clandinin & Huber, 2010)

Subjectivity Statement

As propounded by Watson (2014), in line with the assertion by Malterud (2001) about the need to declare possible sources of biases, I declare that there is a characteristic subjectivity in the design and restorying of the teachers' stories. This declaration is an attempt to return passion and keep the meaning making personal as could be expected in

qualitative research (Glesne, 2011; Peshkin, 1988). One's subjectivity [in a qualitative research] is like a garment that cannot be removed." (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). This brings in the thoughts of the inquiry being part of the "metaphoric parade." (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47)

I have worked as a cross-cultural teacher in Zambia for eighteen months, in Botswana for thirteen years, in Southern Canada for three years and now in Northern Canada for six years. This narrative inquiry will not be a good story if I do not declare that my experiences in these countries as a non-Indigene would not affect my writing, my world, and thinking. I do harbor a hidden desire that teachers will accept the existence of Native knowledge and will make an effort to apply available ways of knowing to bring academic change. Though I try to hide this desire, it keeps coming out each time I write under such influence. So I write under an influence like some auto drivers do.

Agreements and Consent

I communicated with participants before the start of the interview process. An informed consent form was emailed to and collected back from participants as they were being engaged in the study. Their approvals were sought and when received forestalled any possible legal and ethical hurdles. Their informed consent denoted by their signature connoted the agreement to work under confidentiality as they were expected to participate voluntarily.

Summary

"Tswée tswée [please], explain how you prepared your vegetable plot." I requested. "Tswée tswée [please], as we discussed in class, I used the help of my

workmate to measure the needed area of 2m by 2m and to dig the soil...and I finalized it by adding a calculated amount of two kilograms per square meter of farmyard manure...” replied Xharae. I noted that the spirit of Botho had seeped into our relationship so much so that not one sentence would be exchanged between and among us without using ‘please,’ a sign of respect given, respect returned.

Personal Diary, March 20, 2001

Clandinin and Huber (2010) have advised how in setting up a narrative inquiry, the following have to be ensured: (a) aligning the commonplaces of narrative inquiry; (b) establishing the possible starting for the narrative inquiry—beginning with telling stories, beginning with living stories; setting the autobiographical aspects of the narrative inquiry; (c) living the narrative inquiry – from field to field texts, from field tests to interim research texts, from interim research tests to research texts; (d) positioning – in relation to other research undertaken from differing epistemological and ontological assumptions. Additionally, Clandinin and Huber (2010) underscored the need to (a) have ethical considerations; (b) establish issues in representation, setting up the voice, representational metaphors in the field texts; with an element that (c) the entire work will lead from living, to telling, retelling and eventually produce the social change of reliving (Orr & Olson, 2007; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). This change shall be the result of another chronotope, an intrinsic connectedness, a unity of time with space (Bemong, Borghart, De Dobbeleer, Demoen, De Temmerman, & Keunen, 2010). The past of tensions and weaknesses in the education would not matter because it shall fuse with the present and shall be ready to take the agenda of education of the Indigenous to the future *place* of

mitigated achievement gap and acceptance. A portrayal of husbandry of the *present* with a *flashback* and *foreshadow* of educational milieus among Indigenous students (Morson, 1998; Terras, 1998).

In chapter three, I have pursued a narrative thinking to describe certain aspects of the researcher in the narrative inquiry with the aim of investigating living, extracting from what participants are telling. From the material produced, I endeavor to retell, hoping that it eventually produced the change of reliving the experience in other Northwest Territories teachers. The nature of interview questions has been looked into as well as issues of trustworthiness such as ethical procedures. Again, this chapter has laid the ground for setting up the process of data collection and analysis of the six teachers and two focus groups sampled from the 800 certified educators who every school day work to bridge the gap between their cultures and those of the Indigenous peoples they teach.

I am lying here on my back in the bush, on a mat of fallen leaves, with tall trees all around me. I am one with the surrounding and also with Mother Nature. No, I am not only an agent of change... I am also being changed by Native ways of knowing (Silko, 1997)... But wait, the muscles on my back are aching after carrying a few logs through the bush to get ready for winter (Figure 6). The need for urgency in preparation is imbued, as this North American cold season approaches. How can I bring this concept to class? We do not have snow, we do not have winter back in the tropics, this, too, I have to learn...as I cause change, I become changed... too.

Personal Diary, September 30, 2015



Figure 6. From personal diary, changing and being changed

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

Thinking narratively about the Phenomenon throughout the Inquiry --thinking narratively about a phenomenon, key to undertaking narrative inquiries entails thinking within the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry—temporality, sociality, and place. Thinking narratively about the phenomenon is necessary throughout the inquiry from framing the research puzzle, to being in the field, to composing field texts, and finally, to composing research texts... Narrative inquiry is a process of entering into lives in the midst of each participant's and each inquirer's life.

Clandinin and Huber (2010)

Clandinin and Huber (2010) influenced the way I approached this study. I thought narratively about my past, present, and future, and how they combined to make relevant the places I have been and am now.

I learned from my University Vice Chancellor once at an Agriculture Extension Durbar where I interpreted our local language for our village elders at Kwaprow. What I learned was to influence all my learning that followed and perhaps my stance as a cross-cultural teacher even today. Professor Kwamina Dickson who people in Ghana's education system had known as having received a fair share of Eurocentric education told me that to be properly educated, I had to dip myself enough into using local riddles and proverbs while acquiring my first degree-- a lot of content for my degree was needed but also a lot of my local Fanti culture, to establish who I am, first.

Personal Diary... February 1987

A pure chronotope, this is; the present time, my present position and situation in this place called the Northwest Territories have a unique connectedness with days gone by. The chronotope in Kwamena Dickson's advice was for me to maintain enough of the past, negotiate the present where I am, sufficiently well, but to be sure to keep who I am for the future wherever I found myself. He taught me: "*You will need to be who you have been in the past sufficiently enough as you let the presence of the present education pass through you to prepare you*" for the upcoming new realm of two worlds, the world of Internet, cellphone, tube intrusion surgery, but hook on to who you have become as culture has shaped you so you do not lose your identity to any dominance.

The purpose of this narrative study was to describe, analyze, relive, and retell the story and thus restory the narratives presented by six cross-cultural teachers of K-12 Indigenous students of the NWT. The narratives present the stories of teachers using culturally responsive teaching.

The results of the study revealed the themes obtained from the responses of the participants to the interview questions. Findings emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts. The experiences of the teachers came from both their classroom and land activities as well as their views about teaching Indigenous students in the NWT. As seen in the interview data, participants' responses related to elements of TribalCrit and Eurocentric diffusionist tendencies in teaching the students. The cross-cultural teachers presented their stories about the existing achievement gap, available resources, student expectations, and educator best practices. The current chapter presents the responses by the participants during interview sessions. The first part of the chapter has information on

data collection, how coding was done, and how the data were organized into two parts. Part I includes the participants' responses to the interview and focus group discussions, and Part II includes the analysis of these collected data.

Research Questions

Central Question

What are the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of non-Native cross-cultural teachers about curricular implementation in Indigenous schools in the NWT?

Subquestions

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of the culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?
2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in culturally responsive teaching?
3. In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

Setting

At the onset of the study, I contacted teachers from all the regions of the NWT through an email system. First, letters were sent to the superintendents of these regions requesting their support for the study. All research in the NWT requires permission from the Aurora Research Institute. I talked with the staff at the institute and ensured them that I would follow the procedures as expected. Next, I sent invitation letters to all of the

teachers as soon as Walden University institutional review board gave the go-ahead for the data collection according to IRB approval number 05-13-16-0197169.

Demographics

Table 1 presents participant demographic information. Pseudonyms were created for the participants to maintain confidentiality. Included in the participant information were the years of experience as teachers in the NWT, gender. Table 2 and Table 3 contain the dates and duration for the interviews of the participants.

Table 1

Participants' Years of NWT Experience

Participant (Pseudonyms)	Years of Experience in NWT	Gender
Mavis	27	F
Sharon	21	F
Jo-Anne	2	F
Liz	14	F
Tim	5	M
Jason	5	M
Focus Group Members (Pseudonyms)		
Mikhail	8	M
Ron	7	M
Slade	14	M
Lilian	14	F
Mike	11	M

Data Collection

Data were collected during 19 interview sessions exploring how the cross-cultural teachers teach the Indigenous students in a culturally responsive manner. All of the teachers were members of the Northwest Territories Teachers Association (NWTTA) and were non-Aboriginal. I sent letters to inform the superintendents of schools in the respective regions where the participating teachers worked. I contacted the NWTTA leadership to discuss the intentions of the study. After the letters were sent to the principals of the schools, some teachers and principals responded through email to express their interest in participating.

I telephoned the prospective participants to explain the intentions of the study and to obtain the required consent and screening forms. During the phone calls, we explored possible dates for the interviews. I assured them that their participation would be confidential and that I would be restorying their stories.

Five of the prospective participants with more program support and principal experience were selected to be focus group members. The other six were assigned the role of interview participants. The individual interviews were conducted by telephone, Skype, or FaceTime. A protocol of interview questions (Appendix A) and was used to guide the interview sessions, and a similar protocol was used to direct the focus group discussion. Some of the interviews were not completed as expected, as some of the participants were not available at the agreed time. In these cases, I rescheduled the interviews.

Before each interview, I prepared two recording devices. I used an iPhone and an

Olympus digital voice recorder for this purpose. During the interview, I made sure these devices had enough charge and were recording. After the interviews, I replayed the recording to make sure that the interview was recorded with good quality audio during the entire time of the interview. I then proceeded with the transcription of the interview from audio to text using Transcribeme. I read and reread the responses of the participants as the transcriptions were completed. I used colored texts to characterize each participant. After reading and rereading, I created nodes of the themes coming out of the responses using *NVivo*. I sought the common themes after rereading several times and chunked them together. I attached codes to the responses as they represented the summaries of the responses given by the participants. I then grouped these codes together as I detected the trends that the code summaries were leading to. Details of the first, second, and third rounds of interviews are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2

Details of First Round of Interviews

Participant (Pseudonyms)	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview (in minutes)
Mavis	11 June 2016	90
Sharon	13 June 2016	90
Jo-Anne	23 June 2016	90
Liz	14 June 2016	90
Tim	14 June 2016	90
Jason	2 Jul 2016	90
Focus Group Members	Date of Discussion	Duration of Discussion
Mikhail	17 July 2016	45
Ron	17 July 2016	45
Slade	6 August 2016	162
Lilian	6 August 2016	162
Mike	6 August 2016	162

Table 3

Details of Second and Third Rounds of Interview

Participant (Pseudonyms)	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview (in minutes)
Mavis	19 June 2016	90
Sharon	20 June 2016	90
	22 June 2016	45
Jo-Anne	26 June 2016	90
Liz	28 June 2016	90
Tim	27 July 2016	90
Jason	3 Jul 2016	90
Focus Group Members	Date of Discussion	Duration of Discussion
Mikhail	26 June 2016	45
	27 June 2016	
Ron	26 June 2016	45
	27 June 2016	

Coding and Forming *NVivo* Nodes

As the participants presented their responses, the associated perceptions of relevance to the research question were put under themes. In the process, I identified the themes of the responses and attached labels or codes to identify them (The University of Huddersfield, 2017). The transcription of each interview session was read several times. Key points were named as nodes, which are equivalents of codes, to contain the relevant responses for each interview question. I used this formed the process of open coding to lead to the next level of coding. After reading all the transcripts from each of the participant's, common themes were placed into groups. As common themes were found across the responses from the various participants, they were placed under one tag to essentially narrow the number of themes. It was then possible to obtain subcodes under each of the codes; this was the process of axial coding. The coding exercise, led to fifteen themes as presented in Tables 4 to Table 6.

Data Organization

The early part of chapter 4 contains a researcher reflection and narrative of my cross-cultural evolution and journey. It also contains a question and answers narrative of the research participants and the focus group members. Based on Bakhtin's description of dialogism, the interview questions slightly varied. For example, for some of the participants, a single interview question caused them to present views and experiences, which would not necessitate asking the next scheduled question verbatim. Probing was used to further unveil their needed responses as in standard semi-structured interviews.

After each interview, transcription of the data was done and each person or group

member interviewed was sent hard copies of the interview transcript for their comments and corrections to verify that I had captured their stories. Telephone and email communications were used to ascertain that the record was a correct representation of the interviews.

Part I of Results: Restorying the Lived Experiences and Responses of Participants

This section begins the presentation of the forming of the participants' stories. I begin doing this by building the basis of who the participants are and bringing them closer to the reader of the restoried story.

Introducing the Participants of the Interviews

Mavis. Mavis has been teaching in NWT for 27 years. Born in NWT with an adopted Chipewyan sister, Mavis schooled in three places in the NWT where school divisional headquarters are located. She describes herself as Indigenous non-Aboriginal Caucasian. She currently has no classroom but teaches certain units of the K-5 curriculum, and co-teaches and so has an in-depth understanding of what teachers do. She has previously taught grade 4-5 for two years and has been principal for four years.

Sharon. Sharon has taught in the NWT for 21 years. She was born in BC and came North with her parents at age one. Her father was a power lineman who worked in the eastern Arctic through to the Yukon, and so he was gone a lot; fortunately, Sharon had a stay-at-home mom. The family embraced the North and took great interest in fishing and hunting as a way of life. Sharon likes to be described as non-Aboriginal but Indigenous to the North. As we interviewed and Sharon made a point to accentuate her identity, she said: *“And the fun part was is I have dark hair and so lots of people think*

I'm Metis and I'm not, and I'm from here and we're a hunting family, so people think I am, but I'm not. And I never pretend to be. I never pretend to be what I'm not. I'm very proud of who I am. I'm European... I'm happy being who I am." Married to a Dene man from an island Fort settlement in NWT, her mother-in-law is a residential school survivor. *"My children are status Natives."* She hunted with her father shooting chickens but turned to moose when she became older. She shot her first moose at age 29, killing a 4-year old bull. Sharon migrated from Yellowknife to a northern teacher-training town and has been there until now, as she teaches in her former high school where she has been for most of her career. Sharon had revealed one facet of her life that set me thinking. She explained her adoption into her Native family in such terms as greatly marvels my mind and brand of cross-culture.

Jo-Anne. Jo-Anne has been in the NWT school system for two years. *"I was born to a Middle-class family of educated parents. Being third of four children."* Jo-Anne's mom's first language is French but since she did not have French education available her mom and dad put her into French immersion. She has benefited from this early education as she became a French teacher, though now she teaches mostly in English. Jo-Anne was enrolled in a Catholic school from kindergarten to grade 9. She again did grade 10 to 12 in a Catholic school and graduated with a bilingual diploma. Asked when she decided to be a teacher she responded: *"grade 12."* She did University in French and went to Fort Smith to obtain government funding to study French. Her parents also supported financially for her degree.

Liz. Liz grew up in the bush in Ontario at her parents' country home away from everything. She attributes the love for adventure as a possible contribution to why she came North. She relates her life as more suited to the bush than the city. She attended a school 45 minutes drive into town at the family's Ontario abode. She recounts how her parents would drive her in every morning. Mom was a teacher. Liz mentions spending time growing up in summer camps and along the line did the coop program in outdoor recreation. She also undertook a placement in James Bay a small community in Quebec. She had along the line once been flown there to run a summer camp with another student in 1998. Liz talked about falling in love with small Aboriginal communities and recounted going to teacher's college so that she could do a placement in North Ontario.

Tim. Tim grew up in Quispamsis, New Brunswick, a population of 13000, a superb living style outside of St John, New Brunswick. He remembered milestones in hockey as he grew up. Participated in Provincial championships in 2001. His parents were full-time workers; professional workers. Mom was a chemist and dad a mechanic both working at the nuclear power plant in New Brunswick. Growing, he did not have any experience with the First Nations. He added: *"We had a lot of opportunities available to us; practically anything that we were willing to commit to, we were able to. We camped a lot and played baseball in the summer, hockey in the winter, [as well], golf. I grew up going to church every Sunday."* At St. John, they have the Reversing Falls where the St John River goes into the Bay of Fundy. He informed that the Bay of Fundy has the highest and the lowest tides in the world. He added: *"When the river is going to the Bay of Fundy and the water is pumping up, it pushes the river water back, and it*

causes a rapid, a white water rapid.” The participant mentioned: “And so historically, the First Nations saw that in St. John and they called them the Devil Falls. It was a Mi’kmaq word for Devil Falls, but I’m not familiar. So they didn’t want anything to do with the area; that and because it’s very rocky and there’s no good farmland, so St. John became a city for urban purposes later on in Canadian history. So growing up, I didn’t have First Nations around whatsoever. It was very European, very little diversity in many cultures.”

Jason. On describing his upbringing and milestones in his life, Jason said he was born on a little island off the coast of Newfoundland in a small community of about 350 people with a K-12 school. He graduated in a class of 11 and 10 of them completed school, of whom three went to university, but he was the only one of the three to complete university. He recalled back at the time in the late 60s and early 70s when the medical ships used to sail around Provençe in the fight against tuberculosis. *“I grew up in in what they called a saltbox house, Newfoundland traditional style house that had been floated to the island that I lived on from another island that had already been resettled, and I grew up there with mom, dad, and a younger brother.”*

Expecting that having grown in such an environment he would be a great swimmer, on the contrary, he informed he did not know how to swim. The island was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and would be covered in icebergs which would clear up in a couple of weeks but would still be too cold to swim, though if you were lucky and did not get the ice, you could swim in the ocean for a week or two.

Researcher's reflection. The participating educators for this study have been from the experience range of working in the Territories' education system for between 2 years and 27 years. Six are direct administrator teachers serving as principals. There was one PST, and four are teachers with no administration links in the schools they serve. There were two Indigenous non-Aboriginals whose experience with life in the NWT could be confused as Indigenous from both their way of life and education. One of these Indigenous non-Aboriginals gave an impression, which gave me thoughts of a conflict of interest as she rode through the interview. She was married to a Dene man and had Indigenous children. All the participants were proud Europeans. They could under the circumstance exhibit Blautian Eurocentrism if they chose to, or if their experiences in NWT or elsewhere before then, had not drawn them away from Eurocentric ideas or nurtured them as citizens of one human race who are like everybody else. The same may not be said, though, for the two Indigenous non-Aboriginals

Research Questions 1 and 2

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of the culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?
2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in teaching culturally responsively?

The interview questions, as presented in Appendix A were posed to the participants and they had a chance to respond and by so present their insights about culturally responsive teaching of the NWT's Indigenous student. These interview questions had a relationship with the research questions, which directed the study.

Interview Question 1

So if I was co-teaching with you, and a student came to report on a hunting success at home, what should I expect to hear from you?

Mavis

The respondent showed extreme excitement with jubilation and near-ululation in the answer she presented: *“What are we eating...?”* She would ask. *“It is normal after such a feat by students in the school to bring and share meat from their kill.”* The excitement has to be sustained. For some communities and location, the members of the community would expect any desiring partakers of the kill to come-and-take for themselves. Mavis linked this to survival tendencies where one would strive to go to the kill of the neighbor and take meat according to their need after the elders have been catered for. She said the kid with such sharing would easily be drawn into a dialogue, which will lead to a writing expedition for the whole class.

Sharon

“If it’s their first kill you should have a huge celebration. It’s very important from my region and in my husband’s family that your first kill is definitely shared amongst people and then you have a family celebration big time.” She indicated the first kill was a big deal for Natives and is usually shared among the community members. It happened to her nephew and during her first kill. Her daughter, at the age of 13 received a 30-30 gun gift from her grandmother. This gun needed to a rebuild by her father in May, and four months later, she shot her first moose. She described this simply as “super cool.”

Liz

I asked whether there were any particular things she thinks that the students would want to hear whenever there was a success? I probed about whether there were certain expressions to work into the dialogue that she thinks would help them to identify more whenever they have such success. She explained that she would ask them for more information about the hunting. *“I would ask them to share their experience with me. This would be easier in the elementary classroom where they usually have a sharing session each day. I would just ask them about it, maybe getting more details on what they learned and who they went with and their family.”* Liz said she would engage them in dialogue and lead them to share with the group. It would also be a way to make curricular learning connections in Science and Writing in the days ahead. She explained: *“I would engage them in a dialogue of questioning and offer my perspective on things I would like them to grow and become more open in.”* She also mentioned how she would honor and respect the students as they tell their story of success.

Jo-Anne

If a student came to report on a hunting success, Jo-Anne said she would probably be joyful and interested and would want to know what they killed and what kind of recipe would be used. I asked if there were students in Yellowknife who go hunting.

Asked which side of their town people did hunting, she responded: *“people go north of the highway, and some people will go south to Kakisa it just depends on ... but some of my students are not always Aboriginal students, but they’ll go hunting.”* Hunting has become a sport and a social gathering for even non-aboriginals. *“I had a girl this*

year she missed a day of school on her birthday because her dad wants her to go hunting.” She said. It did appear the dissemination of the native worldview of hunting is happening among the students in Yellowknife; I meditated during the interview: are they allowing a nurturing of or grafting part of Native culture into mainstream YK life? She mentioned there is a hunting strand in her French curriculum and they explore whether hunting is a good or a bad idea. The students approach culture in another major language. Also, there is a big focus on fish in the grade 7- course. *“There is a day in March where we go ice fishing with Dene people.... it’s all netted fish, and they learn how to prepare fish, and we eat the fish fried up and have bannock.”* She informed.

Tim

“I would congratulate them, say great job. You know? I’m always curious what they do with all their meat too.” He indicated. He would find out who will be the elders that would share in the meat and the outcome of the fur? It would form a great classroom conversation for a time. Students who experience hunting or fishing success will need to present to class if they do not mind, in the total portrayal of the experience as positive. If possible, such ideas could be carried into literacy, spelling, vocabulary development, and writing for the children.

Jason

He replied: *“It depends on who it was. If it’s somebody who was out hunting every weekend and it’s a thing that they normally do, and you know, they’re 18 or 20 years old, you’re not going to have the same excitement and enthusiasm for it as somebody who’s been on their first full hunt and got their first kill. Right?”* he indicated

with some one who had the first kill, he would congratulate them. Would not ask for any of the meat but would ask some questions about the hunt, how it was killed and how it made him feel, what they did with it.

I am going to follow you again to class, and a child has just come and brought a question about First Nations culture, that you are not comfortable with as a Caucasian. What should I expect to hear from you?

Jo-Anne

I would probably say that I'm uncomfortable; we do have a resource person within the School District who is the person I go to when I don't know answers to questions or when I have questions...” She mentioned that if there were something she was uncomfortable with, she would say so. The school setup has a resource person who serves as a go-to person. The students are familiar with her, she comes to class and is available throughout the year. She once explained how certain culture from other First Nations like the dream catcher is spreading to the Dene. *“Sometimes I tell the students when there is a question that I will check with her and come back to them with answers, or I would invite her to the class.”* She said. It was seen as flushing with the Elders in School program.

Mavis

“First of all I will thank them for bringing that question to me...” She indicated. For the fact that they have reserved that question for her, the Mavis felt that portrayed a level of trust. But in the case of not knowing the answer or not feeling comfortable, she would ask to be given time to think about it or ask somebody who might know.

Sharon

She expressed: *“I think probably if it was a question that I didn’t understand or I wasn’t able to answer, I would certainly refer that child to our school elder or to their grandparents if I know their family, which I probably do because I know everybody here because I grew up here.”* She may also consult with her adopted auntie or mother-in-law. *“Some children may think that perhaps because I was Caucasian, I would not be able to answer their questions. But even still, I would consider where the child is coming from and perhaps figure out why the child considers me as a color instead of a compassionate and empathetic individual.”* Sharon reported that only once as she was promoting Native culture in her classroom did a lady raise a question of whether she was qualified to do that, being Caucasian. This lady also happened to be harsh to some non-Aboriginal teachers; the case was reported to the vice-principal. The lady that was being disrespectful was invited over to the house for tea and tried to resolve the case. *“And the fun part was is I have dark hair and so lots of people think I’m Metis and I’m not, and I’m from here and we’re a hunting family, so people think I am, but I’m not. And I never pretend to be. I never pretend to be what I’m not. I’m very proud of who I am. I’m European. I’m happy being who I am.”* She offered.

Liz

“I don’t know I would probably have to understand what the uncomfortable question would be or ask them, maybe to reiterate or rephrase it in a different way.” Liz answered. She may probably be telling them she needed a rephrasing or was not comfortable with the question. She added that if a student came to class and said

something that was not sensitive to the cross-cultural teacher's culture, reference could be made to direct the question to the elders using the Elders-in-school program. We could also have a dialogue to bring out the meaning of the question.

Tim

He replied: *"Given my age group experience, usually from grades like middle school and up, if they're old enough to understand that I can explain it to them, that what you're saying now is something from your culture and I am not as familiar with that culture as some of your relatives are, and one of them may give you a better answer."*

How do you know the mood of the child?

Mavis explained how some kids come in crying, as mornings are not so good. Depending on the age, some come in with a hoody over their head, others will come with heads down and avoiding to talk. Mavis explained that each poise and demeanor is an indication of what to do and what not to do. The present with the head down and avoid talking, which simply signals not to push. There could be some in the class who just come in and walk out and do whatever they want. With such kids comes the need to develop a rapport. *"If I notice it is going to be tough with any of them then I start the day with them."* She informed. *"With such, going for a walk may be needed; just to check the mail and working in breakfast may be necessary. Hunger and tiredness may be physical needs to be attended to, to add a little bit of safety to the child's wellbeing."*

Sharon

"Having taught the kids for a long period, I just know them." She said. She tends to use a lot of humor to diffuse their tensions. Sharon tends to dig into their lives and develop

enough ties to connect and know them enough to both identify and understand their moods. Her presentation revealed a great tendency to be relational-based.

Liz

“I think aside from watching or... you really have to know your students, and sometimes very helpful, having been in the community for a long time, I know their families, I know their histories, their life outside, and so you can kind of like...” Liz indicated. We chatted a little about moods and how people react. A case in point, I indicated that with me, when I am happy, I make a lot of noise, laughed, others might be quiet. She underscored the need to know students well as well as their parents, mentioning that long time association builds that sense of knowing the mood. Watching listening and being alive and mindful about even things that seem not, would help to detect what mood the students are in, good or bad. She agreed that some people are quieter when in a good mood. The students in her class are more reserved naturally. Citing that some group of people makes outbursts when joyful, the participant corrected that unlike others, the Indigenous people do not make outbursts when nothing has happened; it only happens as a signal of something.

Jo-Anne

“...by facial expression or tone of voice and [by] just talking to them and asking them questions or just observing them...” She also informed she would just develop a dialogue with them to have a chance to observe the response.

Tim

Tim's response was this: *"I'm not sure if I'm really more skilled at reading people than the next person, but with their body language, how they react to the lesson if their head is down on their desk and they're sleeping. Their reaction to what I'm saying is probably the biggest indicator, whether their reaction is pleasant or short and tempered I would be able to know that something may have happened the night before, they didn't get much sleep."*

Jason

He presented: *"You can tell when they walk in in the morning. You can tell if you know, if they've been properly fed and dressed and showered and they're smiling, you're going to have a reasonably good day with that person. If they're coming in with their hoodie hauled up over their head, looking like they haven't been sleeping anywhere that night, you know it's going to be a rough morning unless you do like I do, and let them sleep. Because, you know, Maslow said, if the basic needs are not met, you can't self-actualize. If you haven't slept all night because it hasn't been safe to go home and you're coming to school, you want to sleep because you feel safe here, I'm okay with that. Jason added: "When they're unhappy for the most part, they're quiet or they're lethargic or trying to fall asleep or whatever case. If they're happy they're laughing, joking, carrying on, touching each other, boisterous, sometimes even loud."*

If I came with you to class, and one student approached you, about not having eaten in the morning before coming to school, what should I expect? And without making them feel like they are poor or something?

Mavis

Mavis indicated that there was food always in the school office and classrooms. There is a big food basket and children are encouraged to take and eat whatever they would have a need for. If they are in a bad mood, they may need to have food in the staff room or any resource room. Her school stocks cereal and food for both breakfast and lunch. Teachers are aware that not only are there kids from needy whom, they also come from homes where the parents are on the move in a rush, and kids do not get fed as required. As it appears, there is no ethnicization in this situation, if it applies to one, it applies to all groups.

Sharon

“There is a snack program in the school at 10:00 for the children.” She informed. If they were hungry and could not wait, as a teacher she had food at all times as a Foods teacher. Even when she was in the primary school, she would get them food all the time. Giving them food also requires protecting them from being identified as poor. There is always the surprise element; it could be any one of the kids, and one cannot make general judgments any more about who is needy. Downtrodden-ness does not pertain to just one culture. Elsewhere in the Territories, the school breakfast program had not succeeded as expected because participants were tagged as poor.

Liz

If a child approaches and offers information that they have not eaten in the morning, Liz will say she would ask them to come for a snack in the kitchen. The kitchen is stocked with food for students. It is normal to offer snacks to students in the morning

whenever there is a need. The teachers could even probe whether someone or some people have had a snack or not. The teacher could go with them to the kitchen, or the special needs assistant (SNA) could help. We spoke about the Dehcho region's well set up breakfast program. Teachers sense the physical needs of the students and administer appropriately. Even students who have had breakfast but still need some more are allowed to have a snack when needed.

Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne's reaction to a student who has not eat eaten breakfast would be first to ask them if they have food with them and if so just eat. If they did not, she would ask them if they would like to go to the hallway for a snack or encourage them to get food from the office. There is usually a lot of food in her school. She also encourages students to share with one another.

Jason

When students have not eaten, snack is given to them from his resources though the school has a breakfast program as well. The breakfast program does not catch all the students as desired, only 8 to 10 children show up every day. Asked if it is not funded, he felt that was a question for administration to answer. It could be that the people who arrive for the program in other schools also fear that they may be labeled which would eventually affect the running of the program. This bottleneck is experienced repeatedly, we discussed.

So in your classroom, as a cross-cultural teacher, what do you do? From morning, afternoon and before you leave?

Mavis

The teacher connects with the kids in the morning, settles them in the class. At lunch, the teacher ensures that all the kids are fed. In the evening she sends them home with words of assurance and affirmation “*have a great night ... I hope you have a good time...*” or “*get some good sleep*” or “*what’s your plan for tonight?*”

Describe the typical day of a cross-cultural teacher of the Indigenous in your school.

Liz

There is always an expectation for structure and the students have their own expectations as well. The students have their workflow and pace of learning. There is the Western structural way as embodied in the curriculum. The teacher honors their cultural rhythm and the culture of the curriculum, both. The Western way of learning involves more the written or asking a question while they have a different mode. There is a pedagogical barrier, as they tend to watch and learn or experience and reflect more. In her finding the way to teaching the Indigenous learner, it has taken her through the pathway of obtaining a master’s degree, researching more on the Indigenous ways of knowing. She explained that it was always a struggle.

Sharon

She reported being very involved in and out of the school with student life. “*I read how they are, especially with kids that struggle, I try to gauge their feelings and where they’re coming from that day.*” During the day, Sharon makes an effort to incorporate them into the laid out program. Some of the programs rolling out require

being altered, but getting it to work; one must work the students and not aim at kids working for you. On the contrary, teachers work for them.

Either as an administrator or a teacher, how does it go like?

Liz

I inquired further about a few specific things that she does as an administrator or duty and how she identifies and deals with students who are not being safe in the hallway. She maintains an open door beginning at 10:30 in the morning when the school has already been opened. As the students get in she has to remain visible. Her routine includes checking things that they may be involved in and, the relational piece and also as an academic advisor. As a behavioral support, she is present and can engage them whenever there are challenges, or when needed. When students are in the hallway, they are encouraged to be self-aware and mindful of safety. Children running in the hallway are encouraged to “*walk, please, okay...*”

The students in her current high school are quite respectful compared to her previous school where she was in the elementary school. The carry over effect of grade sevens’ behavior was questioned. Seven graders take a bit of time to shed their elementary school behavior. She mentioned that the older kids model quite effectively to the younger kids. Added to this, the cadet program has formed a commendable character of many of her students in the current school. Concerning the grade 7s she said though they’re in the high school, they still behave as they are in Primary School, the elementary school. So it becomes a bit difficult, and you always have to remind them. She explicated: “*I think has probably changed the entire climate of the school and most kids I*

would say. Probably at least 60 to 70% of our kids have gone through that discipline of being part of the cadet program. The sense of respect for the self and clothing they have to wear, the training that they get. It's a real sense of community with that too... so I think that program has done wonders as far as the kids are very, very, respectful umm at our school and it's almost like they really understand their expectations at the school." This has reduced possible issues with the grade sevens as far as personal, and the following of school routine is concerned.

Jo-Anne

As a homeroom teacher, her day has to do with students, majority of the day. "Students arrive in the morning, and I welcome them and start the day..." A co-teacher does the work with her. In the beginning, both teachers, together with the students share five things that they are grateful for to start the day on a positive note. Then they proceed to the routine of learning French. When problems arise, the students speak to her individually and privately. "I try to make sure that I take some time to listen to the student when they want to talk to me, I'll check in with students when I noticed that they're quieter than normal. So I just kind of check in with them or sometimes ask some students to come and the door in the morning and they just want to tell you what happened last night and they just right off the bat. Toward the weekend, we have a session with the counselor, and when she passes the feathers round, each holder has a chance to speak and be heard. In the end, there is clean up and dismissal."

While she spoke, it was noted that no encounters with grade seven were mentioned. "When there are attitudes the student(s) are brought to me, and they speak to

each other. When there I find that's the best way to deal with them... it's just asking them what happened and why it happened and what they would do differently in that ...If there is a conflict but also if the student is acting. I often invite them to go for a walk."

Sometimes she sends them ahead to the office to cool off and return after a while.

I would want to find out about teacher collaboration and now that you can talk from both sides as a teacher and as an administrator. How do you find teacher collaboration?

What's the state of it in the indigenous school that you're teaching?

The collaboration at her current school comes more in her capacity as an administrator and not in team teaching or common curricular experiential goal. There are pods of people with diverse interest. In the elementary school next door, collaboration quite occurs much more freely as in Liz's former community school, in the form of teachers working together, co-planning in building the school. Then the focus was not much on academics but who we are as a community and being a part of it.

Describing teacher-teacher collaboration, Liz said that it is both structured and non-structured, staff meetings, school improvement plan dialog. Collaboration has been characterized by openness in her school. She reported: *"I guess our collaboration this year was a lot to keep just everybody informed, everybody with the opportunities."* In this, she informed that while some have taken different opportunities, others took other opportunities to collaborate in the different ways and according to strengths or their personal learning goals. Collaboration spreads from the whole school to groups of more or just one-on-one.

Jo-Anne

There is professional learning communities (PLC), which give the opportunity to share resources. There is a lot of data collection and planning which aims at improving teaching. The community resource personnel come in to share as well. It would be abnormal not to work together, not to collaborate, to be like ... an island."

I want to quickly take us to how you perceive teachers' need to work together with teachers, which we have already spoken about on collaboration. But how do teachers need to work together with the school's administration? How do you find that need?

Asked how do teachers need to work together with the school's administration. Jo-Anne explained that if one was thinking about undertaking an interesting activity *"with students that might require funding or assistance, it's important to have a strong relationship with the administration and [an] open communication with administration allows teachers to be able to go to them for support."* The keyword was cooperation she educated. She likes it when families especially of Aboriginal students are involved in the school activities to build trust in the school system. It is good for schools to have food programs.

Tim

Tim responded: *"I don't think there's really that much. I think we had a few opportunities this year to do some assessments together, but even meeting once a week, you could consider that a collaborating because we get the opportunity to plan major events or just discuss current happenings of the school. But as far as actually having a*

project and an outcome and something in writing at the end of it pass in or discuss with people, I don't see any formal collaboration in that way and that's minimal."

Have you laid any administrative groundwork for collaboration to happen or the future of collaboration in your school?

Wondering how principals may likely influence teachers to collaborate, Tim explained how every Monday morning, the children come to school late while teachers engaged in increasingly improving meetings and collaboration. It is a matter of teachers finding a thing of common interest to engage in. He indicated that his staff was engaged in age-grade level issues that tie them to same age or grade level and not with lower grades. We discussed how in his school, teachers were growing more and more in the art of listening to what other teachers have as they collaborated and respect for one another. We further focused on how inquiry learning in Tim's school was increasing and lifting up the tendency for teachers to work more respectfully with each other as each of the participating teachers do not know enough about the topic they are doing inquiry in.

Jason

He presented that teacher collaboration was not encouraged. Teachers kept busy with their subject area, with no central coordination. He had earlier suggested that the system put together about three schools in the division and joined their science teachers with one as the department head as the go-to for the subjects but it was not acted on. With this comment, my mind came to the distances and communication challenges that could surface under such a structure. We agreed that the extent of sharing leaves much to be desired though some teachers will share some of their created documents. There is a

certain level of lack of cooperation in his school; he explained: *“We have our art teacher retiring this year, Ms. Peggotty. Within her art class, there were eight computers that were there because they came in through Skills Canada Program because she was teaching students to get involved in that program. Upon her leaving the school, all of those eight computers have gone to apparently one classroom.”*

He mentioned that these things happen when we have an administrative vacuum in their school, which is being resolved. I suggested a resolution by a technology committee during our discussion. Though we agreed that the incoming principal could settle this eight-computer thing, he informed that the new person would work with the support of one less teacher from the beginning of their tour.

Mavis

In Mavis’ response, the benefit to the Indigenous learner, of watching and learning from someone else was emphasized. Collaboration has been a major tenet of classroom practice. *“Dialogue has played a significant role in my profession as a teacher, as an administrator. I put into our calendar, times for teachers to meet and share.”* She said. During such time the teachers look jointly at assessments, results, data and the students and figure out what to do. The advocacy for collaboration has been huge. To this, Mavis pointed that in the instructional process there is a little choice to be otherwise. Probing further about the possible power struggle in the collaboration process, both teacher parties do not quite know completely and are both contributing to constructing knowledge and very little likelihood of power struggle unless one is asking a question that the other person has an answer to. The other thing is that the inquiry

questions were generated together. Urged to rate her satisfaction for her teaching experience of the Indigenous student on a scale of 1 to 5 she rated it a 4 in 5 indicating that there is more room for improvement.

Explain what is likely to cause that's right the rating that you've given yourself to change.

Asked to explain what is likely to cause the rating she has given to change, she indicated that she needed more time with the different age group, especially of Aboriginal makeup. She loves her time with the Gwich'in, particularly being and living and learning with that group of people. She mentioned the most she had had in her classroom had been 60% of Aboriginal kids at one time.

The teachers that you work with how would you change the way they teach indigenous students ...what things would you change first in their practice?

Pointing further, she gave me to understand that the desired change for the child should not just be of cognition but also in the social domain. Her special function as a principal and teacher leader was underscored and was the nuance underneath this next question. As a principal, she offered that some have taught for 30 years with no change in pedagogy. The first thing she would expect of people is for them to be conscious of the need to change, themselves. As a principal, she asks teachers during evaluation and observation where they do want to change. She expressed the need for teachers to be reflexive. She starts a conversation about what the teachers to be evaluated would like to change in or need information about in the evaluation. *"Teachers ought to recognize hat they may like to fix in their practices."*

I investigated whether she helps give administrative supports to make the creating of a reflexive teacher possible. She said she did some searching, reading and talking after she noticed that things were not working, she felt she was not growing as a learner nor as a teacher. She approached her administration and presented her ideas, which they were supportive about, backing her in what she wanted to do.

“Teachers ought to have a flexible open mindset.” She pointed to Carol Dweck’s stand on mindset, mentioning the need for the willingness to be open to possibilities; even willing to embrace chaos a little with an expectation of what will happen if one was open-minded.

She informed of how she would like to change a personal philosophy about why children behave the way they do and act the way they do and that when children do so, the intent is not to drive educators crazy. Using the principles of positive behavioral supports, she advised that bad behavior is purposeful – there is a reason why they behave the way they do, which should lead them to find out what they could do about it. She has shared these through professional development and teacher sharing.

Whatever change would not be to change the kid but rather the structure of the day, which Mavis sees as arbitrary and unnatural. Students ought to be allowed to leave or remain in the instructional process whenever they can; such flexibility. As it is, a bell would ring, and students will have to come in. *“I have earlier raised questions on several accepted school routines, like bells to come in, lining up at certain doors, walking down certain ways.”* She informed. *“This started a whole bunch of questions about why we do what we do in school. When educators are hungry they eat, so why shouldn’t students?”*

It sounded like the participant was advocating for the classroom to be fashioned in the way we live. Students might need to lie down and rest while still reading. Is it like the teacher to be an agent willing to make relaxation occur as long as learning is taking place? Mavis also drew from to existing Finnish and Swedish schools systems where teachers' co-regulation with self-regulating students lead to the success of the learner. Our discussion led to the allusion that Canada teachers are intensely in-serviced to teach with greater self-regulation at the backs of their minds.

Sharon

Focusing our discussion on priority issues, the participant underscored the need for work on the relationship between the community and school. She indicated she was working on a master's degree on it. She foresaw the value of education that was cognizant of culture and Native identity. Literacy should be more geared to what the students know and are familiar with. Words like streetlights, silos, prairie and the like should be taught with care and with relevance in mind, as the students may not know what they mean. Being mindful that some students have never been outside the North. All standardized testing content should fit their knowledge and be legitimate.

Liz

If given a chance to change anything in the way teachers teach Indigenous students, she stated that she would change by giving it a little bit more intention and structure. *"But that's probably not the best way to go about it. I just felt like things were all over the place a lot."* Liz said. We agreed that it was still change. *"What you have is there, and you would want to maybe intensify it and maybe polish it up and structure it*

much better to work more than it is doing now.” The interviewee added. Our discussion led us to agree that change, no matter what, as long as an entity is intensified and structured does work better than in its current state. She explicated that it had more intention and more sharing with though she would like to see it more holistically integrated across the curricula.

Jo-Anne

“Often, teachers declare that “it is not my culture.”” “ They should concentrate more on the good things they are doing, sharing more resources, engaging in more projects and activities. She explained that there might be areas of strengths and weakness as teachers, but we should redirect our efforts at doing the good teaching we do. She advocated that teachers should continue to do what they do best as every bit of help counts. Jo-Anne pointed to Wab Kinew of Winnipeg’s assertion that all Canada should take a unit of Aboriginal culture just like we all take French and English at the University level. This will educate the entire Canada population.

Given a chance to change anything you desire to change in your work as a teacher of Indigenous students, what would you like to change?

She answered she would like to change a lot about the environment of the school. She mentioned that she would have an outdoor classroom with a blackboard on the outside of the school with benches and stepping stones of rocks for students to sit. *“I would like to create more spaces like that where more classes could go to learn outside and also just have bigger windows in general. If I could re-do this school, it would be [large] windows...”* She said redoing the windows would bring in natural lighting. Also,

she would like to interview all the Indigenous students in their settlement to find out their favorite things and their most powerful learning experience.

Tim

Tim indicated that the first thing to change would be to remind teachers that as educators we are there to educate students how to be positive contributors to society. He was of the view that looking at the specific outcomes of tests like the Alberta tests the system may not be measuring what is being done at the schools appropriately. He explained building relationship, teaching them how to treat people and one another.

But how will you produce that change? So you want more relationship, more building of awareness in the student, but how will you make that happen?

He explained how he would ensure the building of a relationship. He was of the view that could be done school-wide, making the teachers know that they are expected to enforce it; and students are expected to be polite and using positive language and know-how to treat each other, consistently.

Jason

In his school board, this year there was a loss of 2.5 teaching positions, which is not replenished and is still expected to provide the same curriculum. He reported of a top-heavy support structure, which is not being changed or modified. He advised: *“the top should lose those 2.5 positions and where the boots hit the ground, where we’re interacting with the people who are using the service that we provide. We are supposed to be involved in the process of education and providing the best education possible, you can’t do that without the numbers to be able to support everything that needs to be...”*

Jason felt that bringing in teachers and not hiring the SNAs will do the trick, as the SNAs may not have the expertise to handle FASD and the different autism spectra.

We discussed personnel resource input of about five to be instructed to work with teachers and he advised it is not about changing the SNA structure but the entire organizational structure of the board. He explained that it might not just be about having an extra body but a useful body. For example giving adequate training to the SNAs to be able to handle disability. Sometimes it is so tough to work with SNAs who are challenged by the curriculum. He added: *“the students are looking at the SNA and seeing this 35, 40, 45-year-old individual who is employed, making a fairly decent salary and obviously has never had to learn fractions, so it’s not often a good role model.”* If you send out a child to be helped by an SNA who themselves have challenges with word recognition in reading. If you have a class size of 12 to 15 and you have to make an impact in the shortest possible time, and they need quick help... what a liability. Jason commented on that as a helpless situation... useless as agents of change. Most of the SNAs have little education themselves. He mentioned he saw them mainly as showing up for their stipend. *In your view how do your students perceive the quality of Aboriginal education compared to the education of other students in other places in Canada?*

Mavis

She mentioned that though she is in charge of student education in K-5, she was still in contact with them even up to high school and beyond. Teaching the *Dene Kede* *“we do quality [work] with our students.”* She felt that as a Territory we are at par if not more fortunate in some ways than their counterparts in the south. She informed she had

taught many students who have gone on to do masters and honors programs and not all of them are White like herself. These students still came back to relate with the quality education they received in the NWT. *“I will have to say in my opinion that our kids are receiving not just A-s B- s and C- s of learning, but they are learning consciousness and mindfulness and are to me more respectful of the people that are around them, the cultures that they are learning alongside...”* The multicultural-ness, the knowledge on survival and all that help the students and take them far. She thought we were very fortunate in the NWT.

Sharon

“We have to face the fact of students not coming to school or leaving for post-secondary education and not having the background to support them. The media system picks a few statistics and attaches numbers of student performance for the Indigenous student. If we concentrate on 30% failing Math they should also publish that 70% are passing.” She offered. Discussing further allowed us to see through the lens of the proverbial going out and bringing in the lost 1% so that all students will be reached and taught adequately. Attaching money value though to this argument, it was agreed that while students were not countable money, it is worthwhile to be accountable for the return on investment into the education offered them.

Jo-Anne

Students have funding for activities after school that involves them, in a way that she thinks is headed for the best. We are developing a culture of continuous educational improvement for the NWT. The NWT effectively places the student in the teachers’

spheres of activity whereas in provinces like B.C. and Ontario they are left to meddle in salaries and other conditions of service. The students may or may not perceive that but to have elders in school places opportunity in the court of the students in ways that are not experienced elsewhere. It might be different; she does not know since she said she did not have exposure to high school education and the attendant issues like attendance and graduations rates.

We emphasized the great work of change and direction obtained through the ERI to give the best education to the Indigenous student. Again, from the discourse I had with Jo-Anne we came to a consciousness resembling conscientization (Freire, 2000) of looking for ways to improve Indigenous education. We spoke about the uniqueness of the NWT teachers' concentration on the student. She mentioned that the teachers in NWTTA have in a way been shielded from the salary wars that have been fought in other provinces, though, materially and psychologically, the war remained the same for the teacher in the NWT also. We discussed how the details of the Early Development Instrument make clear the existence of a possible challenge. The gravity of attendance was investigated; a K-12 grade student who has had a day absence per week would be functioning at grade 10 being in the 13th year (ECE Factsheet, 2013; GNWT, 2016). We agreed on the need to remedy the student attendance issue in the NWT.

In what ways do you perceive your efforts as an administrator or as a teacher to manage the present achievement gap, which we spoke about in the last interview?

Mavis

We agreed that the achievement gap needed to be properly managed. When children in the lower grades fail in language-based subjects, it does not mean they do not have the capability. As a principal, when a child needs attention, she would work with the program support teacher and the classroom teacher: *“I will both observe the student and set up a class-wide and school-wide program to make learning more accessible to the student.”* They would look into what assistive technology would work for the child and analyze the situation and find out which way to go to make the child succeed. The aim is to make teaching more responsive.

Sharon

An achievement gap in the educational setup exists between the Indigenous students compared to students from the rest of Canada. This consciousness is present in the Northwest Territories. What prevails in the North is not the same as in the rest of Canada. Sharon opined: *“I didn’t know that each Aboriginal student on reserve is valued a dollar sign less than every Canadian student, every other Canadian student. I had no idea. And I think in the north it’s not that way. I think the north we work hard to ensure that our students get the money and the value. Each student is what it is because we are predominantly aboriginal population. I think in the rest of Canada it’s easy not to know those stats. I think it’s easy not to understand. And it’s because people don’t know that things don’t change. And that’s why it’s so important that we keep punching that fact at home.”* She indicated: *“every student on reserve is valued at less by like \$14.00 or \$120.00, whatever it is. But it’s a significant percentage less than every other Canadian*

student, and it's wrong. And what's wrong is that you know, we judge people, and we devalue them, and we humiliate people, and we treat them like they're nothing, but we don't see our ownership in all that existence. Why? Why is Attawapiskat happening? Why is Red Sucker Reserve happening? Versus the very wealthy reserves on the island in B.C. What's happening? It's money. But it's the government-controlled money and the government continues to devalue kids. And they need to stop. When, you know, in the Northwest Territories if we were in Fort Smith or Behchoko or Colville Lake, if there were bad water it would get looked after immediately. That would not be acceptable by our government in the North." These things do not happen North of 60 where people are educated and use the law and intelligence to stand up. Starting from the Reserve at our border with Alberta. In the less fortunate Reserves in the South, they are in a cycle of abuse.

Liz

Talking with Liz, she pointed out that it was not a North-South thing. It is reading with the students and exposure to the diversity of language. The students do not see many languages like in the cities. There is no French-rich environment in the communities. There is little experience with stores and signs. There is a bit of literacy difference. Engaging young students and parents of little children, doing a reading with their children before bed and respect for school, which will reduce the legacy of residential school and parenting. Bringing up the value of getting the children up to go to school and just allowing them to sleep if they don't feel like getting up and going to school. Make learning fun; make literacy fun targeting the little children.

Jo-Anne

Jo-Ann emphasized the need to set up the classroom to resemble the natural environment. Incorporating sharing circles in the classroom, having plants and fish, for example, can make it a positive place to be in. It is also important to build a relationship with the student in the classroom, to make them feel welcome. She pointed to attendance as a big thing that worsens the achievement gap, which may be remedied by creating a welcoming environment in the classroom. *“Also giving kids the opportunity to share about their cultures on things that they are excited about, and getting their input helps set them up for success.”* She informed. She advised working with the strengths of the students. *“if somebody is extremely introverted, a presentation may be intimidating for them to show their learning.”* In a situation like this, other alternative products may be explored.

Jo-Anne

She felt that recognizing that attendance was a problem was important. Jo-Anne saw her role as a teacher in ensuring that all who left her class did so with a sense of belonging and trust and about the importance of education. Students should see the power of education to influence positive change in society. She added: *“So I think I see my role as creating a safe and caring environment for all students and their families no matter what their background is.”* She emphasized this was a way to get students to be engaged, curious, thriving and influential in their families. She gave a summary that we should champion education for positive social change. Forming an analogy of the celebrated

soldier and badges that they receive back home, I asked Jo-Anne to explain five words that described her story as a teacher of the Indigenous students.

About the awareness of the lag in the educational system, she explained: *“I think my students are pretty aware of that and I think Indigenous students, in particular, because of the legacy of residential schools. I think that for the huge role... I think that it plays a substantial role in the lag and achievement.”* There may be a lack of confidence in the education system by parents of Indigenous students. She added: *“I think communities struggle to keep teachers in their communities and there is a turnover all the time.”* She described it as a revolving door of teachers. She felt there wasn't a great quality teacher education program in the North for Indigenous people, indicating there is a need for revamping what is being done for teacher education.

Jo-Anne spoke about an intern from the Northern teacher education system that alluded to huge administrative challenges. She stated without reservation *“I think if we can have a lot more indigenous teachers teaching kids, I think that achievement gap would close for sure.”* She also added that while cross-cultural teachers give their best to teach Indigenous students, they will not be Indigenous. *“It will be negligent to pretend that it's not the case as we look for ways to close the gap.”* She admonished.

Jo-Anne pointed to leading the learners to high-level critical thinking, taking interest in the world. Perhaps offering them articles to read that talk about a radio interview with highlights on the achievement gap to fuel discussion. She said students need to be made excited about learning to engage them and get them working harder than the teacher. *“And so really set them up with things that like light a fire under them so that*

they can pursue them.”

Tim

So how do you perceive your effort as a teacher or an administrator to manage the present achievement gap?

Taking cues from the education renewal and innovation (ERI), we assumed there was an achievement gap, and so I asked Tim to describe how he perceived his effort as an educator to manage the present achievement gap. He felt that to stay motivated, it was important to and made a lot of effort at making things work, being resilient and consistent to keep closing the gap, going don to what they need and continually building from there. *So you are talking about hammering on probably even on the same spot until the right things are done so that we can get the achievement gap to be removed if possible.*

While he rejected the term of hammering, he agreed that memorization might not be what they can do at their current level, but they have to be the best that can be as the learners may not have the same skills as those from the south. Taking them through the needed processes would be just fine. The students need to be the best they can be. They do not have to be compared with students or the south as they belong on/to their own. Teachers have to adapt to what is needed to be First Nations teachers.

In my view, such argument for bringing in only or mostly Indigenous teachers to teach also means favoring bringing in mainly Indigenous lawyers, engineers and nurses and medical officers and so on. The people from the North can withstand the northern conditions of extreme cold and distance. This ideal essentially is akin to the fact that the effort to produce these same people ought to be intensified to match the need or desire.

More and more doctors and teachers and nurses have to be produced by a northern education system for the education of the north. The participant informed that a successful teacher, therefore, becomes they that are eagerly working to lose their jobs. The standard of training our future replacement puts the onus on us as educators to hook up with the task to produce the needed manpower.

How aware are Indigenous students of the existence of an educational/achievement gap between Indigenous students and South Canada?

Tim

Expositing on possible gaps in educational achievement as depicted by the ERI and EDI documents we explored the extent of awareness and perception of the existence of a gap between the North and the South. Tim alluded to the awareness among the Indigenous students. *“I think the ones that wouldn’t be aware would be some of the students that are not as far as an individual education plan (IEP). But aren’t working at grade level or aren’t as socially aware as some of the other students that would get it, realize the gap is there.”*

Tim mentioned that we could still make progress with the achievement gap even if it would not be removed entirely. He felt that comparing NWT students with southerners would not be appropriate to do. Just trying to advance the Indigenous students every day would be how to go about it. He informed *“I don’t think it’s going to be overnight, but I think it’s going to be ... once we see 20 years go by we’ll start seeing some improvements as long as we keep chipping away at it every day.”*

Tim responded that students could benefit in their learning from each other, from their cultures and by so adding some depth to their knowledge.

Jason

He mentioned a difference between the non-immigrant and immigrant populations. He cited the example of the Syrians and other freshly landed immigrants working so hard to become Canadian citizens, seeking education and jobs. Not the same attitude may be seen among his current Indigenous students.

We agreed that the poise of an immigrant was different from other people who had settled here for generations. I cited my experience of waiting and sacrificing to get to Canada as an immigrant. If people struggle and work very hard to become citizens, they do not want to miss any chances in their citizenry.

How are we likely to eliminate the achievement gap with the current student performance and poise and drive and all that? What is the likelihood of removing the achievement and performance gap that we see there?

He answered: *“We need to wait for two generations... it’s a matter of time.”* We gave reverence to the phenomenon of time. He added that: *“We’re trying to force something right now that’s not there. We’ve got a lot of parents and in some cases older siblings who are still tied up in the residential school thing, they’re wallowing in self-pity on it, they’re letting it ruin their lives, and they’re not making any effort to break the cycle. So it’s just going to take a little bit of time for all of that to wash through. Our society will have advanced so much in the next two generations that the gap will become so much wider. But I think the money that’s coming into the communities will have*

started to decline because Canada's population will also have begun to decline and there won't be the money generated that's being generated in tax dollars right now." It led to the deduction that no condition was permanent. When the welfare money being given reduces, in Canada, then the conditions will cause the correct prevalence of behavior. I insinuated crudely that it sounded like "natural selection" will find its way. He said: *"It took Nelson Mandela 27 years to get out of the jail. Good things like being liberated take time; Apartheid was wrong. It took 50 years to get rid of it; it's gone."*

He explained that if followed to the class, the strategies that he would be using to reduce the achievement gap would depend on who is in the class and the size of the class. *"Okay, so hypothetically you have two. How would you teach them maybe Microsoft Excel?"* I asked. He would adopt one-on-one for a class of two for whoever shows up. He will still teach the same content as is the whole class of 20 was present, no break nor tea time. *"But it would be a much more in-your-face kind of thing. Right. Like with twenty you can only be in front of the class, but with the 2, you set them together, and you're in front of them. Right?"* The instructional approach will be chosen to maintain the content.

A larger number in the class will spread the teacher thin, even if there is an SNA present. Jason indicated that he had developed a relationship with the students over the five years of his teaching, even those who stay in boarding facilities. Students who have a period to adjust to expectation as it is totally different from anything they ever met regarding producing any output.

"So if you have such students in the class, obviously it's going to affect your expectation because they already need some time to adjust." I inquired further. Such

conditions and the type of students would determine the expectation in the class. Other teachers are sending them to the principal's office. Jason apparently had developed so much with them in a relationship that they called him uncle and did not know what he did differently to deserve that.

In your opinion what could be improved in the education of the indigenous people for the future?

Mavis

She advised that she once was on the ECE steering committee on student achievement, which hosted a lot of Indigenous students, this should continue. Community elders and families should be included though some families do not desire to be part of the solution. More measurable authentic outcomes should be taught in the classroom. Referring to Dillon Willon's "*the higher we raise the bar, the higher those kids are going to reach for it.*" We are constantly changing staff. We ought to entice educators and keep them there to do the job. It can be cold and isolated and rarely do we get families to opt to stay and work for a long time.

I posed a question: "*Is it not more like ... you are telling me you're big for high stakes exams? Because that is what measures these quantities ... if you have outcomes deriving from the curricula they should be tested we should find out whether by our classroom instruction we can achieve this and this and that and not this and why not this.*"

By Mavis' mention of outcomes, the thought of assessing the outcomes and high stakes exams came on board in the discussion. She pointed to other good things happening which are not high stakes exams. International co-operations and debates with

New Zealand culminating in the Banff summit on the teaching profession which revealed some of the directions we should be going, what is important and how it affects the kids future in a viable way. Northwest Territories Education has been very successful. An example, Jackson Lafferty came from Behchoko. A lot of phenomenal writers and thinkers have been produced from the traditional way of our system.

People have different lenses; they see differently. As a teacher of Indigenous students, how do you address cultural diversity in the classroom knowing that the students that you are teaching are different?

Sharon

The Aboriginal students in the school are different. Some are Chipewyan, some are Cree, others, from the Sahtu and Dehcho regions, and there are the Gwich'in. It is important to find out where the students have come from so that the peculiarities are included in what is being spoken about so that their culture can be accounted for. Non-Aboriginal students in the Northwest Territories such as the Filipino have also to be included. While we focus on Aboriginal culture, the culture of the Lebanese, Sudan and South Korea. We spread the cultures in the regional modules in our foods class so that exploration will be possible. While the culture of this participant's Finnish grandmother is brought in, she invites their stories as well though a lot of time is spent on Native culture because there is a majority Aboriginal population.

Liz

Inquiring about how she teaches in the face of diversity in the classroom she spoke of different expectations, varying levels of expectations of parents. Non-

Indigenous parents happen to have expectations different from Indigenous; educated parents and more aware parents have different questions about what students are doing in the class.

How do you feel about student diversity in today's classroom?

Liz

Liz teased out the diversities she has in her school, though a small school. Some students are gay or lesbian, artistic students; but the kids are open about all that, and there is no bullying. Being a small school, the students have all worked together and knowing one another; there is respect for them, which obliterates any issues and challenges. She added: *"if there's any issue is maybe I cannot make or kids who have a more difficult home than others... and I think I've heard comments like 'I wish I had a different family... that type of thing.'*" The issues lie more with the differences in the families. It has more to do with the health of the families. Some have drinking and drug and partying, which differentiates the levels of family difficulties.

So, how do you feel about student diversity in the classroom?

Liz added: *"there's always a difference, everyone's different, so there's always diversity, and it's, I don't know; it's our interconnections, like within difference. So it's always that."*

With the diverse people in your classroom, how have you come to understand the way to teach the Indigenous students and others present in your classroom?

Jo-Anne

She presented: *“I think it’s always a challenge and with kids, I believe that when it comes to learning about cultures or teaching kids about culture, you have to start with them. Like what is your culture?”* She added it would be necessary to ask them to look at what their culture and specific practices are so that the students may explore their sense of belonging. The students ought to understand the uniqueness and have open minds about their culture and other people’s cultures. We examined the word *rapprochement* as replacing what Jo-Anne was using in describing the need to build bridges. She emphasized the need to get rid of ignorance by spreading love and acceptance of others, learning to understand others in the awareness of openness.

If a child came to you and indicated that maybe, they were not following the strategies you were using in class... what should I expect from you?

Mavis

“My response would be dependent on the age of the child as well as the circumstance.” Mavis indicated. She would find out initially what may not be working for the student. If the student was not forthcoming in their answer, she explained she would ask what would work best for them in the giving situation and what they need. Usually, some of the students would need time or would want to be engaged in talking. Sometimes they do not understand what is being asked of them or they simply do not what to do it, or do not want to commit to producing the needed finished work product. Often there is a need to desist from forcing the child if it is outside their comfort zone if it is a younger child, a redirection to aspects of the required work may be necessary. The redirection may involve a modification of the teach-learn strategy. If they happen to be

older, Mavis would directly engage them in conversation on what they may be intending to show as evidence of their learning. Sometimes they may simply say *“I just want to tell you about it...”* or *“I just want to do a video...”* or simply, *“I don’t want to do anything.”* She would still somehow ask them to tell what they *“intend to do, eventually.”* *“If you did want to do something, what would it be...?”* or she would ask them to go for a short walk and come back. *“And when you come back, you and I will sit and do this or that.”* Mavis pointed that while not everyone goes to higher education, all the students should be given a variety of ways to show what they know which may be a bit different from the traditional paper and pencil. There should be an element of choice going along with it.

And you bring it in a way that kind of strikes an idea in me I don’t know what I’m thinking correctly or not...you look at it this way...a medical doctor bringing in their family to solve the problem that it that is ethically unsound...why would it be sound ringing in your family this over or to kind of resolve the situation as a teacher ... as teachers or maybe you say that our situation is a little different?

She was of the opinion that it could not be compared with the medical field as she would be teaching families and helping them to connect. Besides, she is bringing in her family to share instead of bringing them to share with their families. Briefly put, teachers teach families, but doctors cure individuals.

How diverse is your Yellowknife classroom?

Mavis

The children in the Yellowknife classroom range from countries such as Somalia, South Africa, Philippines, and in fact everywhere, from all over the world. The Aboriginal population is 30%. This requires the teacher to wear multiple hats. The universal design for learning (UDL) comes in handy. The teachers have to be themselves and remain within language reach, accessible to the students to be effective.

How do you address diversity in your classroom ...what is your style?

Mavis presented an atmosphere of a multiplicity of voices and lenses among the students receiving instruction. She indicated that all people love food and everybody has a story so at the beginning of the year she invites the parents to the classroom. They are invited to the class to see that though an educator, she is also a parent just as they are; she values things just as they do and they eat and tell stories. She would say: *“we’re going to play baseball and have a family baseball game because not everybody plays baseball. I might invite the family to come in the end say well show us how you play a game...whatever game you want, show us how you make this, show us how you would say that. So including all the things that are important to a culture food language games those kinds of things are universal I think.”* They have multicultural feasts every once in a while.

Describe the groups that are in your class and how this diversity affects your teaching; how you feel about this diversity in the classroom, and how do they affect the work you do?

Jo-Anne

Both this year and last year there have been students from Indigenous backgrounds, all over Canada, Philippines, African continent, India, China in her class. She explained that it was an opportunity for her to learn more about their origins, cultures and their languages and create a classroom where all are welcome. *“I got to learn about students, their families, their background, that kind of thing and kids like to share where they’re from and their heritage.”* Jo-Anne explained. Teaching circumpolar countries like Russia, Sweden, and Finland in Social Studies about where the students are from has added another exciting dimension to Jo-Anne’s career.

Tim

In the question, we implied the presence of diversity in today’s classroom. Tim described a much more diverse student population at his current school. He explained a majority First Nations peoples and some Metis, much unlike his previous school. Asked how he felt about the diversity he attributed it to the area where the school is positioned and as expected.

Suppose I was a new teacher, and as a new teacher, I need mentorship about, for instance, the differences and similarities between teaching, as it is compared to the Indigenous Canadian and the rest of Canada. What would you advise me to do as a new teacher?

Jason

He explained that most new teachers coming from the university usually arrive knowing nothing. He mentioned that he would ask new teachers to come to him when they need help. He would allow them to experience it first by themselves and help when

they need it. He said it makes it more real; in the past two years, his advice was plainly ignored. *“When you advise, and your advice is ignored, you cannot be blamed for anything that follows.”* He informed.

Drawing the dialog to mentorship, I made a supposition that I was a new teacher who needed mentorship about what she had told me regarding the differences and similarities between teaching Indigenous students and other Canadians; I asked: *How would you advise me as a teacher who needs to see things the way you do?*

Sharon

Having new teachers is a frequent phenomenon in most Northern schools. Asked how she would advise a new teacher, she informed that she had been in mentorship a few times for Aboriginal and non-aboriginal. *“Teachers also are human. I have had to mentor once an Aboriginal teacher from another province whose husband was abusive. Such teachers need to be encouraged and understood to help them. I have had to hook such up to the Sweetgrass program and work a lot more on who they are and what they want and their person. These entities happen to be the driving forces in approach to the students.”* To add to all, she indicated: *“if you don’t love it, don’t be here... our kids are not a job... not money if you do not like our kids, do not come.”* As a researcher, my mind immediately went to suspect a *conflict of interest* at work. I wondered, which one: a teacher, a parent of Indigenous students? She informed that teaching might not be for some, as it is meant to be protective of very vulnerable people, Aboriginal children, who are in the early stages of learning to be proud of who they are.

Suppose I was a new teacher who needed mentorship about the differences and similarities between teaching indigenous and other Canadians. What would you advise?

Liz

Liz informed she would recommend for the new teachers to talk with Native teachers. She added: *“Usually like we kind of set that up at the beginning of the school year, like the cross-cultural, like the culture days. She advised that we be open to asking questions if they don’t understand, never to make assumptions.”* She would ask them *“to build those connections with the community or people from the school or that have been there many years and might have insights into a dialog and to be open to learning.”*

How do your current experiences of teaching indigenous students compare with your experience of teaching other Canadians?

Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne explained that they are different. The expectations and the way the parents view and trust the education system affect or influence the child’s perspective and willingness to cooperate with the system. *“...I find some of my students who are either Canadian- born but come from Filipino parents or are born in the Philippines and then moved to Canada; there seems to be a high expectation from home for them to achieve well maybe to the point of [even] detriments...”* She also indicated: *“... I guess with some indigenous students that I have taught; there is not so much of a focus on perhaps achieving quite highly academically as long as the basics are there; the focus is different.”* She added further that the difference is that she shares similar stories and upbringing with some of her students and differences from others.

Jo-Anne

Now I would make you a mentor, a mentor of a new teacher who has just joined your school and is looking for ways to reach indigenous students. What is your advice?

“My advice would be to get to know the students in their class and get to know their parents and their background and have conversations with those students.” She said.

She added she would give the mentee names of the teachers and other people who would help them should they have any questions. She also indicated she would tell them stories about her successes... encouraging them as well to inculcated certain Native practices like sharing circles, regularly checking with the students in the classroom and make efforts to develop bonds possibly by *“spending a lot of time outdoors and get out on the land.”*

She repeated that she would talk about the kind of importance of teachers and their role in spreading acceptance of others and difference. *“I would encourage that teacher to get to know each student as an individual and their families and learn a bit about their background and perhaps, you see have opportunities for the students to find out more about each other and to share about their families.”* She informed. She would point to their learning of *Dene Kede* and possible infusion into their instructional approach. *“And I would probably suggest if they wanted to learn more or read more for their interest, I would encourage them to read Wab Kinew’s book.”* She added.

During your lesson planning and instruction in the classroom, how conscious are you in adopting strategies that are evidence-based so that your student’s performance

improves?

Jo-Anne

Asked how conscious she is about adopting evidence-based strategies for improving student performance she informed she had made it her goal to differentiate and focus on ways to improve her teaching to help her gifted learners. She uses a bulletin board by her desk with strategies that have proven to be helpful. Additionally, *“I try to have projects where I leave it quite open-ended so inquiry-based learning so students have a lot of say in learning and how they are going to learn it and how they are going to show their knowledge to me.”* She concentrates on getting to know their areas of strength and offers a variety of choices when learning so that they can feel comfortable in these areas of strength.

Research Question 3

In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

How does it feel like to teach the indigenous student? And what reasons can you attribute to that feeling you have?

Mavis

Teaching Indigenous students is a rewarding experience. *“I have a good relationship with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and their families.”* Mavis reported. *“It feels a little bit more rewarding to connect with Aboriginal learners. There is always an enjoyable surprise element when as an obvious non-Aboriginal I do Native*

things like cleaning animals or processing meat with them.” She added. This could be a chance to send the message to Native students of a non-Aboriginal’s effort to reach out and teach.

Jo-Anne

How does it feel like to teach indigenous students?

“It is exciting.” She responded. It is like when she taught in the Catholic school, the focus was on infusing religion into the academic work, the only difference being to infuse culture. At the same time that it is exciting, it is challenging and sometimes uncomfortable for non-Aboriginals. Some say: *“I am ill-prepared, it’s not my culture, or who am I to teach a culture that’s not mine.”* She indicated she has a similar feeling about teaching French, which is not her first language and would not be as fluent as in English. Sometimes there is a sense of an impostor. This would not be if she were to be a First Nations person teaching the Indigenous student.

From the discourse, it agreed with Jo-Anne that there are unique challenges associated with cross-cultural nature. Some cross-cultural teachers have had to traverse several fronts in the continuum of cross-culture.

How do you compare your current feeling with a sense that you had before at the beginning when you first got to class?

Jo-Anne said *“when I first arrived ... and began to teach I felt like I had to prove myself. For many reasons, because I didn’t know anybody at all in the city, come in here. So already you’re dealing with something like you are very aware of that too, having*

been, lived in many countries but finding your bearings and getting settled in the new place but then also standing up in front of a group of students who are from everywhere...” She felt alone, but now she feels more supported; much more comfortable. Jo-Anne said she was understanding, and making friends with people. She reported that things had improved a lot and it does not take a long time to become settled in a new place.

Mavis

She mentioned that it was scary at the initial stage. She felt odd as an only White person in the classroom working with everybody else who was Aboriginal or Inuit. This feeling was attributed to how the local students traditionally reacted to teachers from outside the community. New teachers are ridiculed and do not get treated nicely. Reminiscing from her student days in the North caused Mavis to have an initial fear for the treatment of first-year teachers.

Sharon

Twenty-two years later, her feeling about teaching Indigenous students was enhanced. She reports being in tune more and being more globally aware though that was how she started and that has been her idiosyncrasy. Everything in the school is about the students, and she felt this is how all teachers should see it, with open-mindedness.

“Being the parent of Indigenous children myself...well, I have a huge vested interest because my children are indigenous.” She proudly responded. She thinks it is important to recognize where the students come from and can provide them with what suits their learning best. An attempt was made during the dialogue to shed light on our

contribution to the citizenry and how it leads to how people consider us as who we are in the social strata. In the strata of society, there are some people who think they pay more taxes than others and maybe by way of their tax bracket they consider themselves better than people who happen to be more hinged on “social handouts.” Sharon raised an issue she described as the “tendency of control.” The sequence she mentioned was a description of the tendency of control, which in her judgment followed a culture of dependency that the social system set up for the Indigenous people.

Having an elder in school is like a teacher has moved outside with the kids, though they are still in the class. How does it feel like using that kind of strategy?

Jo-Anne

“Having an elder in the classroom kind of changes the whole kind of dynamic. Students I find are quite respectful and very willing to learn from elders.” They had two elders come and share the passage to womanhood for the girls, beading, making mittens and their experience in residential school. *“They do not have to leave the school, ... it is great to have an elder come in.”* She explained

I questioned what strategies the elder used to teach the class with both boys and girls on menstruation. She replied: *“We did separate the boys from the girls when the elder came in to speak about that and also during an overnight camp where we had themes such as passage to adulthood, the boys and the girls were separated for some discussion about puberty and adolescence as well.”*

Tim

I would like you to describe any areas of your teaching, your NWT teaching tour that you would have lived differently if you had a chance.

He did not quite bring to mind anything that he would live differently. He has been satisfied so far with his practice. He would, however, like to make things a little bit more interesting for everybody. We spoke about the structure of Daily 5 as having the in-built capacity where some two of the processes could be fixed, and the third revolves. Of the five, the educator could fix two and allow the students to pick three others, as they want to strengthen parts of the curriculum.

Jo-Anne

Light a fire under them is a very powerful expression. How do you describe your NWT teaching tour, especially the areas that you have success so far?

Asked for a description of the success of her NWT teaching tour, Jo-Anne had this: *“I have had success with mentorship, so I think I have become a better teacher... a teacher who does think critically; one who applies student-centered planning of lessons.”* She hinted of an increase in her reflectivity, *“thinking about the result at the beginning of the lesson... what kind of student I want to produce.”* *“Formally or informally.”* she felt she had acquired a lot from the mentorship program. Cooperating teachers, her internship and all have contributed lots to who she is now. The support system has helped her in handling report cards, differentiation, inquiry-based learning. She spoke of some magic produced through the inter-Province and inter-school cooperation that was worked for their school.

Jo-Anne

Are there any things that you've experienced in your teaching tour that you would have lived differently if you had a chance?

She mentioned she would encourage open communication with the right people starting correctly from the student. *"If I were a mentor to another teacher, I would encourage them to maintain open communication and also if a problem were to arise is to give a phone call to the parent rather than email or put it off or anything like that."*

She indicated.

How would you describe any areas of your Northwest Territories teaching that you would have lived differently if you had a chance?

Mavis

She indicated that she would rather add on what she has done already. She would have her children live in one of the small communities with her.

So how do you describe the relationship between you and your students?

The teacher makes the children have a sense of belonging and that they mattered. When I meet my former students, they state there was a way I made them feel.

Sharon

"Well, I bond with my kids, and I build relationships." A teacher gets involved. As a way of doing things, she builds a strong bond with every student she teaches while not being a "pushover." It is an honor to have students know how strict the teacher is while at the same time loving and hanging out with them. Sharon revealed it is not easy to deal with the group though they are loyal. If they act out or are needy, the teacher has to be able to straighten them while not judging them based on culture or family values.

The behavior of students is for a purpose. *“Especially if they’re acting out or especially if things are happening...there is something happening behind the doors that we don’t know about and we’ve got to recognize that.”* She informed. Again, this participant reported of a strong bond and active-ness with the students, at baptisms of their babies, masters of ceremony (MCs) at their weddings and an extra ear to counsel them in their relationships and affairs. She made it sound like relationships with students are like diamonds, which last forever.

Liz

It comes down to the connectedness with the school. The cultural and land-base programs help develop this kind of relationship. Liz saw that along with such lines as drawing in the family; her previous school worked better. The entire school staffs are brought into the land-based program, and that bring the teacher into the community more smoothly. This she felt was the foundational piece based on which learning to write and all that can be built. Asked if she felt there was a need to get experts to train the community and school in the psychology of connectedness her response was that these had to be lived and experienced. We underscored the value of direct experience from interaction, which was created from continuity. It is important to be aware, step back and reflect as that is the only way to establish continuity. Liz indicated that her 14 years experience had mainly been Aboriginal students and very rarely with non-Aboriginal.

Jo-Anne

In support of the issue raised about the need for more Indigenous teachers, we

agreed that with the cross-cultural teacher coming in from diverse backgrounds, the students could be left questioning themselves about where teachers from their ethnicity may be. There are students with medical challenges, who as teachers we can only do our best to build relationships. She explained that based probably on her background her Indigenous students have still to ethnically identify and have not been as good as other students in her multi-ethnic class.

At a point, she interrupted and asked about how I felt about the relationship with my students. I explained the frustration of teaching, motivational issues and the need to develop the relationship one day at a time. As we discussed, Jo-Anne and I agreed that the depth of relationship increases with time. The more time is spent teaching the students, the better the relationship. This was based on the understanding that if a relationship takes time to develop it takes time to be broken. Jo-Anne explained that teachers simply have high expectation of their students, which sometimes could get misconstrued. She added: *“some kids are so used to this getting away with the easy path sometimes or not having a role model man like who has these high expectations of them. It takes a lot of getting used to for them before they can appreciate that.”*

Jo-Anne and I explored that the journey to being effective, culturally responsive is a difficult, frustrating one. It takes the teacher through reflective pathways and examining why they are not able to produce all the doctors, engineers and nurses that are needed in the NWT despite the great resources made available. Students ought to be given the opportunity to participate in hands-on and outdoor activities, opportunities for their family members to come into the classroom to share their expertise and human

resources. Having a resources person to help plan as a go-to person. She also mentioned the need for a male role model to come in and talk to the class about his career. Though we have the Internet, Smart Board, books, and others, and still arriving ordered resources what is needed most is the human connection.

Tim

The participant spoke about the relationship between himself and his students. He recalled, good, positive relationship, though he found some more challenging. He tries to keep his role as a principal, and when it gets to quite a touchy relationship, he keeps counseling functions to a minimum and seeks help from the career counselors.

Jason

Jason described the relationship between himself and the Indigenous students as very different from anything he has ever experienced. He mentioned that he had lived in other northern communities and with other cultures where one was physically threatened all the time. Again, he mentioned that he did not feel the same in his current school. He gets students come by his place to say hello and express how they missed him and hung out a bit; in ways that would not happen anywhere else.

What strategies would you advise the new teacher to adopt so that they can reach the students and teach them better, the Indigenous students, Aboriginal students?

Tim

As a mentor, he would advise new teachers to have high expectations. He advised the need to adapt. Using a timer to apportion time to have literacy but also a brain break.

Being patient and knowledgeable and able to find new ways and strategies of bringing out the best from the students.

I probed further *“mentioning all you’re bringing in the element of humility in when you talking to a teacher like this who obviously would be able to benefit a lot from discussing with you...you would agree with me that the teacher for them to get the best from you all from this discussion they have to be humble in the first place what do you think about that?”*

Mavis

The teacher requires humility enough to get the best from finding out about what they do not know. She mentioned that the Natives have known success historically until the Europeans arrived.

What resources do you think would be needed to make the First Nations education successful?

Sharon

I asked: *“Suppose you had a magic wand or feather that you could just wave and things will happen. What resources would you conjure into being to advance teaching in your school to make First Nation education successful?”* She responded: *“Well, I’m hoping to build something that will help. That’s my focus, building some kind of workable strategy to help. My whole focus honestly is about having people understand residential school, that it was true that it’s not people, you know, trying to pass on a ...story. It’s not people trying to manipulate a system. It’s not, you know, made-up stories. It is an experience that people had that impacts us today. It impacts us as parents, it impacts us as spouses,*

it impacts us as community members and it especially impacts us as teachers and in our communities because whether you went or not, if you're aboriginal or not, if you're new to the north or not, residential school impacts how you live, work, think, breathe, exist in the north and we need to understand it and we need to honor it and we need to validate people that went so that they can also move on." It was noticeable that the participant was not readily listing physical things as resources for a change other than a change in mindset. She, however, explained that the North lacks people power, human resources, and education. She added the need for healing centers, addiction centers, treatment facilities that are northern, run by northerners who understand the northern experience.

Mavis

Drawing the family into the work seemed very important to this participant recounting they family needs to be part of the planning in the school, implementation, and the day-to-day stuff. According to Mavis, schools need to have legitimate, authentic learning. She would use her elder's magic wand or feather to dismantle the traditional start and end time and school year. The use of the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* could be improved, and we could prepare the children more for the times ahead. She emphasized the need for more community involvement.

Tim

I asked: *"If you were given a list of things to request to make education happen among the First Nation students, what resources may be needed to enhance education?"* Tim answered: *"Strong parenting skills. I think it starts at home and that would be the number one thing, whether it's getting the parenting skills to our students now or*

teaching the parents of the community, which is a lot less realistic, but how to be a parent. From his statement, it was needful to have a two-way giving such skills to the parents or the parents of the community.

Jason

Again, I inquired: *“In your opinion, what resources may be needed to enhance education for the First Nation’s learner?”*

He responded: *“Wow. I don’t think any resources and throwing money at it in any way, shape or form is going help.”* I asked Jason why he gave this response and he said that *“the desire for education and the desire for success is an internal thing and the expectation here is that something will always be handed to me or given to me, I don’t have to go out and earn it.”* He had used media to recruit locally that he needed a hand to help with his construction work on his house renovation; there was no response. He was offering \$20 an hour. I questioned if the \$20 per hour offer was like free money, which no one would take, obviously perhaps they have no value for money. I asked if perhaps there was a freer source of money. This background leads to the fact that it is not a matter of money being poured in as a resource bit, it is the internal drive that keeps people at it. For most people, it is affirmative, like he came back to his background and mentioned that he was from a welfare family. His mother did not like it when he told her he was going to university. But bringing the issue of money as a needed resource, he said the contrary for the community he found himself in.

Liz

I questioned: *“When I co-teach one lesson with you, and a situation of difficulty which is of a culture nature arises, how will you solve it?”*

Liz responded: *“Well, we’d have to understand what that difficulty was, so I would say that I’d probably get a sense of what the teacher was thinking and kind of a sense of what I was thinking and involving a parent or a community counselor or even the principal. I would probably just open it up to insights of what’s going on and how we can understand and how we can work differently for the betterment of the child. “*

Jason

I inquired: *“In a scenario where I co-teach with you one lesson and a situation of a difficulty of a cultural nature come up. What should I expect you to do to address it?”*

He indicated that when teaching and someone come late, he does not even acknowledge it as it is so deeply engrained. *“If it’s something else, if it’s got something to do with let’s say a girl’s menstrual issues, then you know, you react totally different to that. Right?”* There are no-go areas for male teachers in female classroom issues.

Liz

She responded: *“The community schools have the community counselor or the principals and SNAs who possess a lot of cultural insights and good resources for the generation of better understanding.”*

When I co-teach with you, Jo-Anne, in one lesson; I don’t know what I could teach with you, but social studies or maybe we want to teach more market vocabulary in French and a situation which is of a cultural nature arises, and it is a bit difficult addressing such a situation. What should I expect you to do in addressing it?

I had a chance to narrate to Jo-Anne a careful diplomatic path I had to work along the lines of détente that I had to work in my small community. During the Queen of England's recent jubilee celebration, my principal who has seen my natural inclination to the Commonwealth of Nations invited me to both write a proposal for funds from government and plan the celebration at the school level. Seriously, any politicized Native would not take this celebration to heart. I needed to carve my way around a mechanism, which would likely unite the ideals of the Crown, Canada nationalism with Native aspirations. Not at all a simple architecture working out in our little community. It was a sensitive situation. As a non-Caucasian loyal to Canada and Native loving, I found my very fabric teased apart. We investigated whether the Indigenous people would not feel offended for celebrating an, albeit, foreign Queen's anniversary. Jo-Anne underscored the need to teach the learners critical thinking skills to be able to analyze situations. We had a discourse related to *polyphony* and *heteroglossia* which essentially represent different ways of seeing things which do not make a right or wrong but bring needed understanding and trends for concord among and between people who have different worldviews – NWT cultures and other cultures.

Mavis

Mavis answered: *“Everything will be situational, difficulty and condition dependent.”* Mavis spoke about how one of the elders came to school, and there was a discussion about the significance of the drum. In the Dene culture, women do not drum. While some students know this, others do not. She recalled a lesson when a guy was drumming, and there were these non-aboriginal girls who were interested in the

drumming and wanted to participate. The Aboriginal girls were sitting back under great tension, hoping that the girls would not touch the drum. She remembers stepping in to prevent an unwanted situation at the time. Mavis had pulled the girls aside and indicated that they do have to find out from the elder if they could drum.

If she had done something culturally inappropriate, and depending on the age of the Indigenous child, she would ask the kid what would be the better way of doing it... *“I did something I should not have done could you help me understand what I did ...?”* I would go to someone who knows how to help and quickly as she said it was important to fix thing as quickly as possible.

Sharon

Sharon responded: *“If a kid is speaking from that perspective they’ve learned it somewhere else so I don’t get offended. But anytime they’re reluctant to see why that comment or belief system wouldn’t be appropriate, then we spend a lot of time talking about it. We have to. If you don’t know why something’s not right, if you don’t understand the history behind why it’s not correct, then what happens is, students end up not believing you or not making the time to listen and to decide what they need to do. You know, or why their view needs to be changed or why they need to stand up or why it’s important that they hear what’s being said. You know...”* Sharon’s response was about students speaking from their perspective, which they might have learned somewhere, which can be forgiven. Some mild straightening needs to be done when they utter inappropriate words. A discussion has to be initiated with them if need be.

Liz

I asked: *“When I co-teach one lesson with you, and a situation of difficulty which is of a culture nature arises, how will you solve it?”*

She reported *“Well, we’d have to understand what that difficulty was, so I would say that I’d probably get a sense of what the teacher was thinking and kind of a sense of what I was thinking and involving a parent or a community counselor or even the principal. I would probably just open it up to insights of what’s going on and how we can understand and how we can work differently for the betterment of the child. “*

The community schools have the community counselor or the principals and SNAs who possess a lot of cultural insights and good resources for the generation of better understanding.

Jason

So in your class, you wouldn’t mind one or two students on a beanbag resting or sleeping.

He indicated that if they were lying on a beanbag during the lesson, he would not mind. Sometimes, the self-regulation has to be jerked up, and students tend to rest during the lesson to reach that level.

Jason

“Now I would like you also to maybe take a while and remember any situation in your teaching experience that made you smile, which makes you remember and you feel so proud about dealing with your indigenous students.” I asked. Jason replied: *“It would be this spring we went to a center to complete the second part of a [Training] Program and most of my students because there were only 2 or 3 students from [one] community who*

went back a second time, you know won all of the awards. We all got T-shirts, got together for a great big picture, everybody was happy. It was a nice week.”

I probed further, *“And so that may have come from your effort as well as student effort.”*

Jason responded: *“It was a lot of effort on my part. I was the only teacher who was involved for the entire two weeks of the project and in a supervisory position in Smith.”*

Jason recalled a lot of personal effort being put into this. He was the only teacher in the sessions for two weeks in a supervisory role. There was a total of 23 in the first session and the second was 13 costing \$90,000. He spoke of issues of priorities: *“Yeah, it’s a huge sum, whereas our shop in our high school had not been used for the last two years because we couldn’t get \$10,000 to buy materials and equipment.”* This felt wasteful.

Maybe you could influence funding, you could influence budgeting and so on, couldn’t you?

Jason responded: *“No. Because the people who are responsible for it are the people from the band office have a budget to spend, and they want to spend it how they want to spend it. They’re not interested in feedback from me. They never ask for it.”*

Given what you had said about your life earlier before you became a teacher how you have played the role of taking the Northwest Territories curriculum to other students as you have other cultures right there in your classroom?

Mavis replied: *“Well, again just growing up here I can say that I have a lot of connections to the communities.”* She found it fortunate to have to fund for the elders in school as super helpful because she could go back to people and say she can teach Dene

law all in teaching certain things about the *Dene Kede*. *"I go back to the people who can come in and teach us something in context."* So we were doing stories in origin, and so we had an elder come in and talk to us about what that it is meant and why it is important and not just once but kind of overtime, and then the kids write their responses. They go home and find out their stories of origin from kids from all over the place, including Hindi family and all. Not professing to know it all, Mavis expressed that she only happened to be born here and so would bring in experts and keep learning. She portrayed an ever-learning attitude.

Mavis

How have you come to understand teaching the curriculum to other cultures?

Mavis explained: *"I understand that as a reciprocal relationship, I feel that all cultures value very similar things. How we address those things could be quite different. An emphasis on academia in some cultures is not a value... the very practical skills for survival skills really are that important."* She stated that while she was growing, her parents made the decision that she would go to the university. Her peers in the community were very traditional, and though she was also as traditional on the land, she went to the University. She learned to do both; live in both worlds. She brought out the point of consciousness, covering the *oblivion of being* or *Seinsvergessenheit* (Lapitan, 2003). Mavis emphasized on being conscious of where the teacher is posted. As teachers, we need to honor what is important to the families in the communities we teach as the bigger picture is not just about the classroom. She informed: *"but I do need to make sure that those kids can learn about their culture and also learn about the other cultures."*

Tim

I asked: *“How aware are Indigenous students of the existence of an educational/achievement gap between Indigenous students and South Canada?”*

The participant informed of awareness among the Indigenous students. *“I think the ones that wouldn’t be aware would be some of the students that are not as far as an individual education plan (IEP), but aren’t working at grade level or aren’t as socially aware as some of the other students that would get it, realize the gap is there.”*

I inquired: *“The ERI implies that there is work to do and my question is what is your perception of the students’ awareness of this lag? That lag between them and the other students of Canada.”*

Jason

He replied: *“They have no perception of it whatsoever, no frame of reference, nothing to indicate that they are behind. A lot of them see themselves as absolutely wonderful students. In fact, I had one student say to me at exam time; I aced that exam. You know, I got like an 85 in it. I corrected it, and he got a 24.”*

I asked: *“Describe your perception of your students’ awareness... We’ve mentioned their performance, but are there any things that they might think that they could do better regarding coming at par with the other Canadians?”*

We further explored if there were any things that Indigenous would like to do to become par with the other Canadians. *“Because of lack of realization, they do not make any effort to catch up.”* He said. *“The children who leave the graduation team go to university in BC to do the First Year Aboriginal Catch-Up Program.”* He mentioned that

for some from the more educated and wealthy families, some have successfully gone to McGill and Royal Military College, insinuating that the expectation from the child depends on the family.

I followed up on this question: *“Wouldn’t you say that maybe the ones who were identified for instance as gifted, wouldn’t you say that maybe we don’t have the mechanism in place to identify gifted students?”*

Jason answered: *“I don’t know what it’s like in your hamlet, but from my experience of being here for five years, we have no academically gifted students. We have what would be considered, as you say down south, normal average students. Our top students would be considered normal average students down south.”* But I went further to mention one student in Kindergarten who is at the point of solving much more complex algebraic-like problems and has no problem with huge numbers. I mentioned that coming from far away Calgary, gifted and talented education was a common talk and they have a program for it. This talk is lacking where we are. I mentioned that as long as we do not have the mechanism to identify them, we would not have the beautiful numbers of gifted and talented of Southern Ontario that he spoke about. Jason replied: *“I disagree. I think that you may have found the one in a million. I’ve seen a lot of students here in our school and no, the academically gifted are not there. The top students are average students.”*

He indicated that the reason why they remain average was that they would not do any homework. He added: *“even the good students are missing a lot of schools, you know coming in late in the morning, skipping off classes, not doing any homework, you know*

not doing the quizzes and assignments when they're required. It's like you've got to beat them with a stick at the end of the course for most of them to finish up. Right? I had one student this year in grade 11, and he was doing a three-credit law course with me, and he just blew off the last credit. He just sat in the chair in class, played with his phone, fell asleep, chatted with his buddy next to him or did whatever. He just blew off the credit."

We explored the nuance in his being non-Aboriginal and growing on welfare. I tried to provoke a discussion on this and link it with having for free and doing and the converse as in the Indigenous students he teaches. He pointed to the internal drive and also mentioned: *"I grew up socially deprived, academically deprived, culturally and physically deprived. Like I had only ever been off that island maybe 2 or 3 times before I started university. I was 17 years old and two months when I started University in St. John's, the capital city of Newfoundland, and that was my very first time having been in the city, and I was there alone."*

How do you describe the successes of your teaching tour or teaching career?

Jason

As a teacher, he had visited many communities but has not taught anywhere else in the NWT. *"Okay, so when you're teaching our native students, you are aware that they are native students, so what kinds of things do you do to kind of get to them which you might not do if you were, for instance, in southern Ontario?"* I inquired.

We went into how he tailors the curriculum in ways unique to the students, which he may not do in Southern Ontario. He explained that the curriculum modification would be one, giving many months for projects and assignments to be completed in ways that

would not be allowed down south. In the south, assignments are brought in promptly as expected.

Liz

I asked Liz: “Now, in your situation what are some of the successes that you can give an account of in your teaching tour in the Northwest Territories.”

Having left the previous school about four times, each time she went back, she was received back—a welcoming community. A fellow teacher described Liz as being like family. *“With my students, some of those successes are seeing them have their success, and having them being a part of the little things I guess sometimes, like for example we did an art show one evening, for the community and you know to see the kids with all their art on the wall and showing their parents and their family members and seeing ...what they had done and what they had accomplished, those are successes.”*

Tell me all the things that you have done that you feel you have to be rewarded for.

Liz recalled being on committees and working with different university committees. She has been working to build connections with universities, bringing people into the community and showing them the school. She has been a quiet organizer to get people together, working with Dehcho First Nations and outside agencies. Setting up successful experiences for the students. She reported successfully taking students to Vancouver University, and she had been in charge of paperwork, calling the students’ families.

So if there's disagreement in the classroom how would you deal with it?

Times of disagreement were seen with a sense of restitution, working things out during sharing circles and rectifying their relationship. She formed this analogy: *"We've got a plane taking off. It's got a long runway on the water."* There is still, room to make the best of things. During the discussion, the value of dialogue as a pathway for the shift in the continuum from misunderstanding to understanding and continuity of the discussion was raised. She presented how she spends a lot of time with the students looking at alternatives. She emphasized that while there was dialogue, there was also change or have an awareness of what may be precipitating change. Some students may have more going on for them and sometimes it is what leads to the behavior.

How do you mediate during disagreements?

Liz dialogues with the students and takes time to touch base, which may or may not open them up. The challenge may be a bit more for much younger students, at the time, such students may be simply hungry, upset or tired and disagreements may not just be because of the behavior towards another person.

I inquired: *"How would you address the subject of marginalization of indigenous students in the education setup?"*

Sharon

Sharon answered: *"In these situations, it's because the teacher thinks that the kids are there for the teacher. They're not there for you. That kid isn't there for me; I'm here for them. It's the wrong perspective. So we need to stop thinking that they don't deserve to be in a course or they don't belong in a course, or they can't get themselves out of bed,*

shame on them. We need to start understanding why. It's not about the teacher. The adult is not the important person in this space. And what happens is that we get wrapped up in our curriculum, we get wrapped up in our standardized testing, we get wrapped up in our marks and we forget there's the reason there are these people that are actually, you know, put in front of us and we're supposed to impact change on them. But we don't have a clue what's hindering their progress. We don't take the time. We don't understand. We put marks and numbers above children. We put dollar signs in front of children. That's not acceptable."

Mavis

What are your views about the residential school phenomenon as depicted in this photo of an indigenous student?

She responded: *"Residential schools scare me. They really bother me. My sister who is a doctor... her brother attended residential school... and I am not sure where... because she was adopted in ... so we didn't really get a good history... yet but I have quite a number of friends who were in residential school... good and bad...but it just... the conformity of the little boy on the right hand side with the suit ...its just very ... and very ...not cool."* She had a bad feeling for the boy. Asked if the boy's experience could not be termed successful, she said it depended on the goal. She was against eliminating one ethnic group for the sake of assimilation.

We discussed how passionate people tend to become vulnerable. She brought out her reasons against forced conversion, marginalization, and indoctrination or anything, which tends to suggest *my way is better* than yours.

On the topic of residential schools and I would ask, if it was raised during your lesson, maybe during social studies or it came up during literacy or English language arts, how will you address the topic?

Jason

Jason mentioned the presence of a chapter in their Globalization course this year. He deemed that a very general introduction course. Their teacher's aid in their classroom at the time added to it by presenting their experience at the residential school. I never really went too deep into it, as I knew at the time we would cover it more intensely on its own later. Right now teachers have to be given special training, which he does not have.

How would you address the topic of residential schools when raised among your students in the classroom?

Mavis

Questioned how she would view it if the child came to encounter the different Western worldview and it produced so much positive impact on the child. I presented to her that my view about it would be positive if the broken child at the beginning were mended at the end of the transformation, suggesting that the end could justify the means but we agreed this was a tricky assertion. Part of the curriculum presents substantial exposure to residential school, and we have had to tread very carefully, though some parents do not yet want to come to the school yet. The material has been openly shared with the parents to bring them aboard. She pointed to the potency of the residual effect of residential school in Yellowknife.

We discussed the nakedness and magnitude of the residual effect of the residential schools in Yellowknife and wondered if the interplay of the confluence of Native civilization and Western civilization could be the result of such magnitude, such nakedness not seen in the small communities where the clash of cultures is not so intense. This participant mentioned how several people had approached her doing something for the NWT.

How would you address marginalization if there is, of the present education system and of course of the past as was depicted in the residential school?

Liz

Liz alluded to marginalization as having roots in the history of the Indigenous people stemming from the era of residential school. There is literacy marginalization, which requires capacity building to build the child's level over the years to address. There is a rebuilding; ripple effect translated through the parents who were taken away to the residential school building in the students. The low literacy levels of the communities need to be rebuilt.

Jo-Anne

I inquired: "Tell me how you would address the subject of marginalization of indigenous people in the education setup referring to the past as much as you know."

She explained her work towards running lessons on the marginalization of women and Natives in Canada. She had taken the time to demonstrate the meaning of marginalization in class. We had a discussion on racial minority and the unfairness in society. The aim was to increase awareness and openness to difference.

Tim

I asked: *“I have a question on the word marginalization and I’m sure we’ve implied that in the residential school, how it was run and probably a good program turned sour and so on, and people started becoming marginalized.”*

It is our responsibility in the school to ensure that we teach critical literacy, which helps the students appreciate who they are, who their teachers are in the self-realization journey. Delving into how a student would travel from naïve consciousness through critical to magical consciousness (conscientization) (Freire, 2000), Tim was asked to throw light on how he would address the topic of marginalization. He responded: *“That’s a tough question. I think giving the students awareness is important and so letting them know that this has happened in the past, this is how your parents or grandparents were treated and this is why, and seeing what the students say about that. Just, you’d present the information so that you make them aware and then see where it goes.”*

I presented to Tim my experience of boarding school as involving traveling away from home and being on the books which had not been bad. The contrast was formed, however, of the type in the residential schooling where Canada history has it that some students were abused, mother tongue banned, and sent to sit in the cold for hours and other abusive practices, which otherwise would have been a good way to teach children.

I asked further: *“Residential Schools - if it is raised among your learners in the class, what would be your reaction?”*

He explained: *“It would depend on the context. The comment would change the answer.”* He explained he would have to react appropriately and respectfully when the

topic was raised in class during a lesson or if a learner brought up the topic. The respondent was asked about what he would do if a child just brought up the topic, wanting to know more about it. He indicated: *“I would let them know everything I know about it and just like in general how the government wanted to assimilate the Indians in Canada so that they were going to be the same as other Canadians, and so they went in and took all the children and brought them to these schools and took away all their cultural clothes, didn’t let them speak their language and there’re some, even more, sad stories where people that were in trusted positions took advantage of that... which ensued till 1996.”*

Somehow, if you were given a chance of maybe being in charge of the knowledge of the phenomenon of residential school, how would you advise that it is taught to students?

Tim was of the opinion that the teaching of units of the residential school would need mastery of protocols like teaching the Sex Education, being that sensitive. For example, the parents will have to be sent letters about how this was going to happen. Instructional approaches of the type of discussion and readings and research and videos. He felt doing a grassroots project for the students to talk to their family and all the way ensuring that the teacher handles it sensitively. He added: *“You know, you’ve got to be careful with that stuff because you could strike a chord that hasn’t been struck in 20 years and it could be bad news. It could bring out some demons.”*

So you would say the person is successful now? Did they achieve what they wanted to achieve?

Jason

Somehow, Jason cautioned that it might not be termed successful based on mere change in looks.

I probed: *“So if you met this child and they’ve made something out of their lives instead of maybe still wearing the same clothes, okay for a bigger boy or a bigger man, the same type of attire or the same styles or symbols and so on, but they’ve done something with their lives in terms of they can be employed in the hospitals, they can be employed, they can be participating in the parliament and so on. Would that be your measure of success?”*

We delved into the idea of the end justifies the means, that if the training produced doctors and teachers and nurses than it was successful. This was how Tim responded: *“No. I think before I was a teacher in First Nations schools I would say yes, but now I have learned that no, that’s not how to measure it. I think it’s just each person; an individual defines success on their own based on what they want to do. It’s a lot of what they’re exposed to, but I think that’s part of the teacher’s job is to get them exposed and to see things, what they can do and what they’re capable of doing, making them feel.”*

We explored the idea of the child mastering the things of being trained in a Western school and how that affects the intended defined success. If this graduate becomes accepting of Western outfits and dresses but somehow still can shift back to the original Indigenous orientation whenever needed, for example as a chief in the hamlet, but is still able to practice his profession of Medicine or Law. Describe it as the ontology of flexibility, someone who can easily shift back and forth, but also able to go back to

where he has reached in such flexibility where he exists very positively in both worlds – in two worlds. When it needs for him to be a Native he is a native and if it needs for him to be a chief of Natives as Vice Chancellor Dickson advised me in my Kwaprow experience.

In our dialog in this regard, we meant: someone who when you take to a world A he is there. When you take him to the world number alpha he is there. So it's not like I'm in world A, but I can't perform in world B or world number alpha, and somebody else who is not like me has to come and serve my people in this regard because I have a disadvantage. In the interview, I asked if I would or not, have somebody so educated of the two worlds and very knowledgeable of the ways of knowing of the ancestors and also very knowledgeable in the world of cellphones.

The grill would be if this personality produced by the school system would not fit the description portrayed in the ideal of the *Two row Wampum*. This treaty formed the basis of understanding and respect, an agreement of living together and sharing between the Whites and the Natives though the element of marginalization and subjugation crept in. To ameliorate this, we should be partners in seeking that education passes through the Indigenous students we teach and not they just passing through what we offer them.

Jason

Tell me how you will address the subject of marginalization? It's existence, if it's there, if it's not, and so what do we do if it exists, marginalization?

To so much a surprise, Jason agreed that marginalization exists but in a reverse form. *"It's very difficult actually to describe. You just have to experience it and know it*

and be smart enough to be able to recognize it. But yeah, it's there, and I am marginalized, and there are things I'm not allowed to do in this territory. For example, if I want to have a second job or own a business, I have to get a letter of approval from a deputy minister. Really? Because I can't be seen as taken a job from a local? And that's the institutional marginalization." He mentioned that his training and qualification notwithstanding, there was a *"formalized process stopping me from doing things that I wanted to do."* This was a legal instrument.

Mavis

Tell me how you would address... how Mavis would address the subject of marginalization of the Indigenous Peoples of the education setup of the past.

Mavis responded: *"We are fortunate for the kids to have a chance to engage in day-long camps throughout the year. This is an opportunity for the kids to come with their experiences and language. They have the chance to express themselves in their language. Before the camp, the children are taught the names of the animals and the traditional language around the activity."* She mentioned that marginalization was a big deal for her and it is an issue for her daughter's attending the University. She explained that a sizeable number of the students are coming in with English as a second language. She spoke of two little guys who came with only Russian and Chinese respectively. The Russian was a fourth grader. They would take them round the school and point to things, and they would give their names in their language, and then the educators would give its English. After doing this for weeks, they became fluent in English. This fluency is not seen with the Aboriginal kids, though. *"I think the same approach is you have to honor*

the language and experiences that they come in with and then try and match it in a negotiated way. It's not my way is better your way is not..."

The discussion revealed my experience elsewhere in the school system of Calgary, new students who have English as a second language with probably a beginning level English are taken to beginning level Math or other subjects that they have a higher level in. The level-determining subject for Math and Science has been the English Language for these language learners (ELL). This had been Hakuta's passion for a while in the USA (Migdol, 2011). Mavis presented the story of a grade 12 student who had come from Argentina who spoke Spanish. This student knew very little or no English but was on the honor roll. He had the chance to do his course work in Math 30 online; this was the way devised for such students. She said that it would be a challenge with the same happening in Dene language.

I photo-elicited: *What is your opinion about the first boy and the second boy and how do they compare?*

Sharon

Before she answered, she referred to the published work: *"We were children"* and *"Porcupines and china dolls"* and made a recommendation that I have a look at them. The first boy has an Indigenous presents pride and pomp, a powerful cultural identity. She described the boy as longhaired, traditional attired and adorned. The change is very evident when the European culture is imposed on him. He is not happy, and that is evident. She explained *"it's like he's playing dress-up or something... it's evident that he is not who he is."* Pressed a little more about whether the photo represented one or two

boys, the participant did not mince words about the willful transformation in a single boy. She carefully described a pre-intrusion and post intrusion periods.

Asked why “intrusion” she indicated: *“they’ve taken who he is and they have completely altered who he is and they cut his hair. They changed his outfit. They took away his traditional clothing and put him in something that he probably finds highly uncomfortable.”* Asked what happened to the boy, she answered: *“Well, he was transformed into the dominant culture.”* When I inquired a little more about the morality in the transformation, she asserted: *“I don’t know if we can say it’s not negative. But that’s my bias, right?”* She emphasized *“Because they take away who he is and they make him into somebody he’s not... Our identity is based on how we represent ourselves. Have you seen the movie “We Were Children?” Are you familiar with that movie?”* She explained this was a CBC documentary about two children who entered residential school. *“And when the collectors ...came around to get the children, the children were always presented at their very best. Their hair would be done and in their very best outfits and you know, there was the like of that. But the sad thing was is that the dominant culture did not value those children and appreciate who they were and how they came to them. And so they treated them like everything they were wearing and everything that’s how they were presented by their parents made them into heathens and non-humans and they totally degraded those children by shaving their heads. That’s a huge power issue. If you cut somebody’s hair when hair is so valued by Aboriginal people... you cut their hair; you take their power... you take their identity. That’s the purpose.”*

Liz

Liz answered: *“Well, we talk about this in our northern studies class, and it’s actually the exact question you’re saying. Is this the same person? And then there’s many ways to look at it. Physically from my understanding, it is the same human being. Whether he’s the same, you know, going into residential schools and what they’ve done to “civilize” to conform to residential school standards with the cutting of the hair, taking the cultural identity away and putting more kinds of westernized clothes on the child. You can ask if they’re still the same person; they may not be at all. You’ve just cut their hair which is very culturally significant for indigenous people, so it could be a stripping of one’s identity or they might be able to maintain that within themselves and to kind of go through this residential school process and come out of it and find their way again. So yeah, there’s many ways you could look at it. Is it the same person? It’s hard to say. It kind of depends on the interior.”*

She stated that it depends on the individual’s strength and awareness or what is going on and where they came from. She indicated the extent of the cultural significance of the hair and its connection to power might have to be looked into.

Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne was given a chance to describe the photos. She identified boys only photo, and girls only one. There was one however that was identified as a photo of boys and girls combined. She made an assumption that the photos were about residential school. The reason for this was that the pictures looked like old ones, she had connected the history behind the history of education in Canada to make that assumption. The

picture with Sir John Franklin School label led Jo-Anne to make an assumption that this was a residential school for Caucasian students. She was making a mistake, the Franklin School of Saskatchewan with the Northwest Territories one, which was a residential school. We investigated further the reasons why she felt that would be a residential school. She spoke of a third one of boys and girls combined bringing out its characteristic haircut and outfits for the boys and girls.

I asked: *“Are you saying there is residential school for boys and girls and that for boys only and girls only. How do the three pictures compare?”*

We investigated schools for boys only, girls only and boys and girls combined and I asked her to bring out the similarities and differences among the situations; uniforms in one, with teachers present others with no teachers present, though there could still be teachers who are not seen. She had explained that the Caucasian photo depicted kids who were not relaxed and the situation looks more staged. We investigated the possible costs of establishing the different schools. The Caucasian one seemed more expensive and also portrayed elements of elitism. The girls are a bit happy as shown in the photo. The all-girl one would be easy to set up, prodded why it would have elitism while still a residential school. That was taking us to another realm. *“So if you had a certain ethnicity then you would have a certain kind of residential school... You see what I am trying to get to?”* I asked, and she responded: *“Yes.”*

Jo-Anne had seen a similar photo of the same boy who went to the residential school- a before and after situation (Appendix B.2). Asked why the experience of the boy should not be seen as a successful one? She said one could not tell if the boy was happier

in any of the before or after photos. He would be proud as a Native, and the after look seems staged. We agreed that the definition of success should be determined by the boy and not by observers, as he has been taken from where he belongs to where he does not. We delved around the Freirean question of who would liberate this guy. The student has to be given the needed support to liberate himself by himself.

Jason

Jason could identify the boys like the same with two different types of attire. The one on the left is Aboriginal attire while the other was European. He did not seem to have any more to say. He would not say that the person became empowered after the residential school experience. I probed, and he said the child on the left was more empowered. He said the reason was that the guy was wearing a fancy type of dancing dress, which would not be available to anyone in the community. I reflected whether he was applying his Caucasian mindset to point to a staged identity and if so if it did have elements of Eurocentric Diffusionism.

When Indigenous students come to us for school, and we take them through the outcomes and if they transformed from their original state to the state where they had absorbed so much that he can drive if he trained to be a driver, can program a computer if he trained for that and so for whatever he decided to train to be to assist with the economy, he has in deed become. I asked if he would not see such a student as having been empowered and he answered in the affirmative. But Jason explained that we could make them a better them, but not to transform them into something new. We agreed that the two of us were great agents of that change as teachers.

How do you describe yourself as a teacher of indigenous students?

Tim

He pointed to the fact that: *“The First Nations student on the left is dressed very culturally with long hair and on the right looks like he could be a soldier in the Civil War you would say.”* We kept discussing the individual images as if they were two different people.

We spoke about the demeanor of the second image of the boy(s). He described: *“He’s got that same dress as the Unions that look like that, but with short hair, to compare it to the First Nations student to the left there, nice shoes, fitting pants, everything fits.”*

We discussed under the guise that boy on the right is not a First Nations boy. Obviously, the identity shift had been so immense that Tim thought they were two different people; one a First Nations citizen and the other a Caucasian. He described the First Nations student as being in a colorful and cultural outfit, lots of symbols, loose natural material; animal fur, long braided hair. The Caucasian one was in a uniform, which looks like someone gave him, tight well fitting short hair, nice shoes. Asked what his reaction would be if he were told this was the same student with two images of different eras of his residential school life before and after, he said he would be surprised

Asked if the essence of being sent to the residential school was achieved, he alluded to it having been successful.

Now, if I have to include any five words that describe your story as a teacher of Indigenous Canadians what do you think I should be putting in there?

Mavis

Asked to state what five words can be used to describe her as the best Indigenous teacher, she explained that she was passionate about the land and the people; humble. She is humble by the greatness of the people. She is a perpetual learner, always adjusting. She has a great awareness of the vastness of the heart of the people. She is committed and feels spiritually connected with the North. She is an NWT indigene who does not know all the answers but has a vision of a better NWT ahead of time. She has an ERI-frame of mind, reflective.

Tim

I asked Tim: *“Describe yourself, your story as a teacher of indigenous Canadians with just five words or sentences. How do you describe yourself?”*

He replied: *“Patient...Tolerable, like I can tolerate...I think energetic with the level of energy that needs to be...Optimist. And I think adventurous could fit in there.”*

Sharon

I asked: *“If I gave you a chance to tell your story in just five words, to describe who you are, what words would you use?”*

Sharon indicated she would like to be seen as a reflexive teacher who follows the perspective of the student; grateful, passionate, compassionate and always learning.

Jo-Anne

What are the five words that you would use to describe your story of a teacher, a Canadian teacher of indigenous students?

She spoke of a propensity to inquiry and curiosity, honest teacher, critical thinking, ongoing learner, relationship and bridge builder.

Jason

I would like you to use five words that describe your story, Jason.

His response was: *“Honest, trusting, motivated, knowledgeable and experienced.”*

Liz

Talking about student behavior, are there any behaviors among your students, which you think could be attributed to their culture as indigenous students?

There are little things, relational nuances which are normally not so visible in the classroom. Liz indicated that every behavior depends on one's way of being and knowing. The participant traced the acquisition of knowledge by the student from the lines of ontology and epistemology explaining that there is a definite interplay of culture and behavior. Pedagogically the student might need to watch for a prolonged period and give it a try in the classroom not wanting to make a mistake. So there may be a watching and learning time for learning to catch fish before going in for the catch. This calls for the teacher to study and be mindful to understand the situation. In this aspect of the discussion, Liz traced the construction of knowledge with the students, pointing to the existence and there was of being of the knowledge among the Indigenous students. She presented that there is a way to construct knowledge so that they can own and make use of the knowledge. And it does happen that theirs is more of an experiential kind of approach.

So how does this basic difference influence the way you do your work as a teacher?

Her responses sounded like doing teaching with constructivism in mind. The teacher has to tackle it from what they may need to improve by themselves as they teach, experimenting to examine what might be helpful for the students.

Is there a relationship between the culture of your students or who they are as Dene and their behavior in the classroom?

Liz informed that some of the behaviors stem from cross-cultural differences. If a new teacher's ways do not connect with the student, it might bring about a behavioral outburst causing a difficulty in behavioral interaction or difficulty. Asked more directly whether the students have anything they would do behaviorally because they were Dene, Liz desisted against generalizing on the grounds of stereotyping, but which still needs more conversation about.

In the conversation, we brought out behaviors as behaviors, not good or bad, but that are part of cultural identity. Liz mentioned of the presence of an open-ness with time in the community school, which they joked about as Dene time and part of their being. *"It's not necessarily being late; it's just there's more of calmness I guess with time. It doesn't have to be so structured and set."* She explained how in outdoor programs like cultural camps, instead of following a set program in a rigid manner for a non-aboriginal group, the Native way of moving with the flow had been followed.

We had a conversation about *saving* and *storage* for tomorrow. An example was directed at the use of erasers in the class. As a few would use erasers and keep them for use another time while others use the erasers, you have given them and come again and

again another time because they do not save them for another time. The Dene People, for instance, do go out hunting and obtain just what they need and not more, and so they have to go in again another time. This has to do with the epistemology of *storage* and management of *excess*, which needs to be investigated.

Jo-Anne

What is your opinion about the relationship between culture and classroom behavior of your students?

“I think there’s a correlation between culture and classroom behavior because in some cultures perhaps the role of the teacher or education itself is seen in a certain way that affects the way that a child behaves in the classroom. So if they come from a household where education is valued, then I think that’s likely to rub off on them and they’re going to behave a little bit better in the classroom than someone who comes from a household where perhaps the school is like a foreign place or it’s a mistrusted facility or a place that might cause them to misbehave because their parents don’t really see that much value in education or schooling.” She informed.

She said that sometimes students from particular cultures kind of have similar classroom behavior; she also mentioned that Filipino students a high expectation from home to perform well and if some behavior arises in the classroom parents are contacted, and it gets resolved. We explored a comparison the Filipino parent who never experienced residential school with the Native parent. We agreed that the phenomenon had somehow alienated the Native parent into non-cooperation, non-trusting. So if a problem comes from a school that needs to be solved, you may not necessarily have to

expect so much from them because they already know how the Eurocentric school solves things, which may not necessarily be the way they would have loved to solve things. We agreed that they have not had any direct experience of the residential school like the Indigenous parent and so also their involvement in the school setup.

Sharon

What is your opinion about the relationship between culture and the classroom behavior of your students?

Culture can be both homogeneous and heterogeneous. Each situation is though not 100%. There are Indigenous, Caucasian, African students, and other groups. All the students need to see themselves and their culture at all the levels in the classroom during instruction. The what and why in their culture have to be seen by engaging them in their activities, going home with them and cooking their food, bringing their relatives in for them to hear about what is important to them. A solid school family connection consciously built.

Jason

Would you say there are certain behaviors among your students due to cultural differences?

He mentioned that culturally there is a lot more touching among the students. *“It’s really difficult for them to keep their hands off each other...They do not respect personal space. They spend so much time together, they are so intimate with each other, they are so related in terms of families and all of that kind of stuff and they’re so familiar*

with each other that that respect for space, I guess it must be a cultural thing I think it is a cultural thing.”

So the personal space thing is not followed and how does this affect your work with them?

In the school system, he tends to ignore it as a cultural construct, but with his connection to the Canadian Armed Forces and the Cadet Program, there is a no-touch policy, and so they spend more time dealing with the concept of touch. It is being respected when they are in uniform but not when not in uniform. The challenge is that they get most of their students for one or two years and they start dropping off as they move up in rank and the expectation levels increase which could be due to the need for a leader to be beyond reproach.

What is your opinion about the relationship between culture in the classroom and behavior?

Jason responded: *“It seems alright for students to show up 20-30 minutes late and nothing is done about it. Adults are showing up late for work themselves; they’re dropping their kids off as they’re on their way 30 minutes late for work. I don’t think there’s anything I can do individually as a teacher to change that in any way.”*

How will you address land ownership and access, such issues when it comes to maybe social studies?

He mentioned that there are fully serviced properties that are standing undeveloped in their community

So how do you connect this with the land claims settlement you have in your village?

He could not connect land ownership and land claims in his community, as it is an ongoing process that is not yet finalized.

How would you like to play any part to influence student opinion on Native land ownership?

He indicated: *“No. If students have questions on that, I will phone up the chief or the grand chief or whoever to come in and have a discussion or make a presentation or whatever else on that, because they have specialized knowledge that I simply don’t have access to.”* I hinted of a visit to our school by the Berger Inquiry people about three or so years ago and he said he once got asked by Indigenous students: *“why are you teaching us stuff that happened back in the 70’s when you aren’t teaching us about what’s happening right now, like I don’t know more...”*

Jo-Anne

What are your views in regards to the government’s pursuit of land claim settlement?

Asked about her insights about land claim and access, she said she did not know a lot about it though a few of her friends in different departments in NWT. Jo-Anne informed of a complicated land use and claim in the Dehcho that she did not have a full understanding of. We had a chance to exchange ideas about the land issues and the work of the Berger Inquiry of 1974 and recent visiting of schools with a group of elders. We spoke about how land negotiations are ongoing to return the land to the Native people. Speaking about some rounds being conducted by the Berger Inquiry in the not so distant past, we agreed that it was not too bad for a cross-cultural teacher not to know so much about land claim settlement because exclusively. The settlement was something that was

mainly between government and the people, the First Nations Peoples, but we encouraged it doesn't hurt to at least look around and find information, after all, it is about the Indigenous people.

A Photo-Elicitation

Jason described the photos, identifying gender differences, and time frames. He mentioned the Indian Residential school system and a point of austerity present in one of the pictures.

There are more caretakers more on the side of the girls and boys.

Do you have something to say about their dressing?

Talking about their appearance. The Native people are more in wearing non-uniforms.

While in photo three, they are all wearing uniforms.

So which ones are you saying are neat and tidy and in rows?

In the Natives photos, there are larger rows and much larger class sizes. He felt the Caucasian photo was a typically staged photo portrait in any school at any time between the mid 50's and 90's. He sees himself, his uncles and aunts in those pictures.

Would you say that there may have been for this class a stronger drive to educate girls more than boys?

Jason would not detect from photo three a stronger drive to educate boys more than girls as he thinks it is just representative of the population dynamic at the time.

And regarding presentation and grooming, do you have any comments from these three photos?

We spoke about presentation and grooming. All the children are reasonably well dressed. He observed: *“Hair is cut, the dresses are clean and tidy, and they’re not torn. You know, girls are not wearing boys’ clothes and little grade 5 boys are not wearing their moms’ dresses. You know, dress standards change every year.”*

You know, the way the hair is cut has a different connotation for Caucasian as for the native. You know hair is power for the native, so if you cut a native child’s hair and you expect that’s okay, that is a better presentation, it may not be, because that reduces their power. What do you say?

He mentioned that “hair is cut...” but I asked whether it meant the same for the Native as for the Caucasian as we learn that hair is power for the Native. He explained that the cutting of the hair may have been simply to control lice and should be culturally appropriate. I mentioned that as long as their parents, there did the cutting is no problem but at a residential school to control lice is another story. He mentioned a fiduciary responsibility of care as long as the kids are in their care they have to maintain standards.

Now, what do you say about the pupil-to-teacher ratio?

He could not be definite, as he had no way of distinguishing; maybe 1:30 ratio.

According to Jason, with whatever situation, we are tending to make subjective judgments based on what other people have returned to say. Is our suspicion for a deliberate low pupil to teacher ratio unfounded?

Which of these three photos would take a lot more of your money?

On discussing the question of equity and distribution of resources, he pointed out that the school in the Caucasian photo would take more money. Straying from the history

in the three pictures at stake we discussed inequity of funding between reserves and non-reserves in Canada. We spoke about the allocation of funds for reserves as opposed to non-reserves. As it seems, even so, NWT has not got as many reserves as other Provinces or Territories. We have two -- Hay River: Dene 1 and Salt River 195 according to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

So the funding for Hay River Reserve is different from the ones that you and I receive for our schools. Is that right?

Even so, we could not confirm if the two reserves in the NWT receive lower than other settlements in NWT, which obviously seem well funded. The participant indicated that somewhere in 1997, he left the North the first time due to the freeze in funding. Does this refer to the capping in funding at 2% since 1996? I meditated. Jason expatiated: *“and the freeze on the funding eventually turned into a freeze on teacher’s salaries and everything else. So anybody, a first-year teacher going into any of the First Nations reserves now in northern Ontario and northern Manitoba would receive a starting salary of \$50,000 to \$55,000 a year.”* The NWT has always paid more. We agreed that whatever the details may be, a freeze in remuneration or money for development is still a form of injustice. He added: *“It’s also a form of injustice to cut a program for a physically challenged person or a wounded military member.”* He explained it might have evolved into injustice though at the beginning that may not have been the intention.

Some things are as they are because of the prevailing constraints and conditions such as the allocations in the budget. Though Jason has not seen that happen locally, he knows a few who have industry and generate their sources of revenue, make all kinds of

money and is prosperous. Jason explicated that time may change things and attitudes, it is a matter of time. He said one has to be willing to do things for themselves. He presented an interesting story: *“A friend of mine went to a neighboring community a few years ago for a job interview with Enbridge. One of the very first things they had to do as part of the job application was a urine test. There were 75 people who showed up to do the urine test. The person directly in line behind my friend was smoking pot. Right? Some others had been actively drinking. When the results came back, one of the men found out he was pregnant. Yes, he had used his sister’s urine. The only three people who passed the pee test were my friend and two elders.”*

I wondered about the relevance of this story to my interview, but the question that came into my reflection and purview was ‘what are we producing in these students?’ When I asked, what he wanted to bring up, he said *“the change in attitude. A willingness to do things for yourself.”* He added that there are opportunities there that have to be taken, adding he in his growing had nobody to do it for him. Again, I inquired that unless we deny what the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are bringing up, and saying we must all compete when some of us human beings cannot compete.

He asked: *“... have you ever heard the statement that all families are dysfunctional?”* I answered in the negative, and he took the platform again to state that all families are dysfunctional in a lot of ways. He reported: *“Like my oldest daughter is 34 years old right now. She said to me three summers to me; she said: “Dad, the worst thing you ever did to me was to take me to the reserves for my education.”*

I inquired if he took his child to the reserve for education and his response was: *“Yeah, my family grew up on the reserves.”* In this case, both he and the child’s mother could afford to do otherwise. She was looking back on it, and she just saw herself as disadvantaged by being there, to begin with. Would it mean that Jason and his wife felt at the time that they could do with the same reserve education that Natives have?

I made a follow-up on a trend of discussion. *“You mentioned something that I quite agree with. You said that people have to be willing to do things for themselves. “People should be willing to do things for themselves.”*“ He had stated earlier, and I had told him that that was a Freirean principle (2000). I underscored the fact that no one can liberate anyone. Each has to do their liberation. I also told him that people have to be led to that realization; this was the work of teachers which we do everyday.

I presented in this dialog: *“So I agree in that manner. But I also agree that people have got to be helped to come to the realization, and that’s our work. You and I have that work in the classroom, and we do it every day.”* Jason’s responded: *“Okay. There’s a difference between help, when they do it themselves because they’re incapable or, you know, not educated enough to be able to perform it, but having somebody else do it for you, like writing a resume to apply for a job when you’ve already graduated high school is quite a different thing. There is assistance and doing, and unfortunately, right now in the Northwest Territories, there is a lot of doing, and there’s the expectation of you doing it for me. I won’t do it for myself.”*

While being receptive to his point of view as being experiential, he informed: *“People down south only know what they see in the media. You and I live this thing.*

When we go down south to visit family, friends, whatever, and we tell the stories of things that we've seen and heard and done up here, they're unbelievable. People just cannot believe it because they do not have a frame of reference for what we live every day." I mentioned that our aim is to obtain the best for our students and so if we are not getting there it is frustrating. He explained: *"I had a psychiatrist friend of mine say quite a few years ago, "I will work as hard for my patients as they will work for themselves." I have taken that philosophy to heart."*

In the second interview with Jason the record goes: Before we went on with this interview, Jason requested to clarify his stance about *'two generations for a change'* in the previous interview. He informed of three students in his globalization course that spoke of their opposition to the *'back to the land'* call by their elders and leaders. *"These students wanted nothing to do with that. Not in any way, shape or form."* He reported.

Does this signal a genuine Indigenous orientation or a stance of oppressed minds that need liberation (Freire, 1970)? *"So we can see that already some of these students in grades 10, 11 and 12 are thinking about, you know what's working in the community, what's not, what's being fed to them, where should they go, what direction, you know with the whole Dehcho process thing, all that kind of stuff. It's all working together, and they're a lot more informed about it than we think that they were. And they have their ideas on it."* He added. In this discourse, I added that people are learning beings and as the *'go back'* to the bush they would be going back with something. *"They definitely will not go empty handed and one thing for sure that I know they will be going back with is the technology of the cellphone and Internet."* In the globalization course, the students

get critical thinking skills to understand that it is all about how the rest of world is influencing you and you in return. With this, *“they quickly came to realize that going back to the bush is not going to be the solution to their problem.”* He indicated. With this, we agreed that their going back to the bush would involve them going with a cellphone in their hands and a constant need for Internet connectivity. If they have to go to the bush with cellphones, then they were not going to be on the side of resisting change, as they would be going with something belonging to the future.

Jason had an opinion, for instance, concerning Indigenous language: *“With regards to language revitalization, a lot of those same students and a few more thought that while it may be important, the local community is certainly not practicing what they preach.”* The students see that the people who are in schools teaching them and in band offices say one thing and do something totally different. Again he informed that there is not much value-for-money language education. *“We’ve had students in grade 12 here in our cultural program coloring moose or learning to count to 10. I mean, if you’ve been in a cultural language program since essential kindergarten, I would think by the time you got to grade 12 you’d know how to count to 10.”* He pointed out.

We agreed that even if they were not explicitly taught the language, basic things like counting would have been acquired by the time they journeyed with their language teachers from JK to 12 if the instructional method was effective. It just comes to them without even teaching them. We came to the impressions I had about Jason that he was self-made and I inquired about what made him self-made. He explained that it starts with education; an essential element of what gives one the confidence to build from.

Apart from education, he advised that one needed to travel, broaden horizons and friendships. Jason informed: *“ I know students in our school who are grade 11 and grade 12 and they’re saying, you know I have to find a Dene wife to keep the blood quantum pure. Fine, nothing wrong with that. But sometimes it’s just more important to fall in love with whomever, from wherever.”*

Asked whether he is towing the line of inter-racial marriages, Jason answered in the negative, but that person should be open to it at the minimum. Open to a Dene woman or man or a Motswana woman or man as you are on your journey to Botswana. Life is full of experiences that we must accept to live and not just exist. Probing a little further, Jason agreed that people should not have the monolithic view of looking for someone who only has the Native worldview.

Probing Some Personal Issues in Jason’s Interview

In the previous interview, you indicated are not a career teacher. What did you mean?

Jason was allowed to explain why he had indicated he was not a career teacher. He explained it is about the stereotypical completion of teaching degree and staying on teaching for decades. I explored his view about teaching being a mindset that can be found even in entrepreneurial circles. His definition of a teacher is that of someone teaching in the K-12 system in a formal disposition.

You also indicated you lived on Native reserve. So was it your choice? Did you choose to live on the reserve?

Jason informed he chose to live on the reserve and had one daughter whose babysitters were Natives. Though we had to agree that unlike the Natives who did not

have a choice, he did. He explained the extent of inequity existing in the reserve system where in the Indian Act, even very well educated Natives are not allowed to do their construction of a house on reserve land, and they are only allowed to live on band-provided housing which often was inadequate. We discussed, and he revealed that somehow, the Indian Act was designed to keep the Native where they are. We came to the point that our ethnicities notwithstanding, given the same condition, we could do same or worse as Caucasian and African.

So it means you as a Caucasian and me as an African, if we were put under the same condition we would do either the same as they are doing now or we would do worse?

We agreed that our spending so many hours in the class with them makes us their first stop with another worldview, making it difficult for us to mediate things and make things work for them. Teachers spend more time with them in the classroom and on coaching trips in our waking hours than their parents. At this point in the discussion, I explained that I was attempting to get to his story using probing questions so that I can retell it for some others to relive it.

Integration of the Focus Group and Individual Interviews

Data Source: Focus Group 1: Mikhail and Ron

The following were the discussion responses on the first two questions by the first focus group:

Research Questions 1 and 2

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of the culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?

2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in teaching culturally responsively?

What strategies should a non-Aboriginal teacher adopt when they are teaching indigenous students? And I'm sure you will be drawing from your experience as teachers if not as administrators.

Ron explained that there are lots of strategies, but that the non-Aboriginal teacher needs to start to learn about the culture or its history first, learn from the people in the community, drawing on the experiences of the local people before attempting to teach the students. They need to build relationships more in the north than anywhere else. A healthy relationship like that with the students make progress in education possible and smoother. Then real world application follows. He said he invites elders in the classroom regularly and that gets the work going in a practical way. This was practicable both as future higher education students or members of the community. I reflected if his was a form of reverse Eurocentrism that could mean good know-how of the North is in the custody of Native elders.

Ron explicated further: *"It's a constant growing process of utilizing the resources on the ground, either in the community in order to base my instruction, so sometimes it's getting out on the land with the students and putting what we learned in class into action on the land, allowing them to write about topics that interest them rather than trying to force southern ideals on the situation."* He felt it still has the same educational value if they can write about the hamlet rather than the city. He pointed out what applies in the south applies in the north. The differentiated instruction in the classroom allows focusing

on the students' strengths rather than pushing them to where we want them to be. He found that he was very stringent with time when he first came north but he had to grow to be flexible with time.

Further, Mikhail alluded to the points brought up by Ron. He added that it is necessary to keep an open mind and not having expectations. There is a need to get to know your students. There is a high turnover in the NWT, and a lot of the students do expect teachers not to be there because they move. Teachers ought to get involved in as many ways as possible in their communities.

Share some of your personal experiences of teaching the indigenous student, so you can track it from the very beginning that you came, the first day in the classroom, the things you were thinking about, how you felt and up to today, anything that seems important that you want us to know.

Ron's first experience in the school was greeting of the entire school as his principal introduced him. Then, it appeared each student that he greeted wanted to hug him, which was unfamiliar to him. To him, it was a shock. Once the barrier was broken down, an elder gave him a Native name. For his practice in teaching, he mentioned he had had personal relationships. He had two kids going off to college this year for the first time. For his response, Mikhail mentioned that he was only ever a teacher for the first time to Natives in the NWT and he was hired the principal.

He reported being nervous when he first came to his post. There were a lot of behavioral issues. He had a feeling of butterflies for about a year. He needed to decompress every end of the day for about an hour, during which one does not even talk.

He spoke of the Take-a-Kid Trapping program. He took 2 of the kids for an authentic trapping experience with an expert trapper. When they got back, the students had become so competent that these otherwise challenging learners could go about their trapping.

Wouldn't this be a reflection of "culturally relevant teaching" which is seen as integrating the background knowledge and community experiences of the student into the curriculum and teaching (Ontario Education, 2013)?

When we are teaching culturally responsively as cross-cultural teachers, what do you think it involves? What does it mean?

These focus group members were giving a chance to present their understanding of teaching culturally responsively. Congruent with the participants, Ron explained the integration of culture into the classroom as a meaningful educational experience and extending the connection the students have with the land; incorporating this in the classroom. The students come to the classroom with baggage; a day out on a trip brings them back in the classroom, and they switch back into full gear ready to learn. It means as responsible teachers; we need to be sensitive that the education portion needs to have that traditional element in there. This will maintain a connection with the student and remember the educators' responsibility as the transmitter of some of the knowledge that goes from generation to generation in their families. This spelled out the educators' unique role as an agent of societal transformation. Mikhail explicated that being culturally responsive means doing the traditional and curricular activities on the land and in the classroom, being introspective and thinking about how you treat the students to develop a

sense of self-identity, teaching them these things with care. At this I agreed reflectively that any social change of our students needs, to begin with, self-identification.

How do you describe your daily routine?

Mikhail presented a review of his daily routine from early 5:00 o'clock through to the morning, and prepares for the students to go through their Daily 5, morning centers and then morning meeting, snack and they show and tell, have their snack and then, lunch. They move into other parts of the school curriculum as the day progresses. He tied in the students' interest and being mindful of culturally significant things in the Math, Language Arts program, Slavey and Culture class and bringing in the elders. Ron presented a similar routine added to paperwork and snack and after school activities or meetings and collection of mails. Culture intermingles closely. Elders come in; local people assist, and there is morning circle. There is the on the land programming in their system, as well as presented by some of the participants. I had expected in their responses any elements of how difficult and how their cross-cultural bodies may have resisted waking up in the dark hours of the long winters and carrying on their routines. This was not found in their presentation. It appeared from Mikhail that they were acclimatized pretty well and now the reverse is taking place where his original home in the South does not quite feel like home. Physiologically, their bodies do not struggle now, unlike myself with a lot of tropical body struggle. Again Mikhail said he had a bit of that at the beginning when he started as a teacher but not now.

Describing interest in working in the NWT:

I would like you, Ron if you will, to explain what got you interested in teaching in the NWT. Ron said he left his work in Cape East (pseudonym). He wanted to teach so he left it and moved north. It did not matter how isolated and how far north. He originally wanted to do two years but is now here these seven years. Mikhail and wife freshly graduated from school and did a canoe trip on the Mackenzie River and just fell in love with the north. They did a stop in all the northern communities, felt it was cool, applied and came north. "I think we thought you know, maybe just a year or two and we're, yeah this will be, next year will be year nine. Yeah, they add up pretty quickly." He said. I recalled my own coming up with my wife and family. We had intended we would be up north for two years and at most three and return to our extended family in Calgary. But it has now been year six.

If I followed you to your class, P1, what are the strategies I would see you adopt in reducing the achievement gap? What do you want to achieve? So what you want to achieve definitely would be buried in or would be embedded in what you do and how you see what you do. So if I followed you to your class, what strategies would I see you adopt in reducing the achievement gap among your indigenous students?

Mikhail reverted to the previous discussion of building relationships with the students, being interested in them, being sincere and through that, developing motivation. He informed: *"I feel like a huge obstacle for me is just like I feel like the students lack motivation. There are not a lot of role models for them. You know, there's a lot of apathy in the smaller communities I find, where just people are satisfied with the status quo, and*

I guess trying to build motivation, wanting more and wanting to do well and do a good job at what they do I guess I think a strategy that I've been using to try to do that."

Ron reported of a laid back atmosphere in the classroom. He has created a relaxed atmosphere. He has beanbags chairs and mats with their laptops and engages in technology stuff. They use Smart Board and interactive stuff. The children get involved from the get-go. There is no sitting down for him. He has a lot of self-regulation, one-on-one support, and flat out technology base.

Now on your side, Mikhail, how very heavy or how light is it to motivate people who do not have, so to speak, role models to begin with?

Mikhail said it was difficult since the children return to the community and do not have a lot in the community, as there are no jobs. He said it was a daily frustration and a struggle to develop a desire and a sense of urgency to get out into the world, wanting to do; but it becomes rewarding when they get interested and get to pursue something. *"For example, the mittens that we were sewing like took all winter long to make, you know. It's very time-consuming."* He explained it took all the winter to make the mittens and in the middle of it the kids found it difficult to sew through the fur, very monotonous. But when it got completed, they were so proud of it. So in a way, by such activity you can build – you're talking about perseverance. You're adding to the social and emotional learning of the student. Looking at it from social and emotional learning; we explored whether the same endurance and perseverance that was obtained through this sewing were comparable to that of additions and other subjects like, Math. Mikhail added that the fur and mitten thing was more tangible, and the children take pride in what they do as they

accomplish things. I probed Ron about the possibility of beanbags and mats making the students sleepy and needing to be awakened during the lesson. He agreed it was so at the beginning when he felt he was making a mistake. As time went on, he saw they would self-regulate and take a walk whenever they needed to so that they do not dose off. I recalled when I had mistakenly labeled my pass as hallway pass and the grade 7, and 8s wanted to abuse its use to stand in the hallway instead of using it as a bathroom pass.

I would want to ask another question and it's in connection with the educational financing because all that we're talking about is educational equity.

We photo-elicited the fairness in expense in running the schools in the pictures, and both Ron and Mikhail agreed on the school with the Caucasian picture seemed like it was expensive to initiate and run, and the other two are cheap.

Mikhail agreed it was not fair the money that is spent on the Caucasian school compared to that on the residential school unless there was a special need involved. We added that notwithstanding, we could not bite the hand that feeds us. I mentioned, however: "When we see something wrong we know it is wrong. That's why we have the Truth and Reconciliation Group that is trying to bring all of us Canadians together."

How can times of disagreement in the school setup affect how you teach? And I believe in dialogism; I believe in dialog.

So how can times of disagreement in the school setup affect how you teach or how you perform your duties as a principal? We visited dialogism and how poles of disagreement between individuals tend to draw closer in agreement. Dialog helps to dwindle problems. Ron said he does not remember these seven years anything

disagreeable, as they have an open-door policy. They have towed the line of transparency where all can come in to discuss what questions they have. Within the school, none; though with outside the school, he has had to sit down with the community and work through issues concerning the school. It is a spectrum or a continuum. It covered even our arrangement for this meeting when all three of us did not have an easy, smooth common suitable time. Even sometimes when I asked a question, I have had to talk a little bit to bring all of us to a common understanding of the issue. Ron has taught that he has an open policy and dialog. Working through every dialog, they approach monolog of understanding though they never quite get to it. These points seem to agree with sharing circles mentioned in earlier interviews.

Research Question 3

In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

I want to ask a question which is connected with suspicion. If you make any effort to get involved, to what extent would the indigenous northern student take you as being genuine? Because maybe wouldn't it be best you slow down and you get in, I don't know, when able? Because I don't know whether you get the point, I'm making. The point I'm making is that if you come around, and you want to build a relationship and you begin reaching out, often, especially people are a bit reserved or a bit introverted as we find a few of our students to be, often they might be suspicious what your intentions are, especially that you are cross-cultural and you do not look like them. What do you think

about that?

Ron and Mikhail and I discussed the issue of coming in a little too strong as possible to generate suspicions. Specifically, Ron explained that though not totally an outsider now, he still found himself in a situation where he felt that he had to wait and watch. Mikhail had a similar situation at a funeral where he did not participate in the interactions but just got up respectfully after being cued by people in the community. Ron indicated that as principal he tells his teachers to get involved with the students not just in the school but also in after-school activities and the community activities. With the older population, he tells the teachers to listen first to them. Listen to what everyone has to say. There has to be buy-in first on a well-rounded number of issues not just in the walls of the school.

Mikhail said that much as he did not hear all that Ron said due to technical audio issues, he would add that some of the key things to do are to show interest in specific things that students are interested in, be sincere and striving to become more than just a teacher. I moderated what was said as needing to listen first and not be a know-it-all and relating with the community outside or extra-classroom. Mikhail indicated that there was need not to come in with the attitude that you know everything. Both members agreed that the cross-cultural teacher is both a teacher and a learner as per definition (Xiao, 2014). They bring their views, but they also wait to learn from the other. Supporting this, Mikhail pointed to the specific example of his current ability to make mittens, moccasins, which he had no idea about before he came north. Similarly, Ron revealed how his students came to help him with his quad (all-terrain vehicle). He reported how they

helped him to rebuild his engine. He also reported or how he was taught archery, how he got his first musk ox and how to do up meat, though not all they taught him was successful. Going on with this dialogue, I expressed some surprise and a stereotype boost as an African, that in them being North Americans, I have thought they tend to be adept at fixing engines. I would not have expected them to need any help, let alone from students who would rather learn to fix a quad themselves.

Mikhail, you mentioned something about being sincere. What do you mean by that?

I probed a little more about Mikhail's comment about being sincere, and he explained that one should care about what you say with the students they are interacting with and how, and not paying lip service.

What if you are paying lip service? What harm would it cause and who would know anyway?

Mikhail stated that it was because if it were lip service, the trust and relationship would not develop; teaching-learning would become more of a challenge, making it imperative that we have to make the relationship genuine. I probed on Ron's point on the use of local resources. He explained that the elders are walking encyclopedias of knowledge. They have knowledge about plants and all. He uses elders during field trips which and learn traditional things from them. They learned from them about the Arctic leaf, which freshens breath; about animal tracking and pass on climate change information. Their school uses local knowledge base, elders in the school every second day, Aurora College and Renewable Resources, Hunters-Trappers and the Hamlet to help them in teaching. Mikhail was drawn in about elders coming to school. He said they do

bring the elders in school to teach crafts and mittens, how to prepare an animal, Slavey walks where elders go with some of the students and talk with them about what they see on the walk. Mikhail informed that elders come into the school as the school invites them, indicating how the school works together with the local ways of knowing. This sounded like the presentations by the interview participants.

Correct me if I'm wrong. You're saying that added to all the activities that we do which take care of the culture of the students, and there has to be behind the scenes a deep caring that we have which drives what we do with them. Am I right?

Mikhail also saw the intertwining of a lot of things, learning yourself, getting to know, being part of that relationship, sharing one's living with the learner; genuinely bringing their hand games and other ways of life and knowing the curricular ways of knowing during instructional times.

I concluded this interview session about the meaning of being culturally responsive as we learned from this interview: "one thing is coming out clearly to us, that when we teach culturally responsively, what essentially we're doing is we come with our way of seeing things, we come with our set of skills and though there is a curriculum that we have which we have got to teach, there is a way to see what we have and a way to present what we have because we come to meet people who also see things differently, and we have got to find a way of getting to them effectively through maybe sometimes moderating, lowering or increasing or adjusting what we have come with so that it becomes more acceptable." I could sense tenets opposed to Eurocentric Diffusionism in what we were agreeing on.

How we perceive things or how our children perceive things, and I would like to start with you Mikhail about how your perceptions of your student awareness in the lag of educational quality among the indigenous students and the other students the rest of Canada.

Mikhail explained that they are quite aware of the existence of a gap. It is indicated on their report cards their current level of study. *“You know, they know they’re in grade 9, but they’re working in the grade, you know working on grade 6 material or grade 7 material. Like they open their math textbook, and it says grade 7 on it, not grade...”* It is normal for each student since all of the students are working below grade level. *“I think they’re aware, but it’s not like it’s a big deal I guess.”* He informed. Ron explained that they are aware of the existence of a difference. They understand that there is a difference in opportunity. He added: *“Things are changing and they are aware of that as well with the e-Learning Program they see that there’s more of a draw towards quality, but no, there’s no delusion that all the opportunities in the other schools are present here in the northern school.”* They do not see it as a hazard or a roadblock.

Additionally, I presented: *“Okay, yeah, because it’s quite surprising, you know, to notice or to read that in the NWT, and I believe well it’s not just in the NWT, but if any student were to be absent 1 day in a week from kindergarten to grade 12, by the time they reached grade 12 the student actually would have lost 2 years of the supposed 13 or 12 years educational program. So that simply means that if we considered any student in the stream of grade 12 for instance, if they missed one day a week from kindergarten to grade 12, we would expect them to be only in grade 10 and this is your best student with no*

EDI developmental issues. So that makes it that dire that if student attendance is a problem, then added to our developmental problems that may be present, it would be a big problem as educators to face and possibly to remove so that the achievement gap is bridged. Thank you very much for that.”

I would like to bring us to the next question and this one I would like whoever is ready to jump on and bring us some answers about describing how you felt when you started teaching in the indigenous community.

Mikhail said: *“I was nervous. I remember very vividly like just complete you know, just physically feeling ill, butterflies.”* He said it was his first year of teaching, and he worked hard and did a lot of hours to make sure he was doing everything perfectly, but I don’t think it helped that much. He was just physically and mentally nervous. I congratulated Mikhail for having to juggle between administration and pedagogy in his instruction as a teacher and as an administrator. Ron alluded to having been intimidated at the beginning of his career. *“I don’t think I was prepared for the integration of culture and stuff at first and I did find it quite intimidating.”* He added.

I presented my moves from my career tours of my teaching experience starting from Zambia to Botswana, and Calgary before reaching the North in my cross-cultural journey, teaching different peoples. I added that by the time I reached my current station, the butterflies in my stomach had died a great lot. I was by this time directing our discussion to some photo-elicitation. Ron thinking about what to say, gathered to inform that he gets the image of a residential school, *“very dry stagnant, institutionalized, not conducive to learning, but that’s just my initial interpretation of what I see.”* He added.

I welcome comments about any of the photos and then we will take a while and compare, especially photo #1 and photo #2 before we compare any of #1 or #2 with #3.

Mikhail saw the photos as being in a church, a gymnasium and all- Aboriginal. Ron felt it was not conducive for learning. Mikhail said that was that of Caucasian students with smiles and it looks more like a photo he would have been in, except his would have been of color. All in uniform, well kept and mixed boys and girls. More like a class photo. Indicating he was used to that kind of class size. Adding to what Mikhail offered, Ron said: *“It’s obvious they are not aboriginal, probably from the same period. They look happier. It’s a smaller, more intermixed kind of group. You don’t get that oppressive feeling that you do in the other photos. It’s a much more kind of a happy situation I think.”*

We investigated the number of adults in the picture. We were thinking required number of adults for chaperoning or pupil-teacher-ratio. Ron pointed there are no adults there in the Indigenous photo. You do not even see the kids’ faces, and he added: *“it doesn’t look like there’s any interest in any individuality.”* This was a very powerful, unique observation. About grooming and presentation, Mikhail said their hair looks more coiffed, and a couple of hairdos are present in the photo; the statement was similar to those made by the participants.

Have you had a chance to consult with your cultural teacher or SNA on how certain local ideals may relate to your lesson, and if so, what situation was it and how did it go?

To Mikhail, the SNA was a go-to person for him on anything that seems difficult to understand in the community she serves as a bit of a bridge to the community, though

elders and other community members do help too. Ron corroborated the sentiment: *“In both the programming, the language represented by a language specialist, and a representative from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, I have had to use the SNA as an inside track to get a better understanding.”* Teachers represent the government side.

Teachers represent both the Eurocentric Curriculum, the government and they represent their people and their need to a brokerage or mediation all the time. We have one worldview and the children we teach have another.

What would you like to see happen about teaching the topic of residential schools during lessons with your indigenous students?

I mentioned that I do understand and have experienced marginalization but would like to hear from them about their experience with the topic.

So what would you like to see happen when it comes up that you as a teacher, as a principal, you have to oversee this topic in your school or your lesson in the class with your indigenous students. Mikhail mentioned being a big part of the children’s life, indirectly, it has shaped their lives. It was not what he experienced directly. Ron said that it had been a huge topic, but he has not been marginalized as a person. Nothing has been taken from him. Teaching the topic they bring in about four survivors and there are other resources. It is foreign and so difficult for him to relate completely. Utilizing local sources is key, he added. I spelled out the spectrum of difference, the Caucasian, the Indigenous and in this discussion, my worldview. I applauded Ron and Mikhail for their responses. Mikhail reiterated the sensitivity of the issue. He added: *“and it’s also so much a part of the children’s lives that like it doesn’t do it justice.”* We agreed that the

use of the survivors is the best resource. We spoke that the indirect element brought in by Mikhail was a very noble and honest way to talk about it since as teachers we deal with so many manifestations of the effects of the residential school. Ron explained that to be an effective teacher in the north one needs to allow more time to ensure that the children have time at it and have a hands-on experience as reading a textbook is not the answer. Again, Ron explained that there was a need for more than a textbook. It is important to make community connections all the time. Did this not sound like Liz and Sharon and Mavis? Talking about how teaching Math and other subjects may need the elder from the community as a resource. But also, the Achievement Test may be waiting. You may have ten hours available for a strand or unit in the curriculum, and you have had to use two or so hours or more of it reaching out to a local resource instead of getting it from the textbook. Would that not disadvantage the Indigenous student right away? That was my question.

Mikhail explained: *“Well I don’t think that it’s necessarily disadvantaged, because what they’re learning from their experience on the land or experience from the elder or whatever hands-on experience may be...”* He felt it was not a waste of time, as it would even bring about a deeper understanding. I agreed that the method would be a good way to teach Indigenous learners. But I brought in the element of assessment, which has to flush with the methodology used in creating the knowledge with the learner. Mikhail pointed to a needed change in the way the learners are assessed to agree with the way they are taught. What we use to teach them should be what we use to evaluate or of equal proportion. This could be related to applying the way they are taught which may

disadvantage them, as they will be assessed differently. Also, Mikhail raised this point: “*maybe that raises the question, like are we assessing the students in the wrong way? You know? Like maybe that’s not how we should be assessing the students.*” We related a practical experience like using cutlery or a spoon when I can only use chopsticks. If I am being tested in a high stakes exam that I have not any knowledge about; for instance, writing an exam about cup and saucer when I do not even know what a saucer is as I have not participated in the ceremony of tea. Ron agreed that assessment leaves much to be desired. Kids are going to university, and we need to make connections to going out with the elders on the land. We alluded to the need to apply the hands-on approach that will unite all the other methods so that at the end of the day it will not be like we have wasted two of the ten hours and we cannot account for it in an exam. I then invited them to come to a dialog about the photograph sent to them; I requested a description of what they saw. Mikhail saw two children, one a Caucasian and another an Indigenous. However, Ron saw one and the same child. The same person under the effect of what he termed colonialism. This boy has his Indigenous identity stripped away in the other photo. I agreed with Mikhail’s assertion of two boys. I agreed that Ron’s one boy in different attires was also true. I requested Ron to throw more light on his use of the word colonialism. Ron said: “*Yeah, what I mean is that it’s just you know, the idea of taking away the traditional identity to make them more, almost like they’re you know, to fit in, to be part of the whole group, to not have a native identity; the colonization idea of making everyone the same.*” He was pointing in the direction of the need for difference in this life. He added: “*the colonization idea of making everyone the same. So I just see that*

traditional – not only traditional clothing, but the traditional way of life that would have come with that ripped away and then put into this standard box that everyone should fit into when we talk about the colonial ideal or the colonization of Canada because of that just okay in mind.”

All three of us on this focus group discussion assumed that the boy on the right had become older and has had the interaction and continuity the John Dewey spoke about (Dewey, 1938/1997); I encouraged a look at the advantages and disadvantages. I began by pointing to an advantage after the thirteen years of the process. *“The advantage is that that older boy in that western suit can do western medicine. He is a doctor who can take my temperature and even operate on me. Let’s go ahead and bring out the points and let’s not forget disadvantages, even though I don’t want it to be all disadvantages.”* I pointed. As a disadvantage, Mikhail said the learner might be separated from his family, not able to speak to them, which would lead to other manifestations like loss of language and connection to family. Ron mentioned that if the boy wanted to live in the south, being taught a majority language would be an advantage for him. Both members of this focus group indicated that the language of their thought was English.

I mentioned Vygotsky’s principles of language acquisition and development. Words in a language lead to the invocation of other symbols that lead to deeper understanding. “Now, like I am talking with you, well if I gave each of us five seconds to talk, you realize that both of you would speak far better, far faster and far more eloquent than I can. The same or worse would happen if you were to speak my language, which you have no background knowledge of. I am going through mental processes to get this

that I'm telling you. You know?" I said this to underscore the fact that using a language that is not your mother tongue could lead to reversions and translation in the process which all could have its toll on the processing of the language. I dream in my mother tongue: "*enufu gye*" or take milk as my mother would give me breast milk in my infant days. Mikhail pointed to a possible disconnection, which could slow you down, or cause you to lower your language as you take another's.

I posed to them a question of *how their children would be able to survive in the bush*. Mikhail said the older children would be able to survive the making of fire and all in the bush. Ron noted the majority of them would not do well on the land. There is a whole lot of them who do not go out on the land anymore and are more into technology, staying at home. Though 25% of them would be alright, the remaining may not.

I mentioned that the survival instinct is buried in all human beings. For 25% of them, it would be alright. Seriously, I explained: "*If I took my child, a typical grade 7-8 student outside to the bush... I'm telling you that we had a bit of a cultural session before the year ended and while I was out there in the bush with them they were yelling, they were so uncomfortable, one that they needed the Internet, they had to go with their iPad, they wanted something they had to be present. I don't know whether you get the picture I'm trying to paint. So I'm getting to the point where, well it's not just even about survival, it's about what they are taking back to the same life that their grandparents lived. I see that as going to be very difficult for the typical Indigenous children I teach.*" I continued: "*So that calls for I think both of you have connected me to the common language. That calls for the common tongue. That calls for the common way of seeing*

things that I believe both of you know as the local environment. I believe in taking the Caucasian child and making – this is my belief, I might be wrong – in making the Caucasian child understand all the things that the African child understands, the Native child understands. I believe in taking the native child and making the native child see things the way the Chinese child sees it, you know because we are in a global environment. I don't know. Please correct me.” Mikhail said: “ No, I think that's important to be able to function in like you said, like a global society. You need to be able to see things from other peoples' perspectives and not just think that your way of doing things is the only way of doing things, that there are other correct answers and such. You know? Yeah, no I think having empathy for other people and understanding other people makes you I guess a better person.” Ron agreed and added: “we all understand where everyone else is coming from.”

Data Source: Focus Group 2 – Slade, Mike, and Lilian

Focus Group 2 presented their views on the same questions as follows:

Research Questions 1 and 2

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of the culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?
2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in teaching culturally responsively?

What should we expect to hear from any of you? A child brings a question, and the question is of a cultural nature, and within the question, especially because of our

functions as cross-cultural teachers, and especially because the 3 of you are Caucasians, there is some level of being uncomfortable.

Slade pointed to the fact of the uncomfortable easing out as we work more with the students and their cultures. *“If you want to go back to when I first walked into the classroom, it was different from what I was teaching later on.”* He indicated. It is important that the teacher deals with the culture to build bridges and create equal grounding of similarities and differences to deal with the question being asked by the student. Again, Slade underscored the need for the building of trust and rapport, a reframing of the question to attain a comfort level so that both participants from the different cultures understand the question and answer the dialog. Other interviewees had alluded to this kind of thought. I at this time pitched in the definition of cross culture by Xiao (2014) and invited Mike for comments. Mike explained that usually, the beginning teachers are the ones who happen to be in cultural schools for the first time. Their first months are very difficult. But as they commit more and work within and without the classroom, in interactions, the trust level increases that leads them to be able to answer such difficult questions. Before anything, there is a process involving learning by the teacher. It takes a little while for the learners to trust. There is a need to build the trust as they first go into the classroom.

I would take advantage of that and bring in the element of the achievement gap, the Educational Renewal and Innovation informs that there is a gap that we have to work on and bridge, regarding achievement between our Indigenous students and the students of the rest of Canada. If I followed any of you either as teachers or as a co-teacher or an

administrator doing a walk-through, what strategies should we all be expecting you and the other teacher to adopt in reducing the achievement gap among indigenous students?

Mike wholly agreed with the supposed gap and confirmed that the ERI describes it as being significant at grade 9. He indicated that the impact and increased success rate is achieved only if we strategize to put interventions in place early before they enter junior high school. He mentioned that still there are strategies to increase the success of junior high students and their teachers, but he favored attempts to promote success at the lower grades. This will cause them to have a rich experience from kindergarten with needed interventions to reduce possible dropout in case they experience difficulty along the way.

Lilian informed that if teachers are retained, then the long-term relationship building with the Indigenous student occurs. Putting money in co-teaching and partner teaching add an extra body to the teacher and that helps the kids. People who teach in the north need that extra expense and an extra body in the classroom to achieve success. Slade showed that everything at this point was pointing to teacher turnover. The teacher and students develop bonds. In the justice system and politics the transitioning of the people to and from the land and adjusting to modernization but also questioning where their place could be in this modern world. With that comes the idea of the education system. The parents come short of the understanding of what is required to support the student to succeed, added to their other layers of oppression and how to deal with it. The older students hardly found a reason for leaving their community and pursuing education as it felt safe and saw no future. *“And so there is this big question mark about educating*

everybody in terms of life in Canada, modern world life and where we want to go with it and how we all tie into it and whether we want to tie into it or whether we don't want to tie into it and then your commitment to being involved in it."

Mike wanted to find out if the other group members have experience with the difference between boy student motivation and girl motivation. Earlier, the motivation of sorts had been raised in the discussion with other discussants. He indicated that the boys seemed not to know their way around the track. They seem to know their way in the land but coming back to school, is another story due to the issue of societal change. It is about how they fit into the new society, "*[being] a group of individuals who have gone from the land to a much more community-based living.*" Having all their needs met, makes the idea of school questionable. Despite the need for the second set of eyes in the class, the funding is inadequate to ensure that. The turnover is also significant, particularly in the more northern communities. The in-service of new teachers in northern communities is expensive. The *New To The North Conference* of last year was a good start, but the follow-up is lacking. Teachers that are exiting the system could be asked to give reasons, to help keep retention levels as needed.

How do we handle such frustrations that could come up from handling a multilevel classroom with all the differences regarding the cognitive levels of the kids we teach?

Lilian explained that one individual might not be able to present a solution. She spoke about the support needed in the inclusive schooling ideal, backed by technology, and human resources to cater to the very specific needs. Similarly, she spoke about the high need of the human resource element, especially in the Aboriginal communities.

How do you gauge the students' mood?

Lilian reported that to know the mood of the student, you have to know the child. She also added she has been dealing mostly with teenagers about whom she said: *“Is there such a thing as a happy teenager? I don't know....”* She continued: *“They're so full of angst, and they can turn on a dime. But what makes it so fascinating of course, it's such a crazy time of life.”* She mentioned he has always used humor but she informed that the Indigenous learners do not have the same sense of humor. As a result, one has to invest time and build the relationships. Her method has been that she would open channels of communication for the students to tell her any experiences they need help in but if they do not want to tell her, she asks them to let them find someone they can open up with. We looked at how a grade 12 who was not happy would be turned around. Mike contributed that if they were not happy then one of the things to do as teachers would be to step in, still in the spirit of building relationship, and help them get back on track. There can be a boost in the provision of extra time or mentorship. Knowing that some of the students experience trauma, some teachers adopt grade 12 students and find ways to push them through the difficult periods at that stage. The teachers try to make a difference in their lives, creating a non-threatening environment. For the low grades, it is pretty fast, but with the higher grades, they may take a while to open up.

Research Question 3

In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

On the issue of following up teacher development, I wanted to introduce the word intentionality. "I believe that this is not intentional, or maybe it is. What do you think." I asked.

This was to look into whether it's intentional for the system that we work in to make it look like, well let it fall through, let it not happen. We've in-serviced teachers; we don't follow up and is it an intentional thing? Or maybe we've gone to bite a little bit more than we can manage in the north, teaching the indigenous student. Mike refuted the intentionality and explained that it was rather financial. The in-service is not followed up with. The gap that exists is has a lot to do with how well the teachers can teach the program. Teachers are working well beyond the hours they are expected to. People introducing new programs should be made more accountable so that there can be a better outcome in the end.

Is there anything that as a co-teacher who has been in the system for a while would do to enhance and establish understanding so that there's an increased comfort level between the other teacher and the child who is bringing up the question?

Lilian said the best thing would be to bridge the relationship gap by speaking to the students and urge them to see that you understand what they feel. With time, the trust builds. Both the kids and the young teacher will need to be urged that time to resolve things. She would give support to the teacher, suggest to the teacher to get involved in other community stuff with the kids as the classroom has become the venue or ground for testing the new teacher. A new venue would be required for the teacher to make their better case.

Describe how you felt when you started teaching in the indigenous community.

It was obvious that concerning human resource; building capacity is expensive. Slade explained how they worked in a reserve with a high turnover. The community brought the teachers together and put them through cultural experiences and supported them with what they could do. The demands of the students were outrageous. Slade added: *“The diversity was so wide. Every classroom had a range of ability level way beyond what we were used to teaching in other places...”* In his support role, he was helping other teachers, but he had a shock as there was no set parameters, especially in this Aboriginal community he was in. This was overwhelming as according to him: *“The gloves are off so to speak and you’ve got to deal with whatever comes at you...”*

Asked about examples Lilian brought in her input. When she came to the north as a seventh grade teacher. She felt like walking into a third world country because of the impact of poverty and lack. Her so-called grade 7 class was an impossible one. She reported: *“I had a class of 25 kids and I had three distinct groups. One group, of children that were operating at or above grade level who were extremely well supported at home by their families, but extremely prejudiced against the intervention of the – well I guess I could call it White culture in their education system. So there was that to deal with. The middle group was kids that I could reach and the other group were kids that went right down to kindergarten level as far as behavior was concerned.”* A colleague of hers and herself went to the school board to complain that if nothing were done, the students would achieve nothing. Fortunately, the cry was heeded to at the time though a recent visit to this place indicated some progress. I tried to find out if any senior teacher knew of

Lilian's 'anger.' She replied in the affirmative but indicated the support person had their agenda. She added: "*It possibly resulted, between my anger and her dejectedness, I think they realized that they had to do something for us.*" Through this protest, they sent her a full-time teaching assistant and 0.33 support worker as Special Education. We investigated whether it means that new teachers ought to endeavor to shout out any grievances, and she affirmed this idea. I wanted to find out any ideas that you have which kind of would put the students in a way that they can be more docile or more teachable regarding preparation at home before they come to school. I added that they might not perhaps have any behaviorally damaged students they may be thinking of. That means probably Lilian's point is not an issue across the board. But if it is, are there any suggestions that you think should be underway?

Further, Mike pointed to behavior in the schools as a common thing for the North. There is a degree of resentment for non-Aboriginal. He recalled an employability program that he participated in and mentioned that it was a difficult experience, trying to attach eight students and obtain credits for them. He indicated the first six weeks were the most difficult. This was more with the language and requires a great amount of sensitivity as the learners have difficulty accepting what you have in store for them; added to behavioral issues. Adding some particular incidence, he mentioned that some years ago, two White teachers visited an Aboriginal family and it was very difficult to talk about the parent's child's progress, which had prompted their visit, to say the least. From the conversation, it was obvious that there were trust issues, which require relationship building.

Asked to share some of his endeavors to get the students employable Slade informed of its multi-step approach nature which looks at their talents, interests and organizing counseling and talking to get them ready in connection with what they can come to terms with. In it, teachers were sensitized to help identify children with issues. These students would be supported as needed. Field trips would be coordinated jointly with the Recreation Department. With whatever they needed help, experts would then be sought to assist them. Campus visits were also organized. Sometimes, they would say they were bored, and the challenge was to make the best of what the experts would offer. He spoke of needing to *“fan flames to help them decide this might be something worthwhile to them to explore.”*

A Photo-Elicitation

Lilian referred to the photo as representing *“the transformation from savage to you know...to a fitting in image.”* She indicated that there are boys and girls separate and Indigenous children. The one of Sir J. Franklin represents *“the kind of system we were exposed to many years ago where there was almost a dictatorship.”* Then the nuns or the teachers would call the shots and kids were taught to behave a certain way. *“You were seen but not heard... you behaved a certain way.”* Lilian added: *“We take you and make you into something different...[like] in a factory sort of thing.”* My mind immediately came to Dewey’s thoughts *“of imposition from above and from outside”* (Dewey, 1938/1997, para. 4).

Mike added that the venue for the Indigenous photos was not a classroom but perhaps a hall. There is a separation, of the genders. It is a picture of times when you

were told to smile, pose and show you are happy, do what you were told. It alluded to that the Sir John Franklin photo was more like the Canada of their student days. I probed about the pupil-teacher ratio. Lilian explained that the teacher ratios were higher but the classes of those days were larger. She said that years ago there was a question that required an explanation of what could make an educational system more successful and the answer she gave was: “... *the classroom teacher ratio, like give me fewer kids and it will be a better situation.*” Their comments on the Indigenous pictures lacked the presence of teachers, at least as shown in the picture. But Slade also explained that there used to be times in the past when the children appeared alone in their photos. Mike indicated that the adults in the picture might not even be teachers, but assistants. Taking the conversation further to grooming, comments were requested. Mike also indicated that there could be two grade 2 classes that had been joined to take the group picture. He added there was not a lot of generalities that could be drawn from the picture. Lilian added it could be inferred that the children in the assembly picture all looked clean. The hair is brushed back, cut short with a sort of similar coif, for all. It looked standard for the boys. There was more variety for the SJF students with the uniforms.

Does the length of the cut hair matter for the Caucasian child as for the Indigenous child?

Slade agreed that with the different cultures, hair is significant with the development of the child. At the salons, there was a certain style that was followed which added to more power than if you followed the hair cut as shown by the students of the SJF school. “*So hair does have an indication of power and more than just what culture; I*

just don't know the significance in the aboriginal culture specifically, I just don't. But it does have importance." Slade informed.

Mike mentioned a sense of forced smile in the Indigenous picture stating also that their dresses are more Canadian than Aboriginal. He saw teachers at the back. He pointed to clean-cut children. Indigenous parents would not cut the hair of children while young until the children grew up and chose by themselves to have a haircut. The children are listening to and doing what they are being told to do. The word *obedient* came into the discussion. But Mike could detect that some naivety, *an oblivion of being*, on the part of one of the children in the photo as there was a standing while the others were sitting. But then such still have to be there anyway though they do not even know. It was obvious; their present could not have any connectedness with the scene shown in the non-Caucasian pictures.

If you happen to be in the position of a consultant, how would you advise government or the system to handle the human resource element of solving these frustrations?

Slade informed that it was needful that government recognizes the need for a purposeful movement on dealing with the Aboriginal people in Canada. There has been a major damage done over the 150 years, which may not be solved overnight. The short and long-term goals have to be defined, the vision of whether they want to fix the gap and how. It needs a discussion and commitment and a reality check on what they want to fix; identifying how it impacts the school. The number of children in the class who need instructional help is overwhelming to the teacher. Each of these children may have to sit and wait passively, or when they get bored while waiting for help, they turn into behavior

issue. If technology is a needed factor, then the human resources to make it work should be in place. Additionally, the teachers need to up to date with the culture, for example, the *Dene Kede* has been a good uniting starting point for the teacher. He also indicated that relationship building as a major tool.

What do you say about that about this participant who mentioned that they would bring in their family to come and help them to teach the kids, relate more with them and obviously meaning exposing the kids' weaknesses to their family members. How do you see that vis-à-vis education ethics?

Slade explained that Social Services had more freedom dealing with the Indigenous than teachers with the Indigenous. We agreed that there were Indigenous family systems surrounding the education of the Indigenous student. He warned of not dragging some of the modern systems and dropping them on the Indigenous people we teach. There could be legalities in a more relaxed fashion but not imposing some of the systems on the Aboriginal. Some of the systems followed now may not be as efficient as some of the Aboriginal systems that were abolished. Additionally, Mike mentioned that there are services that could be used in the school, which still needs to be worked into action like the “wrap-around” services provided by social workers and others. They are working on the availability of these services without breaking the confidentiality. Also when the principal is a community member, it is a different game. Getting community members to come back to the community can contribute lots, he added.

I mentioned a contribution where a participant brought out that teachers should be Indigenous, and turnover rates could be curbed by making every northern teacher sign on

to serve for at least five years. We asserted that the acceptance or otherwise of the teacher or their work had got a historical basis of the teacher's representation of and certain functions that they have played for the government; for example in the residential school. *Let us assume that we are teaching a topic on residential schools and you are there as an administrator or as a teacher, or you are co-teaching, whichever way or capacity that you are in there as an educator. What would you like to see happening when such a sensitive topic is being taught?*

It was observed that continuous 'dip-sticking' has been necessary and each of the situations need a readjustment of the norms, structures, and procedures to reach the student and teach them. The children have to come to an understanding of the reality of their grandparents and how Canadian history put these parents so that they can start working on it and make connections for a better tomorrow.

How do you make connections if we neglect this element of building consciousness or causing someone to become either slowly or suddenly aware of their situation?

As I framed this question, my mind was on an oppressed individual's journey from naivety through critical consciousness to magical (Roberts, 2007). From Slade's experience, his training on residential school informs that the children are aware of the dysfunction and the major impacts on them. They are aware of outrageous things about some of the famous adults in the community. *"And so ... it brings us to choices... and all are 'invited' to make that choice."* He added. He mentioned that non-compliance only leads to loss of freedom when the Mounted Police (RCMP) comes in. It goes on all around them that it is inevitable that they make choices not to go somewhere they would

not want to be for the rest of their lives. Again, Slade explained that incidences have been, where some individuals have taken the freedom to become involved in drugs or alcohol, using that as an excuse to allay their responsibilities so that they can be free to do whatever they want, thus harming others in the community. Everybody is aware of these culprits who are making others become victims. The students are aware of these situations, which we could use to protect them.

A Photo-Elicitation

I would want us just to comment, maybe describe the picture that is before you, picture #4, and in the meantime, of course, Mike, if you have any things to chip in that you wanted to, please feel free to do so.

Mike explained that one of the things we need to get to the kids about residential school is that it is their history. It talks about what education was for them decades ago, and this was what was done to them. This has to be done in context, like bringing in the elders to present a balanced view of the residential school. There are some elders who tell the kids that are not the way it is for them today. This helps them to build resilience as they learn their history. And this could be used for them to stay out of alcohol. The elders use that to educate the young that the way forward is in education. So if there is residential school education in the school, it has to be with someone they trust. He added: *“I think we have lots of available people in the communities to come in and help navigate through those very difficult topics.”*

I contributed that as a teacher and first-time visitor to our system in the North of Canada, one thing that I saw was if there was anything that we’re teaching very well in

the school system, it's about the consciousness of residential school. I could see my program support teacher laboring and bringing in experts and one very touching element is the part of you know, getting even social workers ready whenever residential school is mentioned. We see that the wrap-around program is taken quite seriously during the sessions on residential school as they bring in the local experts into the school.

Lilian retorted: *“Well, you know I’ve looked at this picture lots of times, but what is interesting is that you’re looking at it through your own eyes of course, you’re bringing into it what you know of the history of the culture and everything, so you know, to me, I guess because I just can’t look at it and not think about the residential school experience. I think about how this picture was a tool of sorts to show how successful the residential school experience was in altering a personality that came from the First Nations culture into a very successful, smug-looking little fellow ready to go off and be you know, whatever he wants to be in the White world at the time, I suppose.”* The pictures were put in juxtaposition to portray how the two instances of the kid were both comfortable to the kid. They were probably *“proving that the residential school did a good job.”*

Slade explained: *“the pictures are of the same boy, so that’s, even more, driving home the point that the residential school could be successful. I think what jars me is that when you hear of all the negative backlashes that happened as a result of this, it reminds me of a brainwashing tool by an institution that thinks it can make things happen in simplicity without worrying about the impact on the emotions of the individual and what happens, and really as long as you play the part, and you look the part, then really everything is okay on the inside and it just makes me ill.”*

So you're saying that there was a degree of success and I don't know the element of how it comes to you, how you feel about it. The last sentence I couldn't get clearly. You said it doesn't make you well.

"Well I'm just saddened at the genocide of what happened and that there were so many Canadians who were unaware who trusted their government to make a decision that when you look at the voting system you trust that whoever you vote for will do things that are better, you can be proud of, and this is one situation where I am definitely not proud, and I just don't like, absolutely." Slade pointed out.

According to Mike, the Indian Act said they were going to take the Indian out of the child, and that seems to be the message in the photo. And to the extent that was what they had managed to do; transforming him into a White person—a smug White person. *"As an individual who works with aboriginal children, the heart of a culture is their traditions and their language, and for many of the aboriginal children, they've lost their language, so they've lost the sense of identity, and to me, this picture speaks to the identity."* He indicated.

I mentioned that whether we like it or not, the *Two row Wampum* was coming to us. Where you know, White settlers came, they met native people, they agreed, they signed treaties and maybe somewhere along the line somebody did not follow the treaty, where somebody said, okay, why don't we kind of teach the people how to read and somehow it turned into abuse. You know? The human intention may have been there; it may have originally been a good thing. But then something creeps in and spoils it. I will come back to my point. My point is that if we are being educated with a curriculum, with

the *Dene Kede* curriculum or the curriculum as we have it in Alberta Achievement Test which is the pathway to the University of Alberta to become medical doctors, our children, whether they are natives or whether they are Caucasian, have to be educated properly. That's the way I see it because I believe in the two worlds and that's how, whether we like it or not, globalization is taking its effect and toll on all of us and so it's much like taking the Indian out of the child, but at the same time it's also much like producing nurses and doctors so that in the end we don't have to fly somebody from Vancouver to this place or to your place to come and give an injection because there are indigenous people who have been trained to do it. And if you left them maybe out there in the bush they will be sick and the boat will have to quickly bring them to medical attention. That is the way I see it. Lilian interjected: *"Just you have an interesting slant on the whole globalization education. I think though that we still have to make amends to these people. That's what I think. I think that we are part of the machinery, being educators; that brought these people to the situation and the extreme you know, that we deal with. You know, whether we like it or not, we're part of what killed a lot of residential school students, so it's up to us to make amends, I think. In this day and age, we have to do the best we can to get that language re-established somehow, to make the pride in their culture something real, or at least support that. You know, I feel a responsibility. I know it wasn't me personally, but I feel a great responsibility about that. So that's part of what I bring to my class."*

Mike added: *"I agree with you 100% that we created the issue. It's a big task ahead of us to make amends, but the concept of living in two worlds is a real concept,*

and it's one that when you brought it forward. When we talk about Indigenizing education, it's actually what we're talking about, is that we want value for the culture, but also we want them to value the western education because that's where the future is and that's where it is going to have to be. We want them never to lose their culture, but they should be able to work in the world of today and still be able to enjoy the benefits of their culture and you know, that lens is where the word I guess indigenizing the education came from because wherever and whenever these students become adults, they have to live. We need to make amends, but as I live in the Northwest Territories, I know that the financial cutbacks will come; they're coming. And the kids need to understand that, so they need to know that they eventually may have not to depend on the community for a living, but depend on themselves. And that's where we need to be."

Slade explained: *"I agree with both of my colleagues and I'm also looking at what is it that the Canadian government wants to do because again, there was trust given and the trust was violated and while we want all our Canadians to be the best we can, to be competitive in the world however they see themselves in terms of taking on their unique qualities and living the lifestyle, we have to be able to have a country where we're all equal, and we're getting there, but I don't know where the commitment is and there's never been an open discussion to share with the average Canadian where that philosophy is or whether it's a 4-year term and the government gets voted out and then another government comes in and it's a whole different game plan. So I'm hopeful that things will be more productive and that equality will hit for everyone and we'll have a better country*

because a lot of us are committed to that. I would just like to hear it more vocalized by our government.”

If you are to make an order containing maybe two, three, four qualities or attributes of a teacher who would be able to make such amends begin, what type of teacher are you going to order for the indigenous people?

I invited Lilian to give her contributions about the characteristics of the teacher.

“Okay. Oh, many things are going through my head. I have written down a little list for myself, but there’s one word that I was thinking of that escapes me. Maybe you can help.

It’s a word that means I’m thinking you know, being able to go, like always see that there’s this possibility I guess, no matter what. And I don’t just mean you know,

positivity. I mean something stronger than that. Like you just, no give up. The word escapes me right now.” I responded: *“It’s all encapsulated, in what you mentioned as*

positivity and I’m sure building resilience and being there and active and alert, almost like what we’ve been teaching, self-regulation... The teacher should be self-regulated.”

“But I also think, and this is a very strange little thing, but it’s part of who I am, and that is to have the flexibility to blend in the arts with everything that you know, [there is] to do

with the teaching. Some art as a connection I think is really important because it’s spiritual. Flexibility, kindness, listening, compassion and humor. I’ll do my stand-up;

that’s my recipe.”

I added: *“I believe that as well, listening, compassion, you know being present and there was a word, a German word that I try to pronounce and each time I do, I get it wrong.*

It’s more about the art of being. The teacher must be there--Seinsvergessenheit or

something to that effect. We have to be there. We have to be aware. We have to be present and at the same time flexible and yeah. Yeah, I think these words are very powerful.”

“I feel that the teachers have to be supported by the government so that they’re allowed to take their talent and use them and not be constricted because there’s a limited vision at the top about how things should be done. The residential school is very clear about that concerning what was done, so I’m looking at something the opposite. Not loosey-goosey, but something that’s supportive and encourages people to reach out to others because everyone has their talents and no one should be made to feel that their talent is less than somebody else’s because someone at the top has decided what the values are or aren’t. And in the education system, for example, when cutbacks happen, the first cut usually falls with the arts, and they cut away certain things, and they’ve decided what is most important and I just disagree with that totally. And to make sure the teachers are nurturing in whatever capacity and to be open to activities and to just be willing to just experiment and trust, get involved and I guess, require someone to not be afraid just to go where others haven’t gone before and enjoy without having to have preconceived ideas about what it should be. Enjoy it for what it is and try to make it into something that’s helpful for everybody around.” Slade contributed.

“I thank you so much. I thank you very, very much. I see nurturing and openness as the gateway to reflexivity. You know, if we can have reflexive teachers and of course with the system working so hard to equip us, which I believe is one of the things that we need so much here when teaching the First Nation’s child. I’m sure our intentions of

producing ...and Mike had indicated something about vision – strong vision of where we are heading to. You know? Once these things are supplied, the vision will even become clearer, and with this, I do want to keep quiet for a minute and look for words to thank the three of you for this very, very, very great thing you have done for our education system. I am sure that probably as we creep out of this break, this short break, you will come up with new ideas about how to perhaps put your life experience together and make it available to new teachers that are coming up, middle teachers like myself who still have to learn and we will have a better education system for the First Nations child because we agree that amends have to be made and we are ready to do that.”

Part II: How The Findings Were Analyzed

After transcribing the interview responses and rereading the transcription data, nodes of broad themes were derived. The themes, their source and references are shown in Tables 4 to 6 which gives the specifics about the subthemes under each theme and where they originated.

Table 4

Five High-Frequency Themes

Theme	Sub-Themes	Sources	References
The NWT Teacher		11	139
	Teacher best practices	11	92
	Teacher Preparedness	8	16
	Teacher Community Tact	6	12
	Teacher Policed	2	3
TribalCrit		10	86
	TribalCrit Support	10	73
	TrbalCrit Against	4	13
Two-World System		10	54
	Hardworking committed	3	10
	2-worlds Takeaways	6	9
	Mindful of Other Cultures	3	5
	Ontology of Flexibility	2	4
Eurocentric Diffusionism	Eurocentric Diffusionism	7	42
	Unacceptable	7	22
	Almost Hopeless Struggle	2	6
	Eurocentric Diffusionism		
	Acceptable	0	0
Achievement Gap		9	31
	More Conversation Needed	3	6
	Education Difference not		
	Gap	2	5
	Education Gap Exists	1	2
	Boys More Affected	1	1
	Problems with Achievement		
	Gap Effort	1	1

Table 5

Five Medium-Frequency Themes

Theme	Sub-Themes	Sources	References
Encourage Indigenous Practice		7	31
	Get Indigenous Replacement	3	8
	Rejoice with Native	4	4
	Indigenous Student Input	2	2
	Indigenous Myths	1	2
	Hair Power and Native Identity	1	1
	Indigenous Conscientization Needed	1	1
	All-Canada Indigenous Studies Needed	1	1
	Issues of Residential Schooling		8
Residential School Graduate		3	3
Perhaps good Intentioned Phenomenon as Part of		3	3
Native History		1	2
Discuss Ways Forward		1	1
System Readjustment Needed		8	20
	Pedagogy Outlook change	7	9
Photo-Elicitation: Images of Indigenous Past		7	18
	Educational Equity	3	3
	A Snapshot of a Deplorable State of Education	1	2
	Grooming	2	1
	Neatly Dressed All-boy/girls	1	1
	Forced Obedience	1	1
	Gender Separation	1	1
Inclusive Schooling—A case for		7	18
	Diversity Classroom	6	16
	Questionable Inclusive Education—Extent and Coverage	1	1

Table 6

Five Low-Frequency Themes

Theme	Sub-Themes	Sources	References
Evaluation of Natives Should Match Way of Life	Culture Behavior	7	18
	Idiosyncrasies	4	9
	School Success Criteria should be Relooked	1	1
Quality Education in NWT		2	8
Mentorship		6	8
Landownership and Access		4	8
Teacher Virtues/Badges		6	8

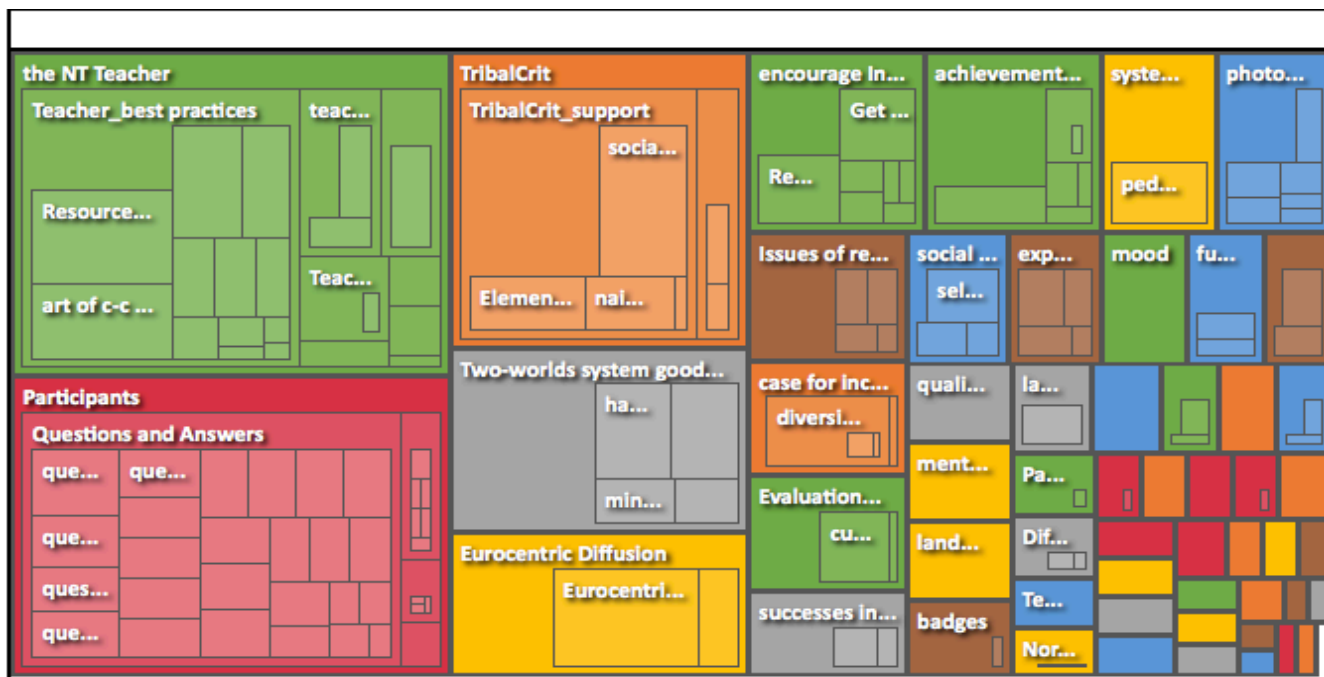


Figure 7. Tree map of codes compared to the number of coding references obtained from *NVivo*

Analysis Source: Participants

The analyses of the findings produced the details in the following pages.

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit)

In the researcher's parlance, TribalCrit and Eurocentric Diffusionism are related to a large extent. They both capture elements of needing to be freed, marginalization of the Indigenous people. Tribalcrit is founded on critical race theory (CRT) and on the notion that colonization is endemic and rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and sheer material gain (Brayboy, 2005). Under TribalCrit, it makes sense to explore ways to make formal education and its structures both understandable and acceptable to Indigenous students and Indigenous students more understandable and acceptable of the process that formal education tends to become. TribalCrit straightens out the complex relationship between the Indigenous people and the Government of Canada in the

unfolding chronotope, the connectedness of Canada's land with its policies, present past and the future. The mandate of producing educated citizens and its application to Indigenous students is revealed in the thoughts of the teachers as portrayed in their responses to the interview questions.

In the light of this, the narrative of the teachers was measured against the yardstick of how dismissive of Indigenous thinking and way of life (Bruner, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Coles, 1989; Wortham, 2001). The teachers' attitudes to existent or non-existent marginalization of Indigenous outlook and how they do education reflected a measure of TribalCrit. Using TribalCrit, it was possible to expose utterances that 'otherized' full or insufficient efforts by Indigenous students to obtain education for themselves and the world of work and progress. From their stories it is possible to gauge the extent of the causes of failures in the current schooling and how it consequentially has or not been, the cause of such failures as seen and experienced by these teachers, helplessly, hopefully, or non-empathetically (Canada Human Rights Commission, n. d.; Dantley & Tillman, 2012).

In the study, it was demonstrated that NWT teachers strive to tune the curriculum for use by their students. The teachers in this study grappled with the need to interpret the elements of the curriculum in a culturally responsive manner. While their understanding of the Eurocentric curriculum happens in their cross-cultural lens, their views are attuned with a Native worldview in mind. Such a disposition placed a double responsibility on the teacher (Cavendish, 2011). Narratives provided an unrivaled mode of presenting the

teachers stories to produce an understanding of how their experiences may have shaped their views and influenced their ways of thinking and practice (Cavendish, 2011).

We saw that the responses obtained from the teachers included an abject denial of one participant that Indigenous students are endowed academically; whether through nature or nurturing, the researcher could not ascertain this comment. As to the need for the Indigenous students, like all groups of peoples to free the mind in a world that is evolving into another realm of full ethnicity yet full globalized citizens. A larger extent of this outlook was supported by Freire (1970), as the oppressed are their own liberators from their oppressors. Several data sources have referred to the dedication of the teacher to remove the low-handedness of the Indigenous student in obtaining a suitable education. Other aspects such as the depth of awareness of the student regarding the need to move from Level A to a high level in obtaining education were recorded as coming from the interview responses. Overall the teachers interviewed presented as ten sources in support TribalCrit and 73 references made in this regard. There were four sources and 13 references somehow against TribalCrit. About the enormity of the Indigenous learner's outlook toward being successful in education, interestingly, Jason commented: "*Wow. I don't think any resources and throwing money at it in any way, shape or form is going to help.*" From Mavis' comments, it felt like it was scary for her at the initial stage to be caught up as a teacher of the Indigenous student, being the only White person in a classroom and working with everybody else who was Inuit or Aboriginal. According to her such feeling was attributable to how local students traditionally react to teachers from outside the community.

Jason had presented varied and rather interesting views about Indigenous students. One of them was that “Because of lack of realization they do not make any effort to catch up.” We examined how he tailors the curriculum in ways unique to the students, which he may not do in Southern Ontario. He explained that the curriculum modification would be one. Jason pointed to the many months allowed for projects and assignments to be completed which would not be allowed down south. He mentioned that in the south assignments are brought in promptly as expected. Again, I attempted to create a thread of discussion that as long as we do not have the mechanism to identify gifted people in the North, we would not have the beautiful numbers of gifted and talented of Southern Ontario that he spoke about in one response. Jason replied: *“I disagree. I think that you may have found the one in a million. I’ve seen a lot of students here in our school and no, the academically gifted are not there. The top students are average students.”*

Who will free any oppressed people? The answer is the people themselves by their willingness and readiness to be free, though the teachers continue to help. The future of education for the Indigenous student should be prepared in the classroom of today in the NWT, using the resources available based on the intensity of the embedded history, which includes the difficulties of residential schooling. I mean to say that the more the hit from this phenomenon of residential schooling, the stronger the desire should be to make the future better, by the Indigenous students and peoples themselves.

System Readjustment Needed

Eight sources in the interview and twenty references were made in the data. Seven of the eight sources totaling nine references have pointed to the need for readjustment as

relating to an outlook or a pedagogical change for the NWT teachers. For example, Sharon reported: *“the ways of knowing of the Native student should be considered when teaching them. She attributed this to a different wiring of the brain, which should match with the strategies teachers use.”* Additionally, Sharon had pointed: *“Literacy should be more geared to what the students know and are familiar with. Words like streetlights, silos, prairie and the like should be taught with care and with relevance in mind, as the students may not know what they mean. Being mindful that some students have never been outside the North. All standardized testing content should fit their knowledge and be legitimate.”* As they teach, the teachers have to tackle it from what they may need to improve by themselves, while experimenting to examine what might be helpful for the students.

As a result of the dialog, it was seen that somehow the principles of the *Two row Wampum* should be relooked and possibly applied. This treaty formed the basis of understanding and respect, an agreement of living together and sharing between the Whites and the Natives; though the element of marginalization and subjugation crept in. To ameliorate this, we should be partners in ensuring that education passes through the Indigenous students we teach and not they just passing through what we offer them.

Researcher’s reflection. It appeared sufficiently from the dialog that the teachers thought there was a need to tackle the issues of teaching the Indigenous student as urgent and needing a somewhat drastic change in teacher outlook, orientation, and best practices. System adjustments ought to be pursued.

Two-world system supported. Does not parts of the world influence other parts?

Can there be a turning of the western part of the globe without a coming along with the east while the north is kept at or around the same locus but with a different orientation just as the south? Our world systems influence one another. Some of the students that come from Sudan, Philippines, and the rest who are in the same classroom with the Indigenous student and cross-cultural teacher, get influenced, infected with different ways to see things. Why will the Indigenous student not be affected? There were ten sources and along with fifty-four references to this aspect of our interview dialogism. There was a range of captions that I considered as I formed the *NVivo* nodes for this thread of an idea. At one point I thought it had to do with “Two world systems good” of course not like four legs good and two legs bad of Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, but a caption indicating acceptance of different worldviews. There was also the “ontology of belonging wherever you want,” which was a bit too verbose so I cut it to “ontology of flexibility.” Jason had informed that one needed to travel, broaden horizons and friendships. He stated: *“I know students in our school who are grade 11 and grade 12, who say, you know I have to find a Dene wife to keep the blood quantum pure. Fine, nothing wrong with that. But sometimes it’s just more important to fall in love with whomever, from wherever.”*

I asked him whether he was advocating mixed marriage. He responded in the negative but added: *“people should be open to it at the minimum. Open to a Dene woman or man or a Motswana woman or man as you [myself] are on your journey to Botswana. Life is full of experiences that we must accept to live and not just exist.”*

On her part, Mavis informed: “There is always an enjoyable surprise element when as an obvious non-Aboriginal I do Native things like cleaning animals or processing meat with them.” She added. *This could be a chance to send the message to Native students of a non-Aboriginal’s effort to reach out and teach.*” On my part, I seasoned the Bakhtinian dialogism between Mavis and I with this: “As an expatriate teacher in Botswana, I would sing their national anthem *Fatshe le no la rona* on a daily basis with them. As I sang, I never forgot that as a Ghanaian citizen, I also have my land in Ghana. I became a Canadian citizen, and when I walk around, I am very openly different in the color that I wear but still it doesn’t make me a second citizen. While we uphold the First Nations, there are no second Canada nationals as we are all Canadians. Having been born and raised here, though not First Nations, she has a fierce allegiance to the North and does not feel like a second-class citizen. Sharon stated: “...*I never pretend to be. I never pretend to be what I’m not. I’m very proud of who I am. I’m European. I’m happy being who I am.*” Is this not of the semblance of cross-cultural teachers loving themselves enough to reach out and help others as their students who are going to replace them tomorrow? I just thought, quietly.

Two-world infections and takeaways. The world is not monolithic in view. It was evident that the interviewees though Caucasian, do not all see things from the same lens. The students taught in the NWT are predominantly indigenous, but their views are diverse. Indigenous people have their ways of knowing, which are desired by most of them but not all. They are represented by different voices, polyphony. There were ten sources of the theme and thirty-nine references from the two sessions of the interviews

for each of the six participants and thirty references made of the nature of this theme. Sub-themes covered what I captioned the ontology of flexibility and 2-worlds infections and takeaways. For example, Jason had pointed to the view that one needed to travel, broaden horizons and friendships. Jason informed: *“I know students in our school who are grade 11 and grade 12 and they’re saying, you know I have to find a Dene wife to keep the blood quantum pure. Fine, nothing wrong with that. But sometimes it’s just more important to fall in love with whomever, from wherever.”* Elsewhere, Mavis had indicated: *“if I were having a class of predominantly Aboriginal students, I would have to teach differently.”* Adding: *“Teaching a class of mixed background I could teach in a certain way but if I taught the class with the mixed bunch of kids in a certain way, I could not do the same with a class of Aboriginal students. It is like this way I can go that group, but this other way I cannot speak for all or vice versa.”* Our dialog took us to a discourse about teaching a predominantly Indigenous class. I had inferred from Mavis’ discussion: *It is like this way I can go with that group, but this other way I cannot speak for all or vice versa if it does not favor the Indigenous group. I had asked Jo-Anne which side of their town people did hunting and she responded “people go north of the highway and some people will go south to Kakisa it just depends on ... but some of my students are not always Aboriginal students but they’ll [still] go hunting.”*

Hunting has become a sport and a social gathering for even non-aboriginals. She revealed the thought: *“I had a [non-Aboriginal] girl this year she missed a day of school on her birthday because her dad wanted her to go hunting.”* So even Indigenous hunting is accepted as an activity for all peoples of the world.

Researcher's reflection. In the interview, I asked if I would or not, have somebody so educated of the 2-worlds and very knowledgeable of the ways of knowing of the ancestors and also very knowledgeable in the world of cellphones. Also, using the ideas derived from the photo-elicitation, we had explored the idea of the child mastering the things of being trained in a Western school and how that affects the intended defined success. If this graduate becomes accepting of Western outfits and dresses but somehow still can shift back to the original Indigenous orientation whenever needed, for example as a chief in the hamlet, but is still able to be who they are in professional life. I had described it as the ontology of flexibility; someone who can easily shift back and forth, but also able to go back to where he has reached in such flexibility where he exists very positively in both worlds – in two worlds. When it needs for him to be a Native he is a native and if it needs for him to be a chief of Natives as Vice Chancellor Dickson advised me in my Kwaprow experience. These have led me to wonder: Should educators not seek ways of creating knowledge leading the Indigenous child only to the best? Would the student not benefit best if we led them to better ways to live in this ever-changing world to make their own choices?

Eurocentric Diffusionism

Eurocentric diffusionism has been of the implication that change occurs from a superior European origin and in successive outward waves from a European center (Blaut, 1998). The ideals from Eurocentrism could be antagonistic to ideals of established culture-sharing groups like the Indigenous peoples of the NWT since it tends to have tunnel history that anything outside is bad and all inside is important (Blaut, 1993). It

could tempt and cause an Indigenous citizen of Canada to naturally be antagonistic to the education received by the Indigenous student.

The data gathered did not have any trace of anyone of the participants accepting Eurocentric Diffusionism directly. From seven interview sources, forty-two references were traced in the teacher's responses. Seven sources and twenty-two references indicated this tunnel vision phenomenon as unacceptable. Liz had brought out some points on what she termed "*forceful conformity to dominance of the Native child and the historical issues of driving the Indian out of the child.*" Asked of her effort as a teacher to manage the achievement and performance gap between the Indigenous student and the rest of Canada she advised for literacy. She had high expectation of the kids, using exemplars to show the various standards for writing to make them aware and have something to compare with during instructional time. This points in opposite direction to Eurocentric Diffusionism. Could these interviewed NWT teachers be labeled as anti-Eurocentric? In this light, when Tim was asked the essence of being sent to the residential school was achieved he alluded to it having been successful. Could not this be an example of assertion indicating that the NWT teachers are aware and resentful of the atrocities of the residential school?

The teachers agree that there is work to do, one of them through literacy, to ensure that students succeed. From their contributions, it was obvious that the teachers were anti-Eurocentric Diffusionist, by choice. I see and hear 'engineers' at work, dismantling the effects of the past by their work located in NWT classrooms even now as a past of marginalization gives way to a future of progress; this is another chronotope.

Achievement Gap

Talking achievement gap connotes using a combination of teacher best practices, available resources and the willingness of both students in lowering the EDI scores of children who are behind in their development in one or two areas. The NWT had a score of 35.7%, and the rest of Canada had 25.4% for children behind in one area of development. For children behind in two areas of development the score was 21.2% and 12.4% for NWT and the rest of Canada, respectively as in Figure 1. Questions pointed to whether NWT students are at par with the rest of Canada or neighboring provinces of Canada.

Responses and assumptions have had their roots in the Alberta Achievement Test that is common to both Alberta and the NWT. Questions tabled for discussion had their undertones rooted in the 2012 performance of students at or above the acceptable level of English Language Arts scores. The results had revealed low average scores of 41% for NWT schools compared to 82% for neighboring Alberta Province covering grade 3, and an even lower NWT score for Grades 9 as shown in Figure 2 (ECE, 2013).

From the interview data obtained, nine sources with thirty-one references and relationships had been made to the existence of an achievement gap. Mavis in her capacity as a principal insinuated that the achievement gap had to be properly managed. When children in the lower grades fail in language-based subjects, it does not mean they do not have the capability. In her function, she would ensure that when a child needs attention, she would work with the program support teacher and the classroom teacher, and observe the student and set up a class-wide or school-wide program to make learning

more accessible to the student, if it required assistive technology, they would look into it. She indicated that they would analyze the situation and find out which way to go to make the child succeed. The aim is to make teaching more responsive. Jo-Anne, on the other hand, pointed to leading learners to high-level critical thinking, taking interest in the world. Perhaps even offering them reading material that talks about a radio interview with highlights on the achievement gap to fuel discussion and remove possible *Seinsvergessenheit* or the oblivion of being of the Indigenous student and the prevailing state of the achievement gap. When Tim was asked how diversity could contribute to closing the achievement gap, Tim revealed that students could benefit in their learning from one another other, from their cultures and add some depth to their knowledge. I had this thought after hearing his response: could this be the reason why schools of predominantly Indigenous students found mostly in the rural areas are seriously hit by the gap as compared to the more multi-ethnic Yellowknife schools? Jason had been blunter: *“We need to wait for two generations... it’s a matter of time.”* He added that: *“We’re trying to force something right now that’s not there. We’ve got a lot of parents and in some cases older siblings who are still tied up in the residential school phenomenon, they’re wallowing in self-pity on it, they’re letting it ruin their lives, and they’re not making any effort to break the cycle.”*

Teachers make teaching more responsive and prepare learners to be more aware and interestingly it is coming that the gap could be closed more quickly in multi-ethnic environments than mono-ethnic. It is becoming clear that while time may bridge this gap, self-pity may not.

Northwest Territories Teacher

These responses covered eleven sources and one hundred and thirty-nine references. The responses concerned things that teachers did in the classroom as well as how they formed relationships with the community members. Teacher best practices and strategies both with the students and the communities were important under this heading.

Teacher best practices. In NWT, it included giving students the opportunities to succeed (OTS or OFS) (Wotherspoon, 2006), teacher-teacher-administration collaboration, a portrayal of the belief that an increase in inquiry-based learning enhances teacher-teacher cooperation and teacher cooperation with their administration for the benefit of the Indigenous students they teach. On teacher collaboration, Jason had stated that teacher collaboration was not encouraged. Teachers kept busy with their subject area, with no central coordination in his division. He informed that he had suggested once that the system puts together about three schools in the division under one coordinator as a go-to person for their science program, but this was not acted on.

Regarding strategies, teachers adopt to reach and teach the students Mavis expressed an absolute need for cooperating with the student with flexibility to modify the teaching-learning process. If students did have to present a product as evidence of their competency, they should be given choices. This sounded like the teacher being committed to giving the students the opportunity to succeed. She reported about her desire to reach for rich and authentic opportunities in the instructional process. Further, she explained that collaboration was a major tenet of classroom practice. *“Dialogue has played a major role in my profession as a teacher, as an administrator. I put into our*

calendar, times for teachers to meet and share.” She informed. Again, she advocated for measurable authentic outcomes to be infused in the instruction in the classroom.

Referring to Dillon Willon, she stated: *“the higher we raise the bar, the higher those kids are going to reach for it.”*

Sharon had pointed to the presence of a check-up system, which helps staff who may be struggling; mentioning that struggling staff members are offered support. Liz on her part had contributed that teacher-teacher collaboration was both structured and non-structured, staff meetings, school improvement plans, staff dialog. Collaboration has been characterized by openness in her school. She also reported, *“I guess our collaboration this year was a lot to keep just everybody informed, everybody with the opportunities.”*

The undertones of this theme included the art of cross-culture teaching and the application of the principles from the handbook of elders in schools (ECE, 2013) and the availability of resource persons.

The daily presentation of education and pursuit of the education mandate in the NWT was greatly influenced by the use of local resource personnel and the Department of Education’s elders-in-school program. This help has included help from knows and the special needs assistant (SNA). Jo-Anne had informed that in her class there was a need for a male role model to come in and talk to the class about his career. *“Though we have the Internet, Smart Board, books, and others, and still arriving ordered resources what is needed most is the human connection.”* She pointed out. She informed about an in-built capacity of their school system indicating that if there were something she was

uncomfortable with, she would say so, but the school setup has a resource person who serves as a go-to person.

Further, she explained: *“Having an elder in the classroom kind of changes the whole dynamic and students I find are quite respectful and very willing to learn from elders.”* They had two elders come and share the passage to womanhood for the girls, beading, making mittens and their experience in residential school. *“They do not have to leave the school, ... it is great to have an elder come in.”* She explained. I questioned what strategies the elder would use to teach the class with both boys and girls on menstruation. She replied: *“We did separate the boys from the girls when the elder came in to speak about that and also during an overnight camp where we had themes such as passage to adulthood, the boys and the girls were separated for some discussion about puberty and adolescence as well.”* Tim’s contribution on the topic led to corroborate what had been discussed earlier by other participants: *“...the presence of inbuilt resources in our school system... employing help from the Aboriginal teacher as well as using the elders in school program when such a thing happens since they are more knowledgeable.”* On the use of local counselors, Tim tries to keep his role as a principal, and when it gets to quite a touchy relationship, he keeps possible counseling functions to a minimum and rather seeks help from the career counselors.

Teachers work with student strengths. Tim had indicated in his responses that he enjoyed teaching the kids and having the opportunity to learn their culture. He prided in his student’s metamorphosis into teachers when they go to the bush. Jo-Anne spoke of the requirement to understand things on a case-by-case basis since some of the behavioral

issues with her Indigenous students are quite complex. She indicated that teachers have to be sensitive to setting learners up for success in school. Teachers ought to continue applying all in their repertoire of skills. The teaching-learning process needs unprecedented flexibility. Building relationships, collaboration and dialog and pursuing a new way of measuring outcomes while setting a high bar for the learners is needed, because these learners in our inclusive classrooms are very capable.

Jo-Anne indicated how the students are given a chance to showcase their areas of academic strength as they are allowed to engage in open-ended inquiry-based projects. We discussed the existence of different voices and worldviews, which characterizes the development of concordance among the worldviews of people in the NWT. It became obvious also what teachers do as stand-in parents. As we continued to discuss, it became clear that trust issues between the teacher, students, and the community could be improved through relationship building. Liz informed that with the new teacher there is a call to the teacher to build relationship, trying new things at the class level. Though not directly academic, land and culture-based programs in the schools could be beneficial.

Researcher's reflection. The elders-in-school program has made an impact. The SNAs have been resourceful partners. The use of local experts from the Department of Health and Social Services remain the strengths of the system that could still be developed to benefit the teaching of the Indigenous student.

Expectation of Students

How much teachers expected from their students could be an indication of how hopeful the teachers are about student achievement and recovery. It could also be an

indicator of how the teachers respect the students. On the other hand, teachers have to set realistic, reasonable expectation and standard for their students based on reality. Twelve references in the data could be attributed to five sources of interview data. Sharon explained that she makes her students work hard. She was of the feeling that they had the ability to bring about change. She rated herself an 8 of 10 for the work she does with her Indigenous students. *“There is still work to do with attendance and graduation, and dropout rates are still not better than the non-Aboriginal students.”*

She expressed the view that educators often get wrapped up in curriculum and standardized testing and tend to assign dollar signs and numbers to students instead of pursuing real progress. Tim stated that it would be hard for him to pinpoint, but the educator has had to accept some things as-is *“because of working in a cross-cultural setting. Such things as would not be accepted elsewhere such as the doodling during a serious instructional time.”* In one of the photo-elicitation, I delved into the idea of the-end-justifies-the-means, that if their training produced doctors and teachers and nurses, then it was successful. Tim responded: *“No. I think before I was a teacher in First Nations schools I would say yes, but now I have learned that no, that’s not quite how to measure it. I think it’s just each person; an individual defines success on their own based on what they want to do. It’s a lot of what they’re exposed to, but I think that’s part of the teacher’s job is to get them exposed and to see things, what they can do and what they’re capable of doing, making them feel.”* Liz presented this analogy about expectations: *“We’ve got a plane taking off. It’s got a long runway on the water. There is still room to make the best of things.”*

There is still work to do with student attendance, and there is still, room in all sectors to make the best of things. The end does not justify the means, and each student determines their own success based on what they want to do and have. But my thoughts about these are that these sound a bit too laid back and expressed no urgency in the direction towards what we want our students to attain as future contributors.

Case for Inclusive Schooling

The theme was in recognition that the classroom has differently endowed learners and, all students can learn. These were the findings of student diversity in the classroom as the teachers responded. Though the small communities had high percentages of Indigenous students, diversity presented itself in the concept of multi-grades of students and even in the classrooms labeled single grades, if there are, the concept of functional grade level existed. This meant that in NWT classrooms, one classroom could have different levels of children with different needs and outcomes receiving instruction. NWT classrooms are supported by the government's inclusive policy. However, in their class, Jo-Anne revealed that there were two Jehovah's Witnesses. She had this to say: "*... the structure of instruction does not cater for such, and they have to discover in due course during the year. The curricula expectation is skewed to cater for the Indigenous who would form at a maximum of 40 %. The question was what happens to the remaining 60%? Would such a trend be seen as adequately inclusive?*" Has the inclusive concept advanced enough to *cater for all*, or it is suppressed at the expense of Indigenousness?

In the data, seven sources of interview data made eighteen references to the inclusive schooling concept and diversity. Mavis informed that the Yellowknife

classroom is populated by students also from Somalia, South Africa, Philippines, and in fact from all over the world, stating that the Aboriginal population was 30%. *“This requires the teacher to wear multiple hats. The universal design for learning (UDL) comes in handy. The teachers have to be themselves and remain within language reach, accessible to the students to be effective.”* She portrayed her ever-learning attitude and needed to bring in experts when she needed ways to do justice to topics other people could help the students better. From Jo-Anne’s presentation, a rapprochement was an important concept to build bridges. She emphasized the need to get rid of ignorance by spreading love and acceptance of others with different views, learning to understand others in the awareness of openness. Jo-Anne informed that both this year and last year there have been students from Indigenous backgrounds, from all over Canada, African continent, India, China in her class. To her, this was an opportunity for her to learn more about their origins, cultures and their languages and create a classroom where all are welcome. *“I got to learn about students, their families, their backgrounds, that kind of thing and kids like to share where they’re from and their heritage.”* Teaching circumpolar countries in social studies like Russia, Sweden and Finland where some of the students are from has added another intriguing dimension to her career.

Similarly, Liz said that expectations vary as wide as the diversity present in the classroom. Non-Indigenous parents have different expectations from Indigenous; educated parents are more aware and have questions relevant to what students are taught in the class. Sharon presented an exposition of the range of diversity in her classroom giving an understanding that the different origins of all the students are catered for:

“While we focus on Aboriginal culture, the culture of the Lebanese, Sudan and South Korea. We spread the cultures in the regional modules in our foods class so that exploration will be possible, [for all].”

Diversity, as presented by the participants, was wide. In places, there was confusion in my mind whether it was NWT Indigenous people we were working with or the Somali or the Filipino. It was United Nations, all in one class. The NWT region was filled with school systems that looked like elsewhere in Alberta, even if not in population; in the social stratum, while there were also schools that had very, very few people, and very, very rural. One question kept coming to me: Can diversity close the achievement gap?

Indigenous Practices Encouraged

There are Native ways of knowing and of doing things; these may be different from the European ways of knowing. Doing the current Eurocentric curriculum of which Battiste (1998, 2000) had expressed a level of dislike, one would wonder how much of Native ideals may have been deleted. Seven sources were detected to make forty-two references about encouraging Indigenous practices. Jo-Anne indicated that she tells the students stories about her successes and encourages them, as well, to inculcate certain Native practices like sharing circles. She would then regularly check with them in the classroom and develop needed bonds by *“spending a lot of time outdoors and getting out on the land.”* With Liz, there was sudden awakening for the awareness for Native things when in her first year she picked a raven feather. On the day this happened, she lost all her students for the rest of the day because culturally, picking a raven feather meant she

had come into contact with bad luck. Losing her students for the day may have been a wake-up call for her Caucasian mindset to understand their extent of embedded-ness in myths. She came to be more respectful what was around her and Native ways and aware that she was not from the locality. She became more conscious that she was “*not from this place but at the same time I’m very comfortable and I call it home.*” It was obvious that the teachers interviewed knew what to do in the event of student successes and feats in cultural activities. Tim threw light on what he would do with the news of a hunting success by a student: “*I would congratulate them and ask about what they would do to their meat and who is involved in the preparation of the meat. Who will be the elders that would share in the meat and the outcome of the fur? It would form a great classroom conversation for a time.*” Sharon would not bend about the identity and power issues related to an Indigenous student’s hair that would not allow anyone to cut their hair.

Much as teachers harbor the desire to encourage Indigenous practices, it is needful to mention at this time that not being culturally responsive may be as simple as lowering the standard just for them and just to accommodate them. I keep thinking of some assertions about Festivals, Foods and Drums. In the light of 4Ds and 5Fs, many cross-cultural teachers tend to think that if they don’t make the students dress or drum, they are not cross-cultural or culturally responsive enough (Writer, 2008).

Student Mood Detection

Years ago, when living with my mother and siblings, we had lots of hurdles to overcome. Each time I came back from school, or anywhere, my mother would be able to gauge what stage I was in. Sometimes she would say: “*I knew as soon as I saw your face,*

I knew you were hungry.” “I knew it was not o.k.” “I knew you were worried.” I came to my status as a cross-cultural teacher with the belief that parents, people who are intimate can read our states of mind, look into our inner being, and so on by looking at us, reading us. Correct me, but I have come to take this view that when good teachers meet their students, they can read them and detect whether they are troubled or joyful. Knowing the mood of your student is like traveling halfway or more to the center of their being and fostering an understanding of them. There were seven sources and eleven references to student mood detection and understanding. Asked about this, Jason mentioned: *“When the students are unhappy, they [become] lethargic or try to fall asleep. If they are happy, they are laughing, joking touching each other or boisterous.”* On the one hand, Mavis explained how little kids come in crying, as mornings are not so good. This kicks in the teacher-as-mother-or-father or grandpa-grandma mode. Some come to class crying and others, with a hoody over their head, some others come with heads down and unwilling to talk. To her, each demeanor indicated to the teacher what to do and what not to do. *“If they come with the head down and avoid talking, it simply means do not push.”*

Sharon in her unique position as the mother of Indigenous children shared:

“Having taught the kids for a long period, I just know them.” She explained how she uses a lot of humor to diffuse their tensions. Sharon tends to dig into their lives to develop enough connections. She simply *“know[s] them enough to both identify and understand their moods.”* That sounded like a mother-teacher with a vested interest. However for Jo-Anne, she responded that she uses a facial expression or tone of voice or just develops a dialog with them to have a chance to observe the response.

When will teachers ever cease to be something for the student? They are dog sled drivers, school parents, chaperones, sports coaches and silent advocates. The mood of our students is a great dashboard that teachers as gentle drivers use to read the internal environments of the students to help them in cognitive, social and emotional learning as they approach their destinies. Why neglect so great a resource when we have so important educational agenda to attain?

A Photo-Elicitation

Four photos that were presented in the various interviews elicited comments from the teacher respondents. Three of them were presented in one interview and one on the final interviews for view by the respective interviewees. From Tani (2014), the spoken words and images combined so that the interplay of the two could be studied as the interview proceeded. After carefully selecting the photos for the study, permissions were obtained, I sought how to use these photos to ask questions that words would not best draw from the participants. Particularly, from seven sources of the interview data, eighteen references were made. Tim observed the photo and made expressions about the posture of the girls, the probable period of the season the photo was taken, the groom of their hair, the dresses worn, their smiling demeanor and their attentiveness. Similar references were made of the boys in the two photos. With Jason, he identified a point of austerity in one of the photos. *“There are more caretakers more on the side of the girls and boys.”* This was referring to the Caucasian photo of boys and girls. He identified the dress differences and mentioned that the Indigenous photos were more uniformed, unlike the non-uniformed Indigenous students. *“In the Natives pictures, there are larger rows*

and much larger class sizes. He felt the Caucasian photo was a typically staged photo portrait in any school at any time between the mid 50's and 90's. He sees himself, his uncles and aunts in those pictures." He pointed out. I felt and wondered if Jason was a bit defensive. According to him, with whatever situation, we are tending to make subjective judgments based on what other people have returned to say. I then asked: *"Is our suspicion for a deliberate low pupil to teacher ratio unfounded?"* In whichever way we saw it, on discussing the question of equity and distribution of resources, he pointed out that the school in the Caucasian photo would take more money to setup and run. Again, I was a little disappointed when Jason's eloquence in answering questions took me a little aback.

In a question about the cut hair of the Natives, Jason responded: *"hair is cut..."* but I asked whether it meant the same for the Native as for the Caucasian as we learn that hair is power for the Native. He explained that the cutting of the hair may have been simply to control lice and should be culturally appropriate. I mentioned that as long as their parents did the hair cutting, there was no problem but at a residential school to control lice was another story. He mentioned *"a fiduciary responsibility of care"* as long as the kids are in their care they have to maintain standards.

A look at the last photo in the final interviews seemed to conjure fascinating comments. In Tim's presentation, he informed: *"The First Nations student on the left is dressed very culturally with long hair and on the right looks like he could be a soldier in the Civil War you would say."* Interestingly, he referred to the boys in the interview as two separate boys. He described: *"He's got that same dress as the Unions that look like*

that, but with short hair, to compare it to the First Nations student to the left there, beautiful shoes, fitting pants, everything fits.” The dialog was more to the point that the boy on the right was not a First Nations like the one on the left. Apparently, the identity shift of the transformation had become so intense that Tim thought they were two different people; one a First Nations citizen and the other a Caucasian, and rightly so. He described the First Nations student as being in a colorful and cultural outfit, lots of symbols, loose natural material, animal fur, long, braided hair. The Caucasian one was in a uniform, which looks like someone gave him, tight well fitting short hair, nice shoes. I asked what his reaction would be if he were told this was the same student with two images of different eras of his residential school life before and after, he said he would be surprised.

The freedom to shift in their being is one thing that educators could transfer to their students. This is a genuine state of being full citizens in two worlds. Should not someone take control of their destinies and if not, can they not be helped in any way to do so? Anybody home...? Daily as teachers push their way through to make things happen; children are sitting, standing or moving in front of them and waiting.

Evaluation of Natives

The theme captured subthemes such as culture-behavior idiosyncrasies and school success criteria should be relooked. Cumulatively, the theme was obtained from seven sources and had eighteen references. It sums up that there should be no evaluation of native life using foreign standards. Sharon had mentioned more directly about assessment containing words like streetlight in the AAT which may be relevant to a southern city-

dwelling student but not to the northern Indigenous. On culture-behavior interconnection, Jason informed that the ideals of personal space were not followed by his students. He added that there is a no-touch policy in the construct of the Cadet Program they have in his school originating from the Canadian Armed Forces. He pointed to a challenge that most of their students stay in the cadet for a maximum of two years and drop as the expectation levels increase.

Mavis presented contrary to assumed position that Aboriginal children get to do whatever they want and never get scolded. Apparently, that represents a non-Aboriginal standard that is used to measure behavior; that as they learn from experience, they have a differing view about safety, avoidance of trouble and punishment. She indicated: “... *If you are teaching a group of kids who are not used to consequences and punishment by somebody else, then they are going to do things a little bit different...*” Adding that the Anglo-Saxon point of view is not the way to go for Indigenous students as they may have been exposed differently.

I had a conversation with Liz about the epistemology of *use, management of, abundance* and *storage*, citing the use of erasers in the classroom and insinuating that perhaps the Indigenous learners may have a different understanding of *use*. A few students in the classroom would use erasers and keep them for use a second time. Extending this thought, we compared how the *Dene* go hunting and obtain just what they need and have to go in again and only when needed, unlike other cultures where excess and industrial processing is the order of the day.

Liz had explained that every behavior depends on one's way of knowing. She reported that students do tend to study for a long time before giving it a try in the class whatever is taught. She emphasized the fact that teachers, therefore, need to study and be mindful of the situation of learning. Based on this the teacher has to be aware of the different ways to construct knowledge which will include, causing ownership and triggering the use of that knowledge by the Indigenous student. Tim presented what he termed a more complicated question of whether abolishing the AAT and replacing with an NWT evaluation would be a seemly action.

Interestingly, the behaviors under discussion were not dubbed good or bad but deemed part of cultural identity. Liz spoke about a kind of relaxed attitude with time, which in her former school they had referred to as Dene time. She mentioned: *"It's not necessarily being late, it's just there's more of calmness I guess with time. It doesn't have to be so structured and set."*

Quality of NWT Education

There were two sources from which this theme was derived, and eight references made. Jo-Anne informed that in the NWT the programming is set up to teach Indigenous ideals. The style of teachers adheres student-centeredness. There is a lot of student participation, which determined the interactive-ness of the education process in the NWT.

Mavis responded that the quality of work in the NWT causes a long-lasting relationship between the students and the school system long after graduation. Mentioned that we are at par, if not more fortunate than our southern counterparts. The ethics in the *Dene Kede* instills a high level of mindfulness, learning consciousness and

respectfulness. Adding that: *“The multicultural-ness, the knowledge on survival and all that help the students and take them far.”* As I tried to take us to our performance in high stakes exams, she informed rather that other good things are happening which are not high stakes exams. She spoke of some international co-operations and discussions with New Zealand on plausible directions for our school system. She mentioned successes like producing excellent leaders like Jackson Lafferty and other renowned writers.

Mentorship

Under the theme of mentorship, there were six sources from which this theme was derived, and eight references were made. Liz spoke about using culture days, building connections and dialog. She indicated that her style was to advise new teachers to talk with Indigenous teachers, encouraging them to be more open to learning. Sharon spoke about hooking a mentee to the Sweetgrass program and working a lot more with her mentees on what they want to be.

Land Access and Ownership

Under this theme, there were four sources from which this theme was derived, and eight references were made. Mavis was of the opinion that in the event of meeting people who tended to entertain that the Indigenous land belonged to all of us, like her son, she would educate them: *“if someone comes to visit you in your house they do not take over your house.”* Depending on the age of such proponents she would ask them to prove it.

With Jo-Anne, we had an exchange of thoughts about the work of the Berger Inquiry and ongoing efforts by the government to return the land to the Native peoples. Sharon initiated an interesting discussion: *“I think that’s really funny as I was teaching*

Northern Studies and the whole controversy over that child wearing the sweatshirt to school, "got land, Thank an Indian." I don't know if you remember that. It was down in Alberta a few years ago. It is quite as amusing as the statement: "*If you can read, thank a teacher.*"

Teacher Virtues and Badges

As earlier stated, good teachers can be identified through "(a) their character traits, (b) what they know, (c) what they teach, (d) how they teach, (e) what they expect from their students, (f) how their students react to them, and (g) how they manage the classroom." (Brown, 2007, p. 59)

I was on the lookout to find what our NWT teachers are made of. Under the theme of *Mentorship*, there were six sources from which this theme was derived, and eight references were made. Jason's response was: "*Honest, trusting, motivated, knowledgeable and experienced.*" Mavis mentioned humility as essential for teachers of the Indigenous citing that humility was a major piece in the situation of the NWT, which has been associated with the success of Natives' way of life for a long time until the Europeans arrived. Further, she explained that she was passionate about the land and the people; humble, a perpetual learner, always adjusting, has a high awareness of the vastness of the heart of the people. She is committed and feels spiritually connected with the North.

Being an NWT indigene she still thinks she not knows all the answers but has a vision of a better NWT ahead of time. ERI-framed. Reflective. Sharon indicated she would like to be seen as a reflexive teacher who follows the perspective of the student;

grateful, passionate, compassionate and always learning. Jo-Anne informed of a propensity to inquiry and curiosity, honest teacher, critical thinking, ongoing learner, relationship and bridge builder.

Liz spoke about the import of a sense of openness when in the communities. She would like to be remembered as being mindful, thoughtful and philosophical, community-engaging, relationship-building, open, listening and participating. She said the areas that she would like to improve in her work as a teacher include building connections with the future of the Earth. Tim described himself as patient, tolerable, energetic, rises to the occasion of the challenge, an optimist and adventurous.

Analysis Source: Focus Groups

To triangulate the data and obtain the views of either equally experienced colleagues, a 5-member focus group discussion was scheduled for the data collection. Due to issues of inability to put meetings together for all five, permission was sought and obtained to divide the group into two members and three respectively to suit a useful workable program. Three 45-minute discussions were arranged for the two-member group, but for the 3-member group, only a one-meeting session of two hours and forty minutes was possible as there was health and surgery appointment issues with one or two of the participants.

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit)

TribalCrit makes the form and structure of formal education acceptable to Indigenous students and Indigenous students more reasonable of the process that formal education. Essentially, teachers are an integral part of how Indigenous people see the

Government. As Ron's principal introduced him, he was surprised at the way each student that he greeted hugged him in an unfamiliar manner. Barriers began to fall and an elder gave him a Native name. He developed personal relationships and could boast of his instrumentality for two students going off to college this year for the first time.

Concerning Native pride and any conflict with other ways of knowing, Slade reported:

"So hair does have an indication of power and more than just what culture; I just don't know the significance in the Aboriginal culture specifically, I just don't." Also from

Slade's experience, his training on residential school informs that the students being prepared in the school system are aware of the dysfunction and the major impacts on them and of what outrageous things about some adults in the community.

Lilian presented her thoughts and placed a unique agentic role on the educator:

"we still have to make amends to these people. That's what I think. I think that we are part of the machinery, being educators, that brought these people to the situation and the extreme you know, that we deal with." On his part, Mikhail explained that the awareness

of the existence of a gap explaining that their report cards show their current level of study. Dispelling any possible surprises of other students working below grade level, he indicated it as normal for each student as all students are working below grade level.

Slade had indicated as well that government needed to recognize the need for a purposeful movement resolving issues with the Aboriginal people of Canada, adding that harm done over a stretch of over 150 years may not be easily solved overnight.

The educator is an agent of social change wherever their mission may find them.

Even if some of the NWT students we teach are at below grade level, the understanding

or the Indigenous student keeps increasing. The acceptance of the school system as it is allowed to evolve to suit Native sensibilities will cause learner improvement, remove pupil absenteeism and make education happen for the Indigenous student, 150 years of mishap in the system, notwithstanding. Education frees the mind (Freire, 1970).

System Readjustment Needed

The use of English and a removal of Native Language either from the beginning in the residential schools was the cause of problems. I had underscored that the use of a language other than one's mother tongue could lead to misinterpretations and reversions in thinking processes of users of that language. Mikhail pointed to a possible language disconnection, which could cause a processing slow down for that language.

We agreed that in an era of globalization, we needed to see in our education system different ways as other people. Mikhail presented: *"No, I think that's important to be able to function in like you said, like a global society. You need to be able to see things from other peoples' perspectives and not just think that your way of doing things is the only way of doing things, that there are other correct answers and such. You know? Yeah, no I think having empathy for other people and understanding other people makes you, I guess, a better person."* Ron agreed. He added: *"we all understand where everyone else is coming from."*

More use of Native language should be encouraged as a Slavey language phrase-a-week project is done in some of the schools. We need to allow different ways of seeing and thinking about things. There are different ways to reaching the destiny, which may

suit the different cultures, the Indigenous culture not an exception. Educating is to seek the means to make progress happen.

Two-World System Supported

There were ten sources and thirty-nine references on what was captioned two-worlds infections and takeaways. It became clearer that the *Two row Wampum* thing was getting more and more to us in current things and as well, the future. We presented a discussion on how White Settlers first met the Indigenous people and developed a relationship which led to the signing of treaties which to say the least may have had human, good intentions but which turned otherwise. I was pursuing the point that if one was being educated with a curriculum, whether the *Dene Kede* curriculum or the curriculum as we have it in AAT takes the student to for example the University of Alberta to study medicine, our students, whether they are Natives or whether they are Caucasian, have to be educated properly... whether we like it or not, globalization was taking its toll on all of us. So it's much like the hated *taking the Indian out of the child* but at the same time it's also much like producing nurses and doctors so that in the end we don't have to fly somebody from Vancouver in their yacht to the north to come and give a diagnosis and medication because there shall be indigenous people who have been trained to do it. And if you left them maybe out there in the bush they will be sick and Medivac will have to quickly bring them to medical attention.

We did a discussion of the *before* and *after* photos of the Indigenous boy in the photo-elicitation and we made an analogy that the transformation of the lad could produce a medical doctor who can do surgery on sick people using the current type of

medicine used in our government hospitals among other advantages though as I invited more comments albeit, disadvantages, Mikhail indicated that the learner could be separated from family, not able to speak to them, leading to other manifestations like loss of language and of family connection. Mike mentioned: *“I agree with you 100% that we [Caucasians] created the issue. It’s a big task ahead of us to make amends, but the concept of living in two worlds is a real concept, and it’s one that when you brought it forward. When we talk about Indigenizing education, it’s actually what we’re talking about, is that we want value for the culture, but also we want them to value the western education because that’s where the future is and that’s where the future is going to have to be. We want them never to lose their culture, but they should be able to work in the world of today and still be able to enjoy the benefits of their culture.”*

The two-world concept is our reality. It has come to stay. Much as it is not my way or the highway, it is not just one way, as long as there is a durbar parade of the different lenses and I have my voice to be heard while I can hear your voice. In the school community where teachers do their work for their Indigenous students two or more worlds will continue to thrive while protecting the culture and language of the Indigenous peoples.

Eurocentric Diffusionism

When it came to describing the boy in the before and after photo, Ron saw one and the same child. The same person under the active effect of colonialism in their growing life. *“This boy has his Indigenous identity stripped away in the other photo.”* He added: Ron said: *“Yeah, what I mean is that it’s just you know, the idea of taking away*

the traditional identity to make them more, almost like they're you know, to fit in, to be part of the whole group, to not have a native identity; the colonization idea of making everyone the same." Further, he indicated that the colonization scheme seeks to make everyone the same. *"So I just see that traditional – not only traditional clothing, but the traditional way of life that would have come with that ripped away and then put into this standard box that everyone should fit into when we talk about the colonial ideal or the colonization of Canada, because that just okay in the mind."* There was a characteristic zero support and references for *Eurocentric acceptable*. It appeared the onus was on the teachers to do what they can do to reduce the influence if any of Eurocentric curriculum.

We cannot be all the same. We are different peoples. Good can exist in all ways. One way cannot be the only good way, and others, bad. Knowledge in the classroom cannot have a center. It does not even emanate from teachers. Teachers make knowledge with learners. This is why teachers take students outdoors and on the land to learn of and from them in the NWT.

Achievement Gap

Could attendance be the reason for the existing achievement gap? Information from the Northwest Territories which may apply elsewhere about a grade 12 student declining to grade 10 cumulative if they missed one day a week from K-grade to grade 12. Thus educators have an intense burden on a system where attendance is an issue. Ron's poise at removing any achievement gap is with the structure of his classroom. He reported of a relaxed classroom atmosphere with beanbags and mats and laptops and Smart Board. He engages the children. There is not sitting down for him as he engages in

one-on-one support for the students and with the use of technology. Mike contributed that while agreeing that the gap intensifies at the ninth grade, an increased success rate would be achieved if the strategy of putting in place interventions was pursued early and before they entered junior high school. This builds a rich experience from kindergarten as a reduction in the gap is achieved with intense intervention from that point on. He added that The New to the North Conference may produce needed change but requires needed ongoing in-service for teachers.

The work goes on to remove the gap. Teacher best practices using evidence-based techniques acquired through professional development shall continue in the NWT. Someone informed that evaluation should be multi-directional and tuned to suit the pedagogy. I come to think of it as a good idea; but whichever way, the NWT child, deserves admission to the best teacher education school, the best medical school, the best schools of psychology with the greatest tint of Native ways of knowing in the land infused, in Canada, like all Canadians.

NWT Teacher

These responses covered eleven sources and one hundred and thirty-nine references. The scope seemed to be about everything teachers did in the classroom and community. Teacher best practices, preparedness, and strategies both with the students and the communities came into play.

Teacher best practices. The teacher happens to be a key determinant of Indigenous student success. They find a niche in their practice to serve as surrogate parents in school, which may not be as surprising due to their role *in loco parentis*. The

teachers serve as emotional cushions for their students. If students were not happy, Mike informed that then teachers still would need to step in under the spirit of building relationship and help them get back on track. Teachers could provide extra time or mentorship for their learners. Teachers being aware of persistent student trauma, Mike pointed to some teachers adopting grade 12 students and finding ways to push them through the challenging periods concomitant with that stage. Also, Slade informed of how teachers make a difference in student lives by creating a non-threatening environment and about how it tended to be easy for the younger grades to open up while for the higher grades it takes a bit of time to open up. He presented on endeavors to get the students employable stating that there was a multi-step approach, which looks at their talents and interests. Organizing counseling and talking to them and getting them ready ahead of time and supporting them where needed. He recalled joint field trips organized along with the recreation department. Campus visits had been arranged and even when they were bored they would fan the enthusiasm to help them to view it as something worth their while to consider.

Also, the government has made the use of elders in school and use of available community human resource, and special needs assistance are factors to be considered in teacher best practice in the Northwest Territories, though from very few numbers of the interview data. The assertion that teachers work with student strengths is an obvious best practice of teachers. Ron enlightened: *“It’s a constant growing process of utilizing the resources on the ground, either in the community in order to base my instruction, so sometimes it’s getting out on the land with the students and putting what we learned in*

class into action on the land, allowing them to write about topics that interest them rather than trying to force southern ideas on the situation.” He pointed out that what applies south applies north and as such to teach Writing and Reading local events can be used. The differentiated instruction in the classroom allows focusing on the students’ strengths rather than pushing them to where we want them to be. His stringency at the beginning when he came north concerning time use and concept by Northern Indigenous people needed to decline and be more flexible, as time went on. In an environment with such unique history, infusion of culture in the classroom is a true part of teacher best practice.

Such teachers bring their views and also wait to learn from others. Ron revealed through the rebuilding of the engine of his all-terrain vehicle and how he was taught archery. I was reminded of the dynamics of the constructivist approach to learning.

Ron underscored how connecting the students to the land gets them refreshed for more classroom work. Making cultural connection can therefore be seen as a best practice of culturally responsive teaching. Both Ron and Mikhail agreed to using evidence-based strategies to teach learners in their classrooms.

Teacher preparedness and challenging brokerage. In the confluence of worldviews in the classroom, the participants explained that teachers represent the government and Eurocentric curriculum side of things, making it necessary to mediate all the time. *“We have one worldview and the children we teach have another.”* Therefore, the teacher comes face to face with many social and emotional issues. Ron reiterated the need for a strong relationship build-up and preparedness in the North before teaching as he invites elders on a regular basis to help him to teach. The concept of the teaching faced

social issues than one would expect. Mikhail explained that teachers represented both the Eurocentric curriculum, the government and their people. This required them to play the role of brokers of the system at all times.

Slade mentioned the difficulty of building human resource capacity in the community and told a story of an experience at an Indigenous community. He mentioned that the demands for helping school the Indigenous students were so outrageous. He explained: *“The diversity was so wide...every classroom had a range of ability level way beyond what we were used to teaching in other places...”* In his support role, he was helping other teachers, but he had a shock, as there was not set parameter especially in this Aboriginal community he was in. This was overwhelming. He indicated that: *“The gloves are off, so to speak and you’ve got to deal with whatever comes at you...”*

Further, to enhance teacher professional development and growth, this was what he contributed: *“I feel that the teachers have to be supported by the government so that they’re allowed to take their talent and use them and not be constricted because there’s a limited vision at the top about how things should be done...”* Slade contributed. It felt like Slade was making use of a long awaited chance to share what had been in his heart. He offered a few more ideas for the future in relation to politics, the justice system and parental support. *“And so there is this big question mark about educating everybody in terms of life in Canada, modern world life and where we want to go with it and how we all tie into it and whether we want to tie into it or whether we don’t want to tie into it and then your commitment to being involved in it.”*

Teacher community watch-and-wait strategy. Under the main theme the NWT Teacher, this subtheme was traced from 6 sources and twelve references. It had to do with whether teachers could spring into action as community members right when they join it without arousing suspicion. Ron and Mikhail explained that connecting with the community may require some tact and time. It would take the teacher a bit of time to shed their outsider status. The teachers may need to listen to the older community first and obtain a buy-in. Mike pointed to building trust as the teachers entered the classroom and rightly so, as a first time, least experienced teachers tended to start their career pathways in the rural and purely cultural communities.

Researcher's reflection. Teachers get the students back on track. They are helping the students, throughout, out to the point where they prime them for their future careers. When they need someone to talk to, they are there; or they will get them a referral to counselors. That is the work they do.

Expectation of Students

From the data, there was one critical item, attendance, the education system is expected to turn the tables round for any success to be attained. Ron retorted with surprise the issue of the critical nature of the student's attendance. That a student's missing of one day per week would result in a student who has been in a K-12 school system would be expected to be only in grade 10 for a hypothetical student with no developmental issues (ECE Factsheet, 2013). This seems to be an issue, which is not within the direct reach of the classroom teacher, though they may be able to use their influence in the classroom and the community to reverse the trend in attendance.

The teachers could expect nothing of their Indigenous students, being by definition non-Aboriginals. But that is not the choice they make. They have high expectations of their students. They expect them to come to school daily. They help them to forge on and succeed; that is if the students will so choose.

Case For Inclusive Schooling

It could be deduced from Mike's presentation that teachers in Northern classrooms have had to contend with student behavior as a usual occurrence and part of the classroom environment and have to plan their lessons with that thought in mind. About this also, Lilian pointed to a team approach in creating the support system needed for inclusive schooling which would be ideally backed by technology and human resources tuned for very specific needs and only the best of it for Indigenous communities. Ron had reported the presence of sensory tools in his arsenal of equipment to keep learners relaxed and working in the class. In Mikhail's daily routine he had been mindful of bringing in culturally relevant things to develop and sustain student interest.

Are the Caucasian cross-cultural teachers accepted to the extent that they would like to create an inclusive school that would bring social change? Is the Indigenous community all-accepting of 'others' and does the system accept the teachers enough for the needed social change? This is a TribalCrit issue. Mike had this to say: "*...some years ago, two White teachers visited an Aboriginal family and it was very difficult to talk about the parent's child's progress, which had prompted their visit, to say the least. From the conversation, it was evident that there were trust issues which require relationship building.*"

Even if it is by capture and release, teachers know how to manage the availability of sensory tools in the class during lessons. The ultimate aim is to make the students more relaxed, self-regulated – calm, alert and learning (Shanker, 2013). The thought of making the classroom inclusive of behavior and academic performance should be expanded in the mind of the Indigenous student to include the outsider teacher who is a vital cog in making social change happen.

Indigenous Practices Encouraged

Earlier, Slade had contributed that the culture of the students was to be used to build bridges and create a grounding for understanding the differences and similarities, reframing questions to develop needed rapport. Teachers need to update their links with their students' culture by developing connections to the *Dene Kede* and Native ways of knowing. Mikhail advised that teachers ought to show sincere interest in what students are interested in, which tend to be culture-based, stating: "*some of the key things to do are to show interest in specific things that students are interested in, be sincere and striving to become more than just a teacher.*" He encouraged a hands-on approach to teaching as a time-saving method during lessons. Mikhail had indicated that lowering turnover could be championed through getting to know the students who are used to teachers coming for a brief time and leaving. He stated that teachers have to get involve in the community in as many ways as possible.

Teaching and living in the community as a cross-cultural teacher is community learning, transforming to community teach which happens under the tutelage of the elders. These elders are the custodians of knowledge, the Encyclopedia of the Arctic.

Student Mood Detection

Lilian would open up channels of communication with the students, and if that failed, she would let them find someone they could open up with. She has always used humor, but the Indigenous students do not have the same sense of humor. She reported that to know the mood of the student; one has to know the child; adding she has been dealing mostly with teenagers in her career and about whom she said: *“Is there such a thing as a happy teenager? I don’t know....”* She continued: *“They’re so full of angst, and they can turn on a dime. But what makes it so fascinating of course, it’s such a crazy time of life.”*

A Photo-Elicitation

From the photo of the SJF School, Ron said that it looked clear they were non-Aboriginal, though they appear to be at the same time. He could attribute happiness to the children in that photo. *“You don’t get that oppressive feeling that you do in the other pictures. It’s a much more kind of a happy situation I think.”*

He added: *“it doesn’t look like there’s any interest in any individuality.”*

Ron and Mikhail both agreed the photo representation showed how it was expensive to run a school like the Sir John Franklin one compared to the other two photos. According to Mikhail, it was not fair the amount of money spent on the Caucasian school compared to that on the residential school unless there was a special need involved. We added that notwithstanding, we could not bite the hand that feeds us. Mike said the pictures represented a time when students were told to smile and do as they were told. He detected *an oblivion of being* in one of the children as this child in the

picture stood while others sat. Quite straight, Lilian recognized: “*the transformation from savage to you know...to a fitting image.*” She informed that it was a system of almost dictatorship where you would be seen and no heard. “*We take you and make you into something different...[like] in a factory sort of thing.*” Mike presented that he could detect some naivety on the part of one child in the photo who was standing while the others were sitting. He indicated that such children had to be there still even though they did not know why they had to; a form of forced obedience was seen to mark that era of schooling.

Time has come and gone, but teachers continue to herald in another era of time when there shall be lots of interest in the individual learner receiving instruction. It had even started. It is waiting, for acceptance and harvesting, for the greater good of the Indigenous learner. I am committed to reporting what I see and hear, and can connect to in this restorying process.

Infrequent Findings in the Data

Teacher Satisfaction

Tim was satisfied in the day as the camaraderie blooms in his school, and as people seem joyful, he feels joy with them. He spoke about a ‘big picture’ and Dene Laws in a behavior plan. Tim believes in old and new staff and role modeling. Whenever he taught in days past, he has had days he thought about education in the South before coming North. He rated his satisfaction at 5 or 6 out of 10 as a teacher, but as principal, he shot up to 8 or 9 out of 10. On a similar note, Mavis had given herself 4 of 5 in her self-rating. Sharon rated 8 of 10. It was becoming evident through this discourse that

principals feel differently from teachers as they are more positive minded than teachers who are on the ground doing what seemed not too positive.

Bakhtinian Dialogism

With Ron, nothing gets done in his domain without an in-depth discussion to get closer to hearing everybody on the team. They have towed the line of transparency in the school, but with things outside the school he has had to sit and talk with the community members. Liz, it appeared had also ‘touched base’ with her students, a process which may or may not open them up. With the younger students, they may simply be hungry, upset or tired. Mavis had used her influence as principal through encouraging dialogism in the school.

On another aspect, Tim had expressed he had a feeling that the Indigenous student had a better opportunity, are being taught by younger non-veteran teachers who are equally qualified but he was unsure if the students take advantage of such opportunities.

Philosophy of Difference

People are different. There are different Indigenous Peoples. In the same way there are different cross-cultural educators. The different cross-cultural teachers are committed on a daily basis in dealing with the diverse manifestations of the residential schooling while waiting for our NWT schools to be completely culturally responsive.

Teacher Policed More

Jason expressed that safety should more be extended to cover even teachers and not just the students. The powers that be made students feel safe and cared for in the school but not teachers. He indicated that far-reaching measures like setting up a safety

advocate for the student in the LGBTQ community but not the same measure of thoroughness for the teacher. Things are done to students and considered unacceptable though not seen in the same light as for teachers. Thoughts like this bring up issues about whether some teachers while performing their mandate and mission feel unsafe.

Funding Issues

Sharon had issues with funding of Aboriginal education. She stated: *“The government has to acknowledge what happened with the Aboriginal people. The White European view is about money, and that may not be the opinion towed by everyone.”* The idea presented an interesting variation. While she felt that more money ought to be something else, Tim felt that the government probably may have bitten more of what should otherwise be the prerogative of parents. He asked: *“Would the same good done not be a disadvantage if seen in the direction of probably setting up the people for failure and perpetually dependent on the government and social welfare?”* Jason presented a view, which was more of misappropriation. Speaking about one training program where almost a \$100, 000 was spent in training sessions but later there was no money to fund \$10, 000 to buy equipment. He pointed to possible wastefulness and perhaps misplacement of priorities in Indigenous education.

Mentorship

Lilian said the best thing would be to bridge the relationship gap by speaking to the students, urging them to see that you understand what they feel. With time, the trust builds. Both the kids and the young teacher will need to be advised that time will resolve things. She advised on support to the teacher; she would suggest to the teacher to get

involved in other community stuff with the kids as the classroom has become the venue or ground for testing the new teacher. A new site would be required for the teachers to make a better case for themselves.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I used member checks to engage the research participants to ensure that the interview details were representing what we had. Added to the use of the focus groups, confirmation, and feedback obtained from the participants helped to review and check the transcripts, which strengthened the confirmability and provided dependability of the data. Researcher reflexivity was ensured through the use of a reflexive journal. As recommended by Merriam (2009), I have provided a detailed narrative in this study in an attempt to provide a thick, rich description in this study which I believe will allow transferability and make it possible of this study to be repeated anywhere that it needs to.

To approach the retold stories of the teachers as close as possible, on some occasions, I contacted by email Clandinin, Xiao, and Battiste to clarify some of the facts used in this narrative inquiry of cross-cultural teachers. Silko (1997) explained that viewers are as much and continue to be, part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on to see the landscape. As the research was done, I viewed my thoughts, as part of the landscape of the study and provided aspects of my cross-cultural journey and identity to solidify the meaning making. I recognized that telling the story as I heard it also helped shape me (Clandinin, 2006). The final product of the study will require the approval of Walden University and eventually its readership will expand to Aurora Research Institute.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the findings of the study were presented in a two-part structure. I had chosen to present the teachers' stories by reporting as close to their chosen intensity of voice as possible. In Part I, I restoried the narratives of their lived experiences, my aim was to create an understanding so that posterity may be able to relive how the current teachers have told their stories and possibly improve on these stories as the vision of education in NWT is pursued. In Part II of Chapter 4 outcomes as obtained from data analysis were presented. Chapter 5 will provide discussion, conclusions and recommendations of this research study in relation to the responses by the educators.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this narrative study was to describe, analyze, relive, and retell the story and thus restory the narratives presented by six cross-cultural teachers of K-12 Indigenous students in the NWT. I explored how the six teachers mediated their cross-cultural background while teaching in a culturally responsive manner.

From the analysis of the data, I was able to interpret the findings and make recommendations for improvement in pedagogy for experienced and new teachers of the NWT. Through restorying the teachers' stories regarding their lived experiences and interactions as cross-cultural teachers of the Indigenous students, I provided insights about how they engage and negotiate with the students to meet curricular expectations. The study addressed a central question and three sub-questions.

Research Question

What are the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of non-Native cross-cultural teachers about curricular implementation in Indigenous schools in the NWT?

Subquestions

1. In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?
2. How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in culturally responsive teaching?
3. In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a

Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

Themes

Fifteen themes were identified from analysis of the interview responses:

1. The NWT teacher included the best practices of the teachers, their preparedness, their community relationship, and their tact and expectations.
2. TribalCrit indicated how the school system interacted with the Indigenous students with the aim of making a Eurocentric curriculum more understandable and acceptable and how Indigenous ways of knowing were infused in the curriculum.
3. Two-world system was seen as dynamic and included the acceptance of other worldviews, a pragmatic view that applicable and useful elements of other worldviews can be borrowed for the good they contain.
4. Eurocentric diffusionism described the view that good things come from Europe and have to spread from a European center.
5. Achievement gap was a description of the current capacity and capability to sustain successes in schooling, as it exists between the Indigenous learners of the North and other citizens from the rest of Canada.
6. Encourage indigenous practice: Indigenous practices are acceptable and are to be nurtured and encouraged.
7. System readjustment needed implied the cessation of the status quo. It included the teachers' pedagogical approach and practice in the teaching-learning process.

8. Issues of residential schooling covered the effect of the history of Indigenous education in Canada.
9. Photo-elicitation referred to images of Indigenous past; this method was used based on the belief that a picture is worth a thousand words.
10. Case for inclusive schooling supported education for all and provides for conditions conducive to learning.
11. Evaluation of Natives should match their way of life: Indigenous students should be assessed fairly using ways that match their preparation. Assessment should be both formative and summative.
12. Quality education in NWT referred to the top level education in the NWT.
13. Mentorship was the act of sharing information among teachers where a mentor and mentee interact to build the knowledge base of the latter.
14. Land ownership and access provided the understanding of who owns the land and how the land is used.
15. Teacher virtues and badges referred to how the teachers would like to be known and remembered in their practice.

Interpretation of the Findings

In the Northwest Territories of Canada, all research conducted has to receive permission from Aurora Research Institute as mandated by the government. Before contacting and recruiting the participants for the research, I communicated with the Aurora Research Institute to ensure that I followed the requirements for permission to conduct research in the NWT. I sent an email to the superintendents of the school regions

and to the principals of the schools inviting them to the study. Potential participants contacted me through our email system. Using email and telephone, I set up interviews with all those who expressed interest. Interested participants were assigned to participate in focus group discussions. The criteria used to obtain the focus group membership were years of experience, exposure to administration, the level of education where they worked, and whether they were Aboriginal.

The findings indicated striking characteristics of NWT teachers regarding best practices in culturally responsive teaching. I noted their views about the history of Western education and its success or failure among Indigenous students. In the next sections, I present the research questions and themes that provided answers to the questions.

Research Subquestion 1: In what ways do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perception of the culturally responsive teaching of Indigenous students?

Theme: Encourage Indigenous Practice

This theme reinforced the efficacy of Indigenous practices. Its dimensions included getting Indigenous replacement of teachers, rejoicing with Natives, celebrating Indigenous students' input in their education, sharing views about Indigenous myths, embracing Indigenous power and Native identity, addressing issues where Indigenous consciousness is needed, and advocating for all-Canada Indigenous studies. According to the matrix coding, new educators with 1-5 years of experience advocated for getting an Indigenous replacement more than experienced educators. There were six coding

experiences from new educators compared to either none from the rest or two from respondents with 21-25 years of experience. Four coding references were attributed to responses from 1-5 years and 11-15 years of experience, and four from those with 21-25 years and 26-30 years of experience.

Theme: Evaluation of Natives Should Match Way of Life

The subthemes were cultural behavior idiosyncrasies and school success criteria should be reexamined. According to the matrix coding, non-Indigenous Caucasian participants made more comments under this theme than Indigenous Caucasian participants. Three Indigenous participants indicated their responses as opposed to six non-Indigenous about the existence of cultural behavior idiosyncrasies, which is understandable because people who are Indigenous could get used to the way things are done and may not notice any difference. Although one non-Indigenous Caucasian felt that success criteria for Indigenous education should be reexamined, there were no direct comments by Indigenous Caucasians.

Theme: System Readjustment Needed

Eight coding references were attributed to Northern, small communities regarding the need for a system readjustment. Four comments were from Northern medium and five from Northern, big communities. Two of these views pointed to the need for a change in pedagogical outlook from Northern small, three from Northern medium, and two from Northern big. Although eight coding references could be attributed to Indigenous Caucasian responses, nine could be attributed to non-Indigenous Caucasians regarding

the need for system readjustment, and similar results were found on the need for pedagogical outlook change.

Theme: Achievement Gap

Five coding references were found from participants from Northern, big communities and only one from Northern, medium communities regarding the need for Indigenous student achievement to improve. Two references from Northern, small communities indicated that the North-South educational differences could be reduced slowly. According to the matrix coding from the same small communities, four coding references rejected the existence of an achievement gap and rather chose to call it *difference*.

Narrative from the Responses: A Restorying Process

For a community event such as a successful kill during hunting, a widespread, sustained celebration is expected to follow. This way the Native student will feel supported in his or her success. Feats during hunting such as the first kill are as celebrated and esteemed (Battiste, 2002; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Burnaby, 1996; Cajete, 1994; 2000; Kawagley, 2001). It would be proper to make a big deal of the success and emphasize its curricular connections and implications. This would be in line with the assertion that Indigenous peoples ought to be celebrated and recognized in their languages, cultures, and traditions for the historical value they represent to Canada (Battiste, 2002; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Burnaby, 1996; Cajete, 1994; 2000; Kawagley, 2001).

Some participants thought this would be a genuine opportunity for authentic Indigenous knowledge construction. It would form part of classroom conversation writing and discussion. During the classroom discussion, when an uncomfortable question emerges, participant teachers advocated for directing the students to their family or people more associated with the question, applying Vygotsky's principles of more knowledgeable others (MKO) of Native culture (Learning-theories, 2017). The participants further reported that more dialog among students, teachers, and community elders could be used to answer the question. Participants also pointed to the use of the elders in the school program.

Student mood could be an indicator of how to deal with the child to ensure his or her safety as it tends to indicate what is happening internally, according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The participants reported that if there were a starving student who needed food, there would always be food in the schools for the students to ensure their biological fitness before teaching them (Shanker, 2013). This is an example of the school's attempt to bring home life into school to foster learning in the school-family connection.

In a typical day of a teacher, there is an expectation for structure, which will allow the flow of academic content, social-emotional learning, as well as the Western rhythm of the education system. The teacher will honor both dimensions. The effort to instill structure to enhance learning has been ongoing and intense. The students' work pace and the existing pedagogical barrier come in, and they dictate the reality. Ideas of the EDI and

the extent of being behind in development when they begin schooling tend to come to mind.

Whether as administrators or teachers, from the responses, the educators informed of how they try to maintain an open-door policy and strive to build relationships as they carry out their work as teachers of the Indigenous people. Teachers build connections; generally, this is done through rapprochement, the constant renewing of friendly relationships in which the teacher-student bond is strengthened. Teachers check into things the students may be involved in and provide academic advising. As teachers check in and listen, they provide an extra ear when students are not in a good mood.

Participants reported that the cadet program training and uniform had done wonders for the school system. The cadet program had positively affected behavioral issues and following of routines in the schools. Some of the participants deemed collaboration as an uncertain phenomenon in their schools. Collaboration took various forms including academic and nonacademic such as teacher-teacher, school improvement plans. Other efforts included the discussions under the student success initiative, staff meetings, taking opportunities in the school according to each person's strength, whole-school or one-on-one, professional learning and community resource personnel engagement, all aimed at adding structure to enrich schooling. I obtained a fresh look of collaboration; collaboration as either among teachers or the teachers with their students or the community. Reading from Roschelle and Teasley's (1995) definition of collaboration as "mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem

together,” (as cited in Dillenbourg, Baker, Blaye & O’Malley, 1996, p. 2). Through this perspective, I was beginning to value such school activities more.

The discussion further exposed collaboration as involving the dispelling of isolationism, and silo-ism of personnel and educators while still maintaining our NWT Teachers’ Association professional integrity. Open cooperation of the teachers with the administration engenders good support and builds trust. According to the responses, the groundwork for collaboration to happen in the schools was based on engagement, listening to one another, inquiry learning and respect during co-teaching. Some of the teachers felt there was still work, as there is not much central coordination linking some units in the system. A teacher reported to the school not doing so well when there are administrative vacuums in the system. More diversity and inclusiveness tend to bring out the better of teachers. One teacher recalled a history of teachers working well with their school administration in her career history. She remembered the point of making reflexive teachers; teachers ought to be open-minded. Personal teacher philosophies need to drift to the knowledge that children behave the way they do and act not to drive educators’ crazy.

Our discussion asserts the extent to which students are aware of the achievement gap; I have become more positive that to aim at nothing, nothing will be achieved, not more. I have learned from the discourse of the interviews that if Northern Indigenous students are not aware of the need to double or triple the effort to catch up, by themselves, nothing can be achieved. This agrees with Freire’s principles (2000).

Removing the existing achievement gap entails a careful plan to do so through student effort under the direction of the curricula initiatives run by educators. Several teachers indicated the students are aware of the achievement gap. One teacher expressed that some students are not aware of their performance and think all is well. Advancing their learning daily will reduce the deficit, eventually. For such needed accelerated progress, having the mindset of freshly landed immigrants who foresee the need for a quick change would help the Native student of the NWT. It would, however, be a luxury I am not so sure would be used by a group of people settled in their land.

How do stories of cross-cultural teachers provide insight into their perceptions of best practices and administrative supports in teaching culturally responsively?

Theme: TribalCrit

TribalCrit generated more subthemes as shown in Table 4. From the data, there was an assertion that the government needs to define a strategy for solving the problems of the Indigenous Peoples. It became clearer that the awareness of their state exists. That, teachers have an important part to play in ending lack or absence of knowledge as they are in essence champions of social change. Three coding references were made in the direction of the teacher as dedicated to eliminating the performance gap from *Indigenous Caucasian* sources and sixteen from *non-Indigenous Caucasian*. Two non-Indigenous coding references spoke to refute that Indigenous students are not aware or forgetful of their being; of the proportion described by Heidegger as *the oblivion of being* (*Seinsvergessenheit*) (Lapitan, 2003) in the process of knowledge construction and acquisition relating to the Indigenous student. It also relates with hermeneutic

phenomenology (Van Manen, 1997). Five *non-Indigenous Caucasian* sources point to the naivety of progress in the teaching-learning process.

The subthemes under TribalCrit were *TribalCrit Support*, *TribalCrit Against*. Other subthemes under this major theme included *the government needs to be more definitive in solving the Indigenous Peoples' problems*, *Indigenous students are aware of their state*, *TribalCrit exists*, *the dedication of teacher to ending the lack of knowledge*, *teacher the champion of social change*. Using the query of the matrix coding in NVivo, three coding references were made in the direction of the teacher as dedicated to eliminating the performance gap from *Indigenous Caucasian* sources and sixteen from *non-Indigenous Caucasian*. Two non-Indigenous coding references spoke to refute that Indigenous students are not aware or are *oblivion of being (Seinsvergessenheit)*. Five *non-Indigenous Caucasian* sources point to the naivety of progress in the teaching-learning process.

Theme: The NWT Teacher

The subthemes were derived from this theme as shown in Table 4. Teacher best practices covered how teachers are professionally developed and in-serviced, how teachers interact with the community where the students came from and very rarely how the laws and policies apply to the teacher. Using query of the matrix coding, references to elders in school was most popular among teachers with *1-5 years' experience* accounting for six and those with *11-15 years*, five. The same trend was seen with teacher best practices where *1-5 years* had twenty-nine references and *11-15 years* experience, eleven.

These same groups produced coding references of seven and three respectively about the need for teacher collaboration in teaching the Indigenous student.

Theme: Case for Inclusive Schooling

The theme explored classroom diversity and the extent and coverage of Inclusive Education, and the student supports set up. Using the query of the matrix coding, based on proportions, though only five coding references were obtained from *Indigenous Caucasian* respondents and ten from *non-Indigenous*, I still think that proportionately more Indigenous responses emphasized or made a case for inclusive schooling, adding that there was more need for human and technology resources in the schools. Similar reference coding was made by the same demographics concerning the state of the diversity in the NWT classroom. Clearly, while no coding references can be attributed to *Indigenous Caucasian* respondents about four references were from the non-Indigenous educators.

Theme: Quality Education in NWT

From the coding query, there were five references attributed to this theme from the participant teachers with *1-5 years* northern experience as compared to three *26-30* years experience. I would wonder whether the respondents made their input based on long years of service and their pride for the part they may have played to make quality education in the NWT happen. As well I wonder whether having more new teacher input was the real indicator of the quality of NWT education as they just joined from elsewhere and would be more objective. Whichever case it was, the existence or otherwise of quality education would serve to benefit the Indigenous student.

Theme: Teacher Virtues and Badges

The coding queries returned eight references made about what teachers say about themselves; of these educators, four were from *Northern, small communities*, one from *Northern, medium communities* and three from *Northern, big communities*. Perhaps this only was in line with the purposive sampling, which was used for the study and does not contain any implications.

More Narrative from the Responses: A Restorying Process

One response advocated for all Canada schools to take a unit in Aboriginal culture as a subject or a course. The data pointed to a need for attendance tackling to be recognized as important, and adequate college entry preparation of the students was to be looked into. The picture of funding for education was deemed as uniquely superb. Our discussion pointed to the education renewal and innovation (ERI) framework as an effective spearhead for directing an educational change in NWT. Also, it led to the revelation that teaching in NWT was well shielded from the salary wars of places such as British Columbia. The demographics of the north present a unique experience. Producing a replacement northern contingent of teachers calls for an intense effort that matches the need in the north. Teacher recruitment seems like a revolving door. There is a high teacher turnover resulting in a call for proper teacher education to propel the drive to have northern Indigenous teachers for northern education. The North should continue to work to dwindle the effect and existence of the existing achievement gap.

From the responses of the participants, the essence of culturally responsive teaching has come to be about managing the Indigenous students' participation and

involvement. It is being a part of what would so much affect their future and participation in Canada, basing on the current, drawing from the past into the future in this part of Canada – another chronotope. One teacher mentioned that the bar for the Indigenous students ought to be raised since they can reach it. I learned from the responses that educators should be attracted to, and an effort made to keep them in the NWT. The northern bigger communities have a vibrant diversity, a United Nations. Addressing cultural diversity, the teachers informed that non-Aboriginal students have to be recognized and their aspirations accounted for, also in the class. Parents happen to have different expectations, educated parents, non-Aboriginal have different expectations. The expectation of the Indigenous student depends on their family's expectations.

From the interview data, diversity increases as the community grows. From the teachers' presentations, I learned that for Filipino born students the expectation is just too high. Indigenous students should have open minds about their own and other cultures. They reported how a teacher adapts the teaching strategies to cater to the student depends on age. The child may need a redirection of the teaching -learning strategy and of the evidence of learning. Teachers have to apply universal design for learning (UDL) principles. Teachers ought to stay within language reach and accessible to students. Language education requires improvement. In the classroom, the multiplicity of voices was allowed. Teacher flexibility was advocated for in the instructional process leading possibly to the toning down of traditional school routines. Again from the data, they make students self-regulate and co-regulate to make relaxation during instruction. NWT teachers have been intensely in-serviced to teach in an ecological system with self-

regulation. Community-school relationship continues to be the central focus of Northern teaching. The change could be embraced which involve the outdoors into Indigenous education. Classrooms can be fashioned after the natural environment, sharing circles, welcoming environment. They advocated for a change to be embraced that ensured relationship building and politeness to one another. About the consciousness of adopting evidence-based strategies, differentiation and focus on improving student performance could be vital.

There has to be a mechanism to identify gifted and talented learners in the Indigenous school system. To one teacher participant, some of the learners have low attendance so much so that teachers may not even reach any giftedness in them. The teacher explained that what was done to Native teaching that is unique is curriculum modification in ways not allowed in the South.

In what ways do strategies used by cross-cultural teachers build bridges and create social understanding between Native ways of knowing and a Eurocentric curriculum in classrooms congruent with the education mandate?

Theme: Mentorship

From coding, there were seven coding references from teachers with *1-5 years* experience, none from *6-10 years*, three from *11-15 years*, none from *16-20 years*, three from *21-25 years* and again, none from *26-30 years*. This portrayed a picture of the importance of mentorship to new teachers who are the most beneficiaries to the process of mentorship, which is vital to the success of a teacher in a new place. It may also signify the seriousness of the current turnover situation.

Theme: Eurocentric Diffusionism

The theme had to do with whether spreading Eurocentric influences to other cultural groups such as the Indigenous was acceptable or not. It presented how they saw, if any, an attempt by the Indigenous people to be free of their current plight and their struggles to advance not only their education but their entire cause. I sensed from the data a hint of what was explained as a *hopeless struggle*, at least from one participant, the attempt and desire to become free, by the Natives. Clearly, none of the coding references pointed to Eurocentric Diffusionism as being acceptable by the educators. Could it mean that the teachers acknowledge the cultural uniqueness of their students intentionally and nurture this thought to create conditions for learning (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011) and to foster the full mandate of anti-discrimination in education in their inclusive NWT classrooms? Five references pointing to the Indigenous struggle as almost hopeless could be derived from teachers with experience *1-5 years* compared to only one reference from educators of up to *26-30 years* experience. It could mean that there is something in the way teachers do their work, which makes them grow in their confidence from the day of arrival onwards, indicating that the struggle is not hopeless.

Theme: Issues of Residential Schooling

The subthemes as in Table 5 bordered around graduating from the residential school; the discussion was about the possibility that perhaps the residential schools were well intentioned and exposed the phenomenon as a bona fide part of Native history, as well as a required discussion of ways forward. Five coding references from the matrix coding were attributable to *Northern, small communities* and three from *Northern, big*

communities who allude to the need to seek more understanding of the residential school phenomenon. Two references from northern community hinted that the residential school was perhaps a good intentioned thing that went bad because it was used to subjugate the Indigenous. Three coding references from *Northern, big communities* were presented on the philosophical success, if any, of the graduate from the residential school system.

Theme: Land Ownership and Access

The matrix coding query returned more respondents from the *Northern, big communities* on this theme than small communities showing how sensitive bigger communities interviewees may perhaps be concerned about land history, access, sharing and ownership for and with their Indigenous students. The eight coding references made all came from *female* participants. The theme returned equal references from both Indigenous and *non-Indigenous Caucasian* participants.

Theme: Photo-Elicitations Images of Indigenous Past

The subthemes as in Table 5 pointed to creating an equitable (Saunders & Hill, 2007) educational climate, presenting a snapshot of the reductionist nature of education, the grooming of the students which in itself an indicator of care given to and about the student. The subthemes were also about the regime of obedience as compared to contemporary education as gender separation. There were five coding references on the submissions of photo-elicitation of vital importance from *male*, and three from *female*. I could not directly attribute the array of gender responses to any reason, but from the history and level of cultural responsiveness of the school regions in the NWT, these views on the images of the Indigenous were not necessarily *genderized*.

Theme: Two-World System

The subthemes were *Hardworking committed, 2-worlds Takeaways, Mindful of Other Cultures. Ontology of Flexibility*. These are more attributes of the teachers and the nature of the work they do and how it affirms a two-world system. It also asserts that the students have takeaways that relate to other cultures not their own. Three coding references were about bringing into being flexibility in the teaching of the Indigenous student. These were *non-Indigenous Caucasian* sources. Four sources were on the need to be mindful of the presence of other cultures in the classroom when teaching Indigenous students. These were from *Indigenous Caucasian* sources. Five coding references were made from non-Indigenous sources recognizing that the Indigenous student stands to benefit in a two-world system while two references from *Indigenous Caucasian* sources were of the view that the *two worlds* help the Indigenous student. Six *Indigenous Caucasian* references complemented by four non-Indigenous saw their students as hard working and committed in a two-world.

Further Piecing Together Their Words: A Restorying Process

For some of the teachers, the data indicated that it felt rewarding to teach the Aboriginal student. As Caucasians and ostensibly from the Settler oppressor group, some of the teachers expressed inbuilt gratification from teaching Native students the things related to Native culture. One of them, a language teacher explained that English speakers have the same feeling when they are teaching French. Teaching the Indigenous students at the beginning “felt alone,” “scary,” had a “prove yourself” feeling. My discussion at this stage brought me to my status as a minority; I remembered the same

feeling as indicated by this teacher. I have often had the same feeling of having to prove myself. It has become my *normal*. The same feeling of *proving oneself* makes me come home late. As a cross-cultural minority in the same experience frame as some of the participants, I have had to *work* my students and probably even *overwork* them to the extent that some would misconstrue the effort. From the interview data, it could be deduced that high expectations of students could be misinterpreted. One teacher reported of the feeling of *vested interest* when the Native students are their biological children. The thought coming to me was: Is this not the way all teachers in NWT should feel? I think so, from our discussions, I have come to believe that this fills in any possible *parent gap* for the hours the child spent at school and makes the children want to come to school, more, perhaps even more so with early childhood schooling. Regarding anything they could live differently if they were given the chance a few felt they would do the same, while others reported new strategies.

Reading from the data, there was a feeling of satisfaction by the teachers in their practice. The participants showed their responses that successful mentorship makes teachers better as other teachers pour into their lives. I deduced that mentorship in NWT schools was elaborate and advanced and that inter-provincial cooperation worked the magic when teachers returned from such sessions. Open communication while teaching the Indigenous student was a good means of maintaining the communication lines especially in the way and manner it was extended to Indigenous parents. From the discussion, parents ought to be called by phone when needed, rather than by email.

Teachers felt rewarded in each of their student's successes. One teacher explained that when she met former students, they revisited strong bonds earlier built. It was revealed that the teacher of the Indigenous was the first stop for the student with someone from another worldview. We agreed in the discussion that teachers form a vital cog in the community dynamics. They are the masters of ceremonies at weddings, and are there at the children's baptisms in the communities and do form the other ear to counsel needy students.

To the question of whether there was a need for a *psychology of connectedness* to train and develop a relationship, one teacher responded that it had to be a lived experience and nothing else. The teachers' account revealed that the North schools needed more human connection. When teachers are of Native background, that situation does raise few questions and resistance in the minds of the Indigenous student. It takes a bit of time to become trusted if one was non-Native. It was revealed that the journey to cultural responsiveness was a long, arduous one.

Talking about strategies to reach the Indigenous student the teacher participants pointed out that teachers have high expectations and need to adapt and offer brain breaks, which are helpful during the instructional time. Teachers ought to be humble enough to find out about things they do not know. A few responded that outdoor activities allowed the families of students to come to the school. It was also revealed that food and get-together solve it. Students should not be judged based on family values or culture. Resources needed to make the work successful included planning with the Indigenous families of the daily program of schooling their children. Part of this is dealt with by

Northwest Territories student support plans. There was a call for an improved use of the *Dene Kede*, the *Inuuqatigiit*, and *other Native documents* as these would help with cultural infusion. We also agreed that more community involvement was required.

One teacher called for Canadians to see residential schools, not as a way to manipulate the system but rather develop the mindset that as a phenomenon it impacts everyone in the education system. We had agreed that teaching parenting skills could be helpful. Another teacher also felt that no amount of money spent would change what was seen as an educational predicament. It was learned that in situations of difficulty, male teachers tended to react sensitively to no-go female student issues and made use of resource persons available to their various classrooms. It was not difficult to understand from these discussions that the teacher served as a *détente* worker, cultural negotiator or mediator.

The teachers presented an impression of their attempts at making immense personal effort and sacrifice to cause things to happen in their schools much like the governance of Canada. Throughout the discussion, it was apparent that in the schools there was a need to recognize *polyphony* and *heteroglossia* as people everywhere had different views. The respondents revealed that the Elders in school was a powerful resource for NWT teachers. I understood that teachers do not profess to know it all, are ever learning, possessors of a level of consciousness. The impression was that teachers were sensitive of where they were posted to execute their mandate.

Dialogue appeared very important as revealed by the interview data collected and rightly so as it was seen as the means to travel along the Bakhtinian continuum, from

disagreement to near-*agreement* due to what was termed *communication gap* (Christian, 2015). As we discussed, the respondents led more and more to the fact that the teacher should develop understandings that are enabling in their work. It was further revealed that the teaching of marginalization and residential school had to be handled very sensitively. To some teachers, marginalization was a big deal as their work in the classroom seemed to confirm. The interview led me to suspect the principles of Eurocentric Diffusionism from at least one teacher about the extent of transformation done at the residential school. This teacher also felt a kind of staged identity pre-residential school experience for the boy used on one of the photo-elicitations.

Researcher's Reflection

My question for most of this experience as I collected and analyzed data was: shouldn't our education represent an ontology of flexibility which was equally empowering to be in whatever world we desired? I also reflected whether or not the spirit of sharing as in the *Two row Wampum* would be as beneficial if it were translated to our classroom instruction. As I heard one response from one of the teachers, I thought: does reverse institutional marginalization exist for Whites in the system? Could the liberated somehow become an oppressor of others (Freire, 1970)? Again, considering the boy's pictures from the photo-elicitation (Appendix B.2), towing a simple outlook, the discussions revealed that residential schooling was an intrusive transformative phenomenon. It could be deduced from these interview discussions that the major way to address the marginalization of the student was for teachers to place the student in the center of all the instructional activities.

It could again be inferred from the discussions that the state of low literacy in the communities required rebuilding. From my cross-cultural journey elsewhere in Canada and as the discussions have led, I have come to believe that no matter their origin, students with low English speaking ability need not do lower components of subjects such as Math and Science in their school setup. They should be properly matched to their levels in these subjects according to Hakuta's work (Migdol, 2011) for the evaluation of their education to be fair. Also as we discussed, my thoughts were geared to the understanding that teaching should not be toward trans-cultural conformity, towards conforming to another peoples' culture. One participant had indicated that students have to be taught critical thinking skills.

Limitations of the Study

Has this study done justice to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space that allows inward, outward, backward and forward travel and permits looking at transformations in the practices of these teachers? Would it lead to better transformation possibilities in the situation of the teachers' schools and classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)? I cannot tell.

As mentioned, the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space would allow this narrative inquiry to travel (1) *inward*, using responses of the teachers to examine their pedagogical practices, (2) *outward*, looking back at the field texts and responses, (3) *backward* (4) *forward*, looking at transformations in our practices to better transformative possibilities and situated within a place such as the classroom or school premises (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The choice of a purposive mode for selecting the participants and the focus group members for this research study may have added a limitation. As I looked through the data to make more meaning, I could sense that the result was not applicable to Indigenous people located in other provinces of Canada who may be suffering a similar plight. The restorying tagged the narrative as ongoing and *being made* rather than *ready made* (Cavendish, 2011). Thus as I interacted with the interview data, I “transform[ed] texts derived from others’ (teachers’) texts and discourses” (Cavendish, 2011, p. 116). I needed to write more, to provide a clear understanding of the context of the participants’ lives and make meaning from their experiences as NWT teachers. As a necessity I had to look into a narrative lens and think narratively during the entire process, to understand their presentation. Doing this drew a lot from my experience as a cross-cultural teacher. By so doing, readers may confuse whose story is being told in the process. There was a challenge with the reporting of some of the equally important but less frequently occurring data from the participants. In some cases, data from the focus group members represented facts on their own, though most were congruent with the participant data as I called in Pinnegar and Daynes’ (2007) narrative *data competition*. Much as I sought, there was no way I could detect and discard make-belief responses from the participants due to the Hawthorne effect (Landsberger, 1958). Responses from Sharon may have been influenced by her being the parent of Indigenous children, those from Jason may have come through his stay and brushing with Indigenous ways of knowing. Could we call them unintended consequences of becoming cross-cultural? Some themes may have escaped me in the analysis, and this was not deliberate.

Much as the work presented the core stories for the participants, there was a need for a series of laid down historical events in a narrative chart for the participants so that reordering of experiences in the story could show a much-needed connection to the final outcomes (Kelly & Howie, 2007). I did not do any chart nor did I *emplot* events.

Recommendations for Action

Students should be involved in periodic discussions of the way forward about the way Indigenous student education unfolds. A mentorship group made of teachers and community members could be formed to advise on the infusion of culture into the schools. The thin line between culture and culturally responsive education to ensure academic empowerment could be clarified more. Such action would eliminate any thoughts that culturally responsive teaching is only about foods, dress, drumming and ceremony, likewise any subtle teacher perceptions of low expectation of students.

Education consciousness build-up should be intensely encouraged among the members of the community. I learned that NWT teacher mentorship should be more widespread at the NWTTA level to build capacity, develop capability and sustain the development of the education of the Indigenous student, through an especially prepared cross-cultural teacher.

It should no longer be *parenting* being described only as an issue but stretched into developing a system where NWT parents follow a government approved, department of health and social services sanctioned model of parenting. We can initiate and set up a Canada-wide consciousness and parenting action. Subscribing parents could be provided an incentive to follow so that the Indigenous student could benefit more from Indigenous

culturally responsive education. One pensioned teacher suggested how student attendance could be improved by offering a stipend, which commensurate how many days they have attended school and are seen to be doing well in achieving their set outcomes.

Recommendations for Further Studies

More research could be done on the stories of how Native parents' see the education of their Indigenous children. Such a study could be used to measure how the phenomenon of Western education is viewed in the sensibilities and tolerances of Native parents post-residential school era. Further, a narrative study could be done under the same conceptual framework but with an expanded participant base to involve teachers from other ethnicities other than Indigenous.

A mixed method study could be conducted to measure the attitudes of both Indigenous parents, guardians, and students with regards to the extent to which post-residential school education has been shifted as attributable to the current Eurocentric curriculum. Again, an ethnographic study could be conducted on the perception of a culture-sharing group about how the teachers in the community teach Indigenous students culturally responsively.

Also, a case study could be done on the effects of culturally responsive teaching on a Northern, small; Northern, medium; or Northern, big community. Additionally, a grounded theory study could be conducted to investigate the cultural compatibility of the children's acquired cultural ways learned from educational practices, which ensure the generation of important academic behaviors (Jordan, 1995) in the NWT.

Implications for Social Change

If more of the 5-year old children who come into school in the NWT are behind developmentally compared to the rest of Canada (ECE/EDI, 2013), then only the best effort by teachers will suffice to make the needed change in these children. Further, that needed change seems urgent. From the thoughts derived from the interviews and discussions, I considered the question of how the findings can liberate and create opportunities for both the teachers and their students in constructing knowledge. Additionally, I reflected on how the findings directly relate to the closing of the achievement gap. I thought about how the closing of the achievement gap merged with the general wellbeing and economic state of the Indigenous students' present and future (Richards & Scott, 2009). While it sought to engender the clarity of understanding of the information about the residential schooling, I also looked into how such understanding prepared the Indigenous students to use the past to propel themselves into the future in their current situation, on their land or wherever they chose to be, there we go again: another chronotope.

There was an indication that the teachers were working towards building a more dynamic relationship between home and school cultures on an ongoing basis. From the first-day in the classroom, teachers in the NWT become automatic *de facto* allies of the Native student. The education presented in the NWT as narrated by the NWT teachers interviewed bears a cultural relevance and thus has a potential to academically develop the students, offer a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence and develop a brand of critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The curriculum is carried out in

a lot of ways that can be described as culturally responsive, as tools such as the *Dene Kede*, the *Inuuqatigiit* other Native documents, and local resources are applied for the advancement of the Indigenous student. One or two of the participants tended to see the closing of the achievement gap as not happening in the very distant future. Still, the speed that the NWT teachers are drawing their students toward Native ways of knowing synchronously as offering them critical literacy toward a two-world system tells that it would be sooner rather than later. Not only that, the way education is carried out in the NWT has a potential to close the gap in the UN human development index (Barsh, n. d., UNDP, 1993).

Conclusion and Reflections

How do the cross-cultural teachers do their work? As I attempt to write a conclusion, I am reflecting that all will still not be known completely, the communication gap of Bakhtin (Christian, 2015) shall persist as “nothing is happening now, ...[since] what is happening today cannot be known until tomorrow, but the interpretation given tomorrow of today is indeterminate until the day after tomorrow and so forth.” (Freeman, 2015, p. 24)

As I reflected in the early stages of data collection, I prepared myself on how to frame the questions in ways that will take the respondents away from cultural responsiveness as mere celebrations and simplistic ideas around multiculturalism; this was not very easy to achieve. We explored the “acknowledgment, respect and an understanding of difference and ...complexities” (Ontario Education, 2013, p. 2). During

the interview, I could feel that I was talking mostly to and interacting with personnel who saw culture as a resource for learning (Ontario Education, 2013).

Also, during the time I pondered on my discourse with the participants, I found myself surfing around and receiving answers to already prepared questions, drawing in *institutional, personal* and *instructional* dimensions. Richards, Brown, & Forde (2006) saw these as foundational to the inclusive school culture (Ontario Education, 2013). The findings are a reflection of the voices of their experiences as cross-cultural teachers pursuing their versions of culturally responsive education, in the confines of Bakhtin's continuum of dialogism.

All eleven educators, including the focus group, made a total of one hundred and thirty-nine references on aspects of the NWT teacher conforming to norms, structure and procedure (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) of their teaching of the Indigenous student. Teachers gave evidence through the data that they were able to focus on students' achievement. Through their professional development, mentorship, sharing and outdoor education, teachers, can advance cultural competence both for themselves and the students (Ladson-Billings, 2001). In the entire NWT, classrooms are inclusive. Educators and students travel the hard journey of getting connected. Though more has yet to be achieved about developing an attitude and creating dispositions toward better relevance and choice (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

In some of the schools, it was evident that the teachers can awaken cultural diversity knowledge base through the school-family connection. The use of the *Dene Kede* and other Native documents is a portrayal of this sustained capability by the NWT

to apply culturally relevant curricula (Gay, 2002). The teachers are aware of the presence of culturally and linguistically diverse groups during instruction, especially in the territorial capital where there are other people from elsewhere in the world. Each of the educators interviewed demonstrated the willingness and responsibility as agents to bring about educational change and their schools more responsive to their students. There was a clear showcase of understanding that when students are outdoors or on the land, knowledge construction is enhanced. The teachers all knew about the students and their families in ways that influenced instruction heavily (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

The six participants shared their individual best practices that enable them to be the cross-cultural teachers devoted to their art of teaching culturally responsively. All the educators involved seemed to align their practice to anti-Eurocentric Diffusionism principles and views as teachers. Only once did I reflect contrary to this assertion as I dealt with data from the teachers. The principle of TribalCrit was widely supported by the teachers. Four sources of data interview made thirteen references, which seemed to be against this conceptual framework. The teachers and their students recognized an achievement gap. From three sources, it could be deduced that more conversation was needed though a smaller number fell short of calling it a gap and rather calling it an education difference between the North and elsewhere in Canada.

More respondents advocated for the need to encourage Indigenous practices in instruction as seen in Table 5. We recognized the negative implications of the erstwhile residential schooling system as teachers cited issues on educational equity as being unjust and deplorable, affecting even today's Indigenous student. From the interview data, there

were seven sources of a case being made for the NWT's inclusive schooling policy though one source raised inclusive education's extent and coverage as questionable. It was clear that teachers desired that the evaluation and assessment of Indigenous students were made to match the way of life of the students. Some of the teachers were calling for a system readjustment and pedagogical outlook change in instruction as shown in Table 5. Teachers possessed virtues that would make a culturally responsive education work. The two focus groups, in essence, authenticated the responses of the teacher-participants. The study provided a chance to examine the teachers' points of view through the narrating of their experiences. Insights obtained threw more light on how the cultural discontinuity is managed in the teaching of NWT Indigenous students to enhance educational engagement. The teachers have handled the challenge of making formal education more attractive to Indigenous students.

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[=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=subjective%20meaning&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=TobLgxW6ZXkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=subjective%20meaning&f=false)

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[gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=resistance&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=b0XHUvs_iBkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=resistance&f=false)

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my%20native&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=KIdMAAAAcAAJ&pg=PP8&dq=richard+ii+m
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Appendix A: A Matrix of Relationship Between Interview and Research Questions

Behavior Questions

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. If I was co-teaching with you in your classroom and a student came to report of a hunting success at home, what should I expect to hear from you? | Sub-question 1 |
| 2. I followed you to class and a child brought a question about First Nations culture that you are not comfortable with. What should I expect to hear from you? | Sub-question 2 |
| 3. If I followed you to your class what are the strategies I would see you adopt in reducing the achievement gap among your Indigenous students? | Sub-question 1, 3 |
| 4. How do you know the mood of your students? If I came with you to class and one student approached you about not eating in the morning before coming to school, what should I expect? | Sub-question 1, 3 |

Feeling Questions

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. How does it feel like to teach Indigenous students? | Sub-question 1 |
| 2. What reasons can be attributed for the way you feel? | Sub-question 1, 2 |
| 3. Describe how you felt when you started teaching in an Indigenous community? | Sub-question 1, 3 |

4. What do you do in your classroom in a typical day as a cross-cultural teacher? Sub-question 1, 3

5. Describe how you felt when you started teaching in an Indigenous community. Sub-question 1, 3

Opinion and Values Questions

1. What is your perception of your students' awareness of lag in educational quality between Indigenous schooling and other students in Canada? Sub-question 1

2. Describe the relationship between you and your students. Sub-question 1, 3

3. What resources may be needed to enhance the education for First Nations students? Sub-question 3

4. How do your current experiences of teaching Indigenous students compare with your experience of teaching other Canadians? Sub-question 2, 3

5. How conscious are you, during lesson planning and execution, about adopting strategies that are evidence-based for improving student performance? Sub-question 3

6. What are your views on reducing the achievement gap between Indigenous students and other Canadians? Sub-question 1,3

7. What do you believe should be done about directing Native Sub-question 3

students' individual efforts at lowering the achievement gap?

8. Describe any areas of your NT teaching tour that you have had success. Sub-question 1, 2, 3

9. Describe how best a teacher can teach Indigenous students using Native ways of knowing. Sub-question 1, 2, 3

Sensory Question

1. What are some of your most memorable experiences of teaching of Indigenous students? Sub-question 1, 2, 3

Knowledge Questions

1. How do your current experiences of teaching Indigenous students compare with your experience of teaching other Canadians? Sub-question 1, 2, 3

2. What do you do in your classroom in a typical day as a cross-cultural teacher. Sub-question 1, 2, 3

3. What are some specific things you enjoy doing in your teaching Indigenous students? Sub-question 1, 2, 3

Background/Demographic Questions

1. Describe your early upbringing and significant milestones in your childhood, education and later preparation for your career. Sub-question 1, 2

2. Tell me about your life before deciding to teach in the Northwest Territories. Sub-question 1, 2, 3
3. Describe your career history of teaching non-Aboriginal and Indigenous Canadians. Sub-question 1, 2
4. Explain what got you interested in teaching in the Northwest Territories? Sub-question 1, 2, 3
5. How would you describe some of your early experiences of teaching Indigenous students. Sub-question 1, 2, 3
6. Explain what got you interested in teaching in the Northwest Territories? Sub-question 1, 3

Appendix B.1: An Assembly Hall

Alberni Indian Residential School female students (United Church Archives, 93.049P/433N, Wolf Kutnahorsky, Berkeley Studio, 1960).



Appendix B.2: A Before and After Photo of a Residential School Student

Permission For Using Saskatchewan Provincial Archives Photo



Appendix B.3: A Year Photo of Canadian Students

(with Permission from Marylou Driedger, 2016).










Appendix B.4: An Assembly Hall


Alberni Indian Residential School male students (United Church Archives, 93.049P/432N, Wolf Kutnahorsky, Berkeley Studio, 1960).



Appendix B.5: Permission for Using B.1 and B.2 Photos

2016-269 Amprako, Francis  Inbox x   

 **Main Reference Desk - Regina SA** <mainre...> Feb 26 (5 days ago) ☆  

to me 

Our Case File 2016-269

Dear Francis Amprako:

Thank you for requesting permission to use two of our photographs as part of your dissertation work. To the extent that we have rights in the matter, based on physical ownership of the works in question, we are pleased to authorize the use of the following reproductions:

Photo R-A8223-1 Thomas Moore before admission to the Regina Industrial School.
Photo R-A8223-2 Thomas Moore after admission to the Regina Industrial School.

Please credit the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan as the source of the images and include the photo numbers in the credit lines. Please note that the photos are in the public domain.

Sincerely,

Tim Novak
Reference Archivist
Reference Services Unit

Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan
P.O. Box 1665
Regina SK S4P 3C6
Phone: [306-787-4068](tel:306-787-4068)
Fax: [306-787-1197](tel:306-787-1197)
Email: info.regina@archives.gov.sk.ca

Appendix B.6: Permission for Using Sir John Franklin School Photo

Delete	Reply	Reply All	Forward	Forward Inline	Add Addresses	Close	Move message to folder: ▾
Subject	Re: Permission to use photo						
From	MaryLou Driedger <maryloudriedger@gmail.com>						
Date	Sunday, February 21, 2016 6:25 am						
To	Francis Amprako <amprako@northwestel.net>						

Dear Francis,

How interesting! Yes, please feel free to use the photo. Sir John Franklin School was a public school built in 1921 and named after the Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin. The school was demolished in 1991. I only lived in the neighborhood for one year but it was in a quiet, lovely treed area of Winnipeg with very modest working class homes. I had two best friends on my street whose names I still remember more than fifty years later. Good luck with your dissertation.

MaryLou

Appendix B.7: Permission for Using Sir John Franklin School Photo



March 2, 2016

Francis Amprako
Walden University
P.O. Box 79
Fort Liard NT X0G 0A0

Dear Francis:

I am pleased to grant you permission to use the images cited below in your dissertation with the proposed title: *Teachers' Stories: Culturally Responsive Teaching of Indigenous Students in the Northwest Territories*, to be published in May of 2016.

There is no charge for this right; ensure the image is properly cited. This is a onetime permission; for future usage, please contact the Archives.

1. United Church Archives, Toronto. 93.049P/ 432. [Students in the assembly hall of the Alberni Indian Residential School], [196-?].
2. United Church Archives, Toronto. 93.049P/ 433. [Students in the assembly hall of the Alberni Indian Residential School], [196-?].

Sincerely,

Robin Brunelle
Acting Central Conferences Archivist
The United Church of Canada/L'Eglise Unie du Canada
40 Oak Street
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2C6
rbrunell@united-church.ca

Appendix B.8: Interview Protocol for Focus Group

These questions shall be passed round among the members centered on the central research question:

1. Share some of your personal experiences of teaching Indigenous students.
2. Tell me your perceptions of what is meant by culturally responsive teaching.
3. What strategies should a non-Aboriginal teacher adopt when teaching Indigenous students?

Again, I shall use the following questions to generate more conversation during the focus group discussion:

- Which of these experiences stand out the most for you?
- What are some other issues you remember?
- And then what happened.... that's interesting...
- You may have reasons for saying that... what are they?
- Tell me more...
- Can you share more details about that?

Appendix B9: Skype Interview and Discussion Schedule with Participants and Focus

	Group	
Week	Activity with Participants (90 minutes per interview)	Activity with Focus Group (45 minutes approx. per group discussion)
1	First interview with first teacher participant TP1 First interview with second teacher participant TP2	
2	First interview with third teacher participant TP3	First focus group discussion (Group of 2 and then Group of 3)
3	Second interview with first teacher participant TP1 Second interview with second teacher participant TP2	Second focus group discussion (Group of 2 and then Group of 3)
4	Second interview with third teacher participant TP3	
5	First interview with fourth teacher participant TP4 First interview with fifth teacher participant TP5	
6	First interview with sixth teacher participant TP6	Third and final focus group discussion (Group of 2 and then Group of 3)
7	Second interview with fourth teacher participant TP4 Second interview with fifth teacher participant TP5 Second interview with sixth teacher participant TP6	

Appendix C: A Letter of Invitation to Teacher Participants

FRANCIS K. AMPRAKO

P. O Box 79 Fort Liard, NWT X0G 0A0 Canada Tel: 1 867 770 4447

Email: amprako@northwestel.net

Date:

Hi/Dear [First Name as it appears on FirstClass email list],

My name is Francis. I am a fellow member of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA). I teach in Fort Liard in the DehCho Region.

I am embarking on a study of how non-Aboriginal teachers teach our Indigenous students of the NWT using culturally responsive instructional methods and other related best practices. This is a doctoral research study. In this research, I will need to be interviewing some teachers in our Territory. I would like to talk with you on the phone to both introduce myself and the study.

If this would work, I would find out which time I can contact you and at what phone number. Being an initial telephone contact, I anticipate this may take about three to five minutes of your time.

I will appreciate your response.

Sincerely,

Francis Amprako

Appendix D: A Letter Informing Superintendents about the Study

FRANCIS K. AMPRAKO

P. O Box 79 Fort Liard, NWT X0G 0A0 Canada Tel: 1 867 770 4447

Email: amprako@northwestel.net

Date:

The Superintendent
All School Divisions
Northwest Territories

Dear Madam/Sir,

This letter is to inform you about my Ph.D. research study that seeks to present the stories of how non-Aboriginal cross-cultural teachers of the Northwest Territories manage to teach Indigenous students culturally responsively.

This research will help create an understanding of the experiences of teachers in their contribution toward eradicating high dropout among Indigenous students located in the Northwest Territories. It will provide a way out through their rich experience to inform teachers of best practices in other classrooms.

Also by this letter, I would like to inform you that I shall be contacting teachers on our FirstClass email list or any teachers that you may kindly recommend who would like to be participants in this research to tell their story of how they apply their style and pedagogy to educate the Northwest Territories Indigenous student.

Sincerely,

Francis Amprako

Appendix E: A Screening Form for Participants and Focus Group

PARTICIPANT FORM	
NAME _____	SCHOOL /STATION _____
My Teaching Experience is with Grade(s) _____ I Have Taught in the Same School or Other(s) in the NWT for _____ years.	
My Level of Education (Please Choose One): Bachelor's Degree _____ Master's Degree _____ Other _____ (Please indicate which Degree) _____	
Membership in the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association Yes _____ No _____ (Choose One)	
I am or Have been an Administrator Before. Yes _____ Not Applicable _____ (Choose One)	
I am non-Aboriginal _____	I am Aboriginal _____ (Choose One)

Appendix F: Permission from the Education, Culture and Employment, NWT

Subject: **RE : Another!!**
To: Francis Amprako <amprako@northwestel.net>

Date: 02/08/17 06:43 AM
From: Sophie Call <Sophie_Call@gov.nt.ca>

Hello Francis,

Yes, you may have permission to use the material you sent to me for approval, for non-commercial purposes, understanding that the work will be properly cited.

Note that the data from the last figure stems from use of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) which should be mentioned.

I wish you well in these ambitious academic pursuits,

Sophie

Sophie Call

Director – Health, Wellness and Student Support Division / Directrice – Division de la santé, du bien-être et du soutien aux élèves

Department of Education, Culture and Employment / Ministère de l'Éducation, de la Culture et de la Formation

Government of the Northwest Territories / Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

4501 - 50th Avenue, 3rd floor Lahm Ridge Tower

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Tel. (867) 767-9345, ext.71020