Experienced Aboriginal teachers' narratives in the publicly funded school system.

By

James L. Angus

A Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO

James L. Angus

January 2014

Abstract

The lack of literature related to the perceptions of experienced Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system represented a void in knowledge. Within this Indigenous narrative study the Aboriginal teachers provided their experiences with isolation, overt and covert racism, and perseverance. Advice for improving various aspects of Native language/studies instruction and supporting relationships with colleagues, administrators, parents, and students, in publicly funded schools were also explored.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my family, who believed I could and patiently waited for me to finish this study.
I wish to thank my supervisor Dr. Juanita Epp, as well as Dr. Susan Drake, Dr. Sandra Wolf, Dr. Patrick Brady, Dr. Alex Lawson, and Dr. Susan Faircloth for their bountiful guidance and for sharing their wide range of input and collective wisdoms throughout the dissertation process.
I wish to thank and acknowledge the community in the East End of Thunder-Bay, which always provided me with tremendous support while teaching and taught me the gift of being strong and generous.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .... **II**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .... **II**

CHAPTER ONE: THE STUDY **1**

PREQUEL 1

INTRODUCTION 2

PURPOSE STATEMENT 4

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 4

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **7**

RECOGNIZING THE PAST 7

ADDRESSING THE PAST 12

DEFINITIONS 20

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY **23**

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODS 23

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS 27

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES 27

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS 29

Interview Guide: Session One *29*

Interview Guide: Session Two *30*

Focused Interview Questions *31*

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES 32

REPORTING THE FINDINGS 34

ETHICS 35

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS 36

INTERNAL VERIFICATION 37

EXTERNAL VERIFICATION 37

CHAPTER 4: THE NARRATIVE 39

ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER (PART 1) 39

INTRODUCTION 42

THE JOURNEY 43

ELEMENTS OF THE JOURNEY 58

Experiences with Colleagues........58

Experience with Administrators........63

Experiences with Aboriginal students........ 70

Experience: Understanding Aboriginal Parents........ 74

Experience: Self-identification 78

CHAPTER 5: RESPONDING TO RACISM 81

ROLE OF RESEARCHER (PART 2) 82

ENCOUNTERS WITH RACISM 86

"The Pattern" 87

Overt Racism 89

Covert Racism 97

EXPERIENCED RESPONSES TO RACISM........109

Strategies for Dealing with Racism........111

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE........119

Smooth Entry 120

Maintaining Relationships ... *122*

Building capacity in the Native language program ... *123*

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY ... 128

FINDINGS ... 130

THE FINDINGS AS BLUEPRINTS ... 133

A LETTER FROM ABORIGINAL TEACHERS IN THE PUBLICLY FUNDED SYSTEM FOR THOSE TO COME ... 134

A LETTER FROM THE EXPERIENCED ABORIGINAL TEACHERS TO THE PUBLICLY FUNDED SCHOOL SYSTEM ... 137

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ... 141

FINAL COMMENTS ... 142

REFERENCES ... **143**

APPENDIX A ... 167

Chapter One: The Study

Prequel

My original plan had been to record the impact of competitive, cooperative, and individualistic learning structures amongst elementary students in the publicly funded school system. That study was delayed when a more important lead horse started pulling my research cart and it would not leave until I wrote about it.

Although born out of an interest in cooperative learning, this research developed amidst the backdrop of the "Truth and Reconciliation" hearings, but prior to the "Idle No More" movement. This study is about the reality that I have come to recognize. It is not an indictment or hearing, but it has been healing. My professional teaching narrative based on my experiences as a teacher in the publicly funded school system (PFSS) details my growing understanding of possible subaltern motivations behind some incidents and my growing academic understanding of them. Thus, my PhD courses, teaching experiences, my own Aboriginal heritage, and the political events being played out on the national stage, contributed to the development of this research.

I had been teaching for many years when I began to accept that it was possible that my encounters with new and unfamiliar people on school staffs had been more of a challenge than necessary. I began to wonder if my encounters with colleagues, administrators, parents, and students, as a teacher in the publicly funded system, were similar to the experiences of others with an Aboriginal heritage. Once I had asked the question I was able to gather the experiences and reflections of other experienced Aboriginal teachers. I then fleshed out my own story as a

part of this multivalent Indigenous narrative research. Through the process, I have resolved the dissonance between my professional experiences and my academic understandings of those experiences and remain encouraged. I present this story with respect and responsibility.

Introduction

Aboriginal educators in the publicly funded school system (PFSS) are a critical link to the improvement of achievement and retention of Aboriginal students (Aboriginal Education Office/Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a; Archibald, 1999; Archibald, Pidgeon, Janvier, Commodore, & McCormick, 2002; Battiste, 1998; Friedel, 2009; Kirkness, 1999a; Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, 1996; St. Denis, 2010; Van Ingen & Halas, 2006). These teachers afford Aboriginal students with the space in which to complete their educational programming. Their presence within the publicly funded school system provides educational relevance for both Aboriginal and Canadian students within their classrooms.

In spite of their importance to change in the fortunes of Aboriginal students, Aboriginal teachers currently represent a minute percent of the total teaching population (Archibald, 1999; Archibald et al., 2002; Cherubini, 2008; Kirkness, 1999a). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) has stated that one of its goals is to encourage more First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) people to enter into the teaching profession. Although the need for change and the means by which to achieve change has been identified the educational achievement of Aboriginal people globally remains significantly less than that of non-Aboriginal people (Aboriginal Educational Office/Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, 2007b; Brade, Duncan, & Sokal, 2003; Grande, 2008a; Jones, 2003; Kanu, 2002; Ledoux, 2006; RCAP, 1996; Redwing-Saunders & Hill, 2007; Robertson, 2003; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

Teachers of Aboriginal descent may choose to teach outside of the publicly funded system. The experiences of those who stay in the profession within the publicly funded school system may differ somewhat from the experiences of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The research question asked within this research is this: "What are the lived experiences of Aboriginal educators in the publicly funded school system?" This research on experienced Aboriginal teachers who have negotiated boundaries and relationships within the public system may provide unique data to the Ontario Ministry of Education, school boards, and educational decision and policy makers that will allow them to go beyond recording of best practices or simply moving from practice to practice.

In this research I integrate narrative inquiry (Andrews, 2008; Atkinson, 2007; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin 1990, 2006; Josselson, 2007; Phoenix, 2008; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007) and Indigenous research methods (Absolon, 2008; Absolon & Willett, 2004; Battiste, 2008b; Bishop, 1998, 2005; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Graveline, 2000; Hermes, 1998; Menzies, 2001; Meyer, 2008; Piquemal, 2001; Smith, 1999, 2005b; Steinhauer, 2001, 2002; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2008) and I situate myself among other Aboriginal educators to record and interpret their experiences both descriptively and conceptually. This was done to provide the background necessary to move toward ensuring the retention and survival of the best in practitioners. The narrative has been constructed with two layers in order to give a holistic accounting of the participants' words, (the meaning they ascribe to their experiences in the public system), and to respectfully frame the extensive unintentional consequences of the results. The first driver details a collective evolution of the personal awareness and understanding of situations and occurrences as perceived by these Aboriginal teachers. The second driver details

context and circumstances for Aboriginal teachers in the public school system in their words and on their terms.

Purpose Statement

Narrative inquiry attempts to uncover the meaning of experience and critical events in the lives of participants (Andrews, 2008; Benham, 2007; Bruner, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Lyons, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The purpose of this study was to explore Aboriginal educators' professional narratives to obtain a descriptive understanding of the essence of what it means to be an Aboriginal educator in the mainstream schooling system. Specifically, this dissertation describes the lived experiences of 6 Aboriginal educators and uses their experiences to provide a detailed description of what and how it was experienced. Moreover, I am interested in the perceptions of Aboriginal educators in the publicly funded school system surrounding their experiences of racism and what form it takes. This investigation can eventually yield valuable insight into the lived professional experiences of Aboriginal teachers, and it will allow for, and generate discussion on, improving the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personnel within schools.

Significance of the Study

The Ontario Ministry of Education's initiatives (OME, 2009, 2012, 2013) to (a) introduce, establish, and sustain Aboriginal culture in the content of what is taught, (b) represent culturally relevant pedagogy in the processes used and (c) report on Aboriginal data collected in the publicly funded schools and classrooms is all part of current conversation, continued scholarship, and an expanding literature base provincially and elsewhere (Aboriginal Education Office/Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a; Agbo, 2002a, 2002b, 2005; Auger & Faries, 2005;

Battiste, 2008b; Baxter, 2006; Bell, 2004; Charters-Voght, 1999; Curwen-Doige, 2003; Ignas, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education 2008; Osborne, 1996; Pewewardy, 2002; Powers, Potthoff, Bearinger, & Resnick, 2003; Toulouse, 2008, 2013; Western Canadian Protocol, 2000). Many have spoken of the need for improvement in the educational experiences of Aboriginal students in the mainstream school systems. Often this conversation includes the identification of best practices and the identification of strategies intended to promote future educational success for Aboriginal students (Archibald, 1995; Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987; Bazylak, 2002; Burns, 2000; Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2000; Demmert, McCardle, & Leos, 2006; Grande, 2008b; Harris, 2006; Niles, Byers, & Krueger, 2007; St. Denis, 2007; Swisher, 1990).

These best practices and strategies invariably include a call for heightened Aboriginal profiles, practices, content, culture and acknowledged presence (self-identification). Additionally, the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework (2007a) as well as The Ontario Ministry of Education's progress reports on the implementation of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework (2009, 2012, 2013) also contribute to increased attention and awareness of the Aboriginal focus in the PFSS. The main goals forwarded by the OME remain consistent and are restated as: "…by the year 2016, to improve achievement of Aboriginal students and to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students" (2013, p. 6).

The intention is to promote greater awareness of Aboriginal perspectives regardless of the enrollment level of Aboriginal students in a particular school. However, as "Aboriginal" initiatives are highlighted, the Aboriginal teachers in this study reported facing counter-resistance from the dominant educational stakeholders. Similarly, the ubiquitous coverage of Aboriginal affairs has often resulted in an increase in both verbal and covert racial responses.

The Aboriginal educators in this study have experienced both of these interconnected dynamics. It is part of the experience of Aboriginal educators and it is paramount that the Aboriginal teachers' voices be added into the data corpus.

The importance of establishing an understanding of racism is a part of the Aboriginal teacher's experience. As articulated by Battiste (2008a): "The initial educational struggle for Indigenous educators, then, is to sensitize the Eurocentric consciousness in general and educators in particular to the colonial and neocolonial practices that continue to marginalize and racialize Indigenous students" (p. 87). This initiative to educate and define racism and racialization within the public system is intended to interrupt the current model of education that projects the wants and needs of the prevailing dominant cultural structures. If the old modus operandi is able to persist unchallenged or remains unidentified as part of the hidden curriculum, then it will continue to reproduce itself, and continue to deny alternative sources of knowledge construction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Freire, 1970; Lomawaima, 1994; McLaren, 2003; Restoule, 2000; Wilson & Wilson, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Overt instances of racism can be quickly identified and recognized but covert instances are more sophisticated and less easily identified. Both types of racism are reported within the Aboriginal teachers' narratives in this study even though school board policies of most jurisdictions make specific reference to the provision of a racism-free working environment.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This literature review includes two separate topics that converge in the current study. The first is the context of Aboriginal Education in Canada and specifically in Ontario. The second is an explication of the policies and interventions, which have been put into place to counteract the negative impact of past practices. Both the past practices and the current interventions form part of the context of the lived experiences of Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school systems.

Recognizing the Past

In order to provide a better understanding of some of the events, conversations, and data contained in this study, and to prepare for the future direction of Aboriginal education within the publicly funded school system, it is necessary to present a brief historical record of First Nations' education. In doing so, we will acknowledge the seminal sources in the field of Aboriginal education and orient Aboriginal education and those responsible for educating Aboriginal students towards a stronger and more positive sustainable capacity within the publicly funded school system.

Pre-contact. The First Nations inhabiting Turtle Island (North America) were able to thrive in the environment and established an efficient system for transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Friesen & Friesen, 2002; Hampton, 1995; Hookimaw-Witt, 1998). This education has been described as a community-based knowledge in coordination with the surrounding environment (Agbo, 2005; Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986, 1987; Burns, 2000; Kirkness, 1998a, 1998b; Matthew, 1991). Children learned holistically by intentionally placing emphasis on observation and modeling experience in a

cooperative environment, that is, they were not subjected to competition, marks, prescribed levels of advancement, and spotlighting individual achievement (Archibald, 1995; Armstrong, 1987; Friesen & Friesen, 2002; Goulet, 2001; Gresko, 1986; Harris, 2006; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

Prior to contact with European settlers, First Nation parents and elders of the community were always involved and in control of the education of their children. It was truly a time in Aboriginal education when parents and elders had complete and non-confounded jurisdiction over the education of their children (Auger & Faries, 2005; Henderson, 1995). Contact with European ideals, education, technology, and religious belief is said to have diminished First Nations identities, cultural independence, self-reliance, and most critical to understanding this section, all but destroyed First Nations parental jurisdiction and educational guidance of their children (Agbo, 2005; Battiste 1995; Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002; Henderson, 2000).

Contact and separation. Early in the 17th century the plan to educate the Indigenous people was to separate the Nations from their traditions and spiritual beliefs and to segregate them from the rest of the incoming settler population. "European missionaries came to establish schools for Indians. It was believed that this would be the best method of civilizing the Natives" (Kirkness, 1999b, p. 15). It was the plan of the missionaries and civil servants to not only "civilize" but to "Christianize" Aboriginal people within these Day, Mission, or Industrial schools and re-orient their worldview so that they might be able to blend in (via their newly acquired religion) with the established and arriving Euro-population (Gardner, 1986).

At confederation, the creation of Canada through the British North America Act (BNA) of 1867, Section 91(24) of that act declared that the welfare of the "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" became the responsibility of the federal government (Kirkness, 1998a; Pauls, 1984;

Perley, 1993). The Act created the power and quasi-legal justification for the government to direct Indian affairs and shape the education of Indigenous peoples. It is the position of scholars and increasingly conscious Aboriginal population that the BNA Act and the Indian Act of 1876, which later determined who qualifies as an Indian, and additionally "…determines where they live, what education they get, how they will earn a living, what land they will own, and who will inherit their earthly possessions when they die" (Greymorning, 2000, p. 189) is the organized legislative effort to legally and cognitively colonize the original population and their descendants in order to create the conditions for further exploitation of the land and unchallenged access to economic prosperity the lands provided. According to Goulet (2001) colonization is "…an oppressive system that strives to subjugate a group of people to keep them from having equitable access to the economic opportunities and social privileges enjoyed and taken for granted by the members of the colonizing group" (p. 76).

Residential schools. The education of the First Nations students became directed by church. The churches' methods and access to Indian children were reinforced by government legislation. This action created a dark epoch in Canadian history. The residential school (RS) experience continues to have ramifications as it pertains to understanding Aboriginal parents in the modern day. It has established that the formal (institutional) schooling of Indian children began with various religious organizations in Day or Mission schools during the start of the 17th century amidst the battle for both souls to fashion and furs to tan. After substantial "Francization" it was projected that "Native peoples were to enter the French social order at the lowest rung of the ladder, that is, as the equivalents of peasants" (Jaenen, 1986, p. 47). Egerton Ryerson was a key figure involved with the early residential schooling structure. He advocated for a system of boarding schools that would provide training for First Nation children (Agbo,

2005; Wotherspoon & Satzewich, 1993). "In 1849, the first residential school for Native Canadians was established" (James, 2001, p. 26). According to Young-Ing (1988) "Industrial schools were eventually replaced by residential schools, by means of an Order In Council which passed in 1892" (p. 29). This new combined educational effort between church and state to educate Indians became known collectively as the Residential School experience. It was this model that became "the major pattern of education for First Nations children in Canada" (Agbo, 2005, p. 290).

The nature of the curriculum in these residential schools was: "limited to a basic education combined with half day practical training in agriculture, the crafts, or household duties in order to prepare pupils for their expected future existence on the lower fringes of the dominant society" (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986, p. 6). The purpose forwarded by the Shingwauk Residential School was openly stated: "to wean our boys altogether from their old savage life; to instill into them the civilized tastes, to teach them English thoroughly, to encourage their intercourse with white people, and in fact to make Canadians of them" (Algoma Missionary News, 1877, p. 35). According to Virag (2005) "by 1900, there were 64 residential schools in Canada… it is estimated that as many as 150,000 Native children attended residential schools since the 1930s" (pp. 19-20). Additionally, Friesen & Friesen (2002) forwarded a defined accounting of residential schools based on the following figures:

> In 1894 the government was funding 45 residential schools, 11 of them in British Columbia. By 1923 there were 71 such schools, and at their peak in the 1930s there were as many as 80 of them in operation. Sixty-five of these schools were located west of Ontario. The Roman Catholic Church ran 44 schools, the Anglican ran 21, the United Church of Canada ran 10, and the Presbyterians ran two. Other, less

well–known denominations ran the remaining three schools (pp. 104–105).

It has been widely reported that there were minimal alternatives to attendance and this counter cultural education mode caused immediate and lingering damage to the First Nations child, their family, future generations, and parenting (Brigham & Taylor, 2006; Curwen-Doige, 2001; Ing, 1991; Trevithick, 1998; Young-Ing, 1988). Coates (1986) made reference to the trappings of the Family Allowance Act of 1944: “if mothers wished to receive the subsidy, their children had to be in regular attendance... the programme forced difficult choices between Native mobility and the sedentary life style necessary to collect the sizable monthly payment” (p. 145).

In addition to this corruption of the First Nations family unit, parental jurisdiction, and access to holistic communal learning, the residential schools also had an even darker devastating legacy of psychological damage that is still being felt today. To pay respect to the departed and to the former residential school students that continue to endure with their recollections of the experience, the covert and overt violation in the form of cultural annihilation by any means necessary should not be understated. Today, the extent of the abuse is becoming more evident. Not only were siblings separated, there was also a focus on the suppression of all languages other than English, and any attempt to revert or cling to a First Nations attitude or spontaneous use of the Native tongue was confronted with punishment (Gresko, 1986; Knockwood, 1992; Virag, 2005).

This forced separation from the foundation of family resulted in the loss of language, loss of tradition, loss of trust, and for some, the loss of self. “The humiliation destroyed the self esteem of the children and their understanding of family and community” (Curwen-Doige, 2001, p. 122). A return to the community did not supply any comfort, affirmation, or relief from the confusion: “We were allowed to see our parents two months out of the year and allowed to visit

our brothers and sisters for one day out of the same year. We didn't know them then and we didn't know them now" (Kirkness, 1998a, p. 100). Residential schools were designed purposefully to dismantle and replace the Indian child's connection to their parents and Aboriginal inheritance (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Virag, 2005). Given the evidence, residential schools were a historical wrong and a "disastrous mistake" (Fenwick, 2001, p. 18).

Assimilation. After a period of segregation, the goal of schooling moved toward a policy of assimilation or creating the means necessary for Aboriginal peoples to eventually blend in with the dominant and competitive settler society (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Curwen-Doige, 2001; Lomawaima, 1994; Ormiston, 2002; Wotherspoon & Satzewich, 1993). The departure from the plan of segregation and return to enforcing paternalistic and assimilative policy was an unproductive cycle that still lingers and is a variable to contend with when attempting to advance a First Nations' ethos into the public schooling framework. Evidence of this resistance does not fall within the scope of this study, however it will be emphasized that forcing a Nation to transform via acculturation or accommodation, which is now being referred to as "code switching" is counter diplomacy and remains a recipe for future confrontation or continued lack of full participation in educational processes.

Addressing The Past

It is within this context, described above and further exposed by the current "truth and reconciliation" hearings (the Canadian commission gathering the detailed testimonials from the remaining residential school attendees), as well as Prime Minister Harper's formal apology on behalf of the Canadian government for their participation in the historic wrong committed against generations of Aboriginal people in attendance at residential schools (08/06/11 4:46EST),

that the participants of this study related to the parents of the children they taught or encountered in the public school setting. Many of these Aboriginal parents and grandparents have had a variety of negative experiences with schooling that may not be widely known amongst the settler population.

Understanding of the effects of the residential school experience would contribute to answering many of the questions that seem to puzzle current educators. Questions such as: Why does statistical evidence and analysis indicate higher drop out rates and under representation of graduates for Aboriginal people? Do negative school experiences contribute to a cultural disconnect or dissonance and lead to a myriad of problems such as poor attendance, lower academic achievement, a persistent learning gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students at every grade level and guarded engagement with the programs offered in the publicly funded school system? Negative school experiences have obvious repercussions with less than obvious means for reparation.

Attempts to counter the legacy of forced separation and assimilation focus on several remedies. Some advocate for increasing Aboriginal content and practices in the classroom. This approach is often coupled with a policy of self identification to encourage students of Aboriginal heritage to make that heritage known to the larger school community which in turn requires strong anti-racist policies intended to prevent racist backlash. All of these carry their own complexities and have added to increased critical consciousness among Aboriginal scholars, teachers, students and communities. These culturally appropriate practices, the self-identification mandate, the protective anti-racist policies, and the increased critical consciousness all frame the context for the current study.

Advocated teaching and learning strategies. Many researchers believe that the process of rekindling and sustaining First Nations' culture, identity, and subsequently academic gains begins with reinforcing the language common to a particular First Nations community (Antone, 2003; Battiste, 1998; Corson, 1998; Ermine, 1995; Gamlin, 2003; Greymorning, 2000; Kirkness, 1998b; National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; Thies, 1987). Supporting, sustaining, and expanding the Native language program within the public system that Aboriginal students are attending is a beginning.

Some commentary has focused on public schooling itself as a process that prevents Aboriginal students from embracing their own academic and cultural growth (Brade, Duncan, Sokal, 2003; Greenwood, 2006; Kirkness, 1992; Rasmussen, Baydala, & Sherman, 2004; RCAP, 1996; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003; Vickers, 2002). In order to deconstruct barriers to one's culture or to get "outside the colonizers cage" (McCaslin & Breton, 2008) would require an education that fosters critical thinking and affirms the ability to recognize potential structures of oppression. An education that shows respect for a student's culture as evidenced by the language, symbols, the study of historic figures, demonstrating an openness to diversity, and in supporting instances of self-determination would significantly improve academic outcomes in the publicly funded schooling system (Beckford & Nahdee, 2011; Bell, 2004; Hamme, 1996; Ledoux, 2006; Maina, 1997; McCaleb, 1994; McMahon, 2003; Toulouse, 2013).

There are many advocates for cooperative learning, elder involvement, visual representations, oral approaches, current life examples of success, and hands on applications for teaching Aboriginal students (Barman et al., 1987; Barnhardt, 1991; Bazylak, 2002; Collier, 1993; Forman, 1991; Kanu, 2002; Ledoux, 2006; Pewewardy, 2002; Rasmussen et al., 2004; Sawyer, 1991; Sparks, 2000).

Some have suggested that a less competitive model would result in lessening the culture of silence associated with Aboriginal children (Hamme, 1996; Hampton, 1995; Plank, 1994; Simmons & Barrineau, 1994). “The use of silence in the classroom among Native children might be because the students put themselves above their classmates and that native culture involves more listening and watching than answering questions” (Rasmussen, Baydala, & Sherman, 2004, p. 330). Silence could also be a means to express “the desire for adequate time to reflect and observe” and “explains why many First Nations students do not respond verbally to classroom questions which demand instant answers” (Maina, 1997, p. 305). Stairs (1995) made a relevant point when she stated: “It is as if we have been able to recognize that there are cultural differences in what people learn, but not in how they learn” (p. 139).

There are, however, numerous cautions against adopting a generalized race–based learning style; it can perpetuate negative stereotypes that all Aboriginal people are deficit, as opposed to the system of instruction being culturally deficient (Hodgson-Smith, 2000; Lomawaima, 2008; Redwing-Saunders & Hill, 2007). Underlying the issues in Aboriginal education and perhaps more at the heart of the matter is Archibald’s (1995) assessment. Archibald argues that advancing a First Nations child’s education means providing cultural relevance and a rational for the child to accept school.

Identification of an Aboriginal presence. Several provincial ministries of education encourage local school boards to heighten their focus on addressing the needs of the growing Aboriginal student populations in publicly funded schools (Aboriginal Education Office, 2007a, 2007b; Alberta learning, 2002; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009; Western Canadian protocol, 2000) and encourage boards of education to collect data pertaining to the Aboriginal voluntary self-identification initiative.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education in Ontario offered funding to the Northern Ontario Education Leadership (NOEL) to participate in an Aboriginal students self-identification pilot project. By December 2003, six schools in Northwestern Ontario had developed self-identification policies, but only for Aboriginal students (Aboriginal Education Office/Ministry of Education, 2007b). It is significant to note that Aboriginal students enrolled in Federally funded schools (FFS) are not represented in this self-identification data sample.

By 2007, fewer than 10 School Boards in Ontario had established the option for students to voluntary self-identify their Aboriginal status. By 2009, 34 school boards reported 8,684 identifications. As of October 2012 the Ontario Ministry of Education reported that 44% of 64,000 Aboriginal students have voluntarily identified their Aboriginal status (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). In order to arrive at this percentage the Ministry had to account for students being educated apart from within the publicly funded school system. By using Aboriginal Affairs data and comparing it to the nominal roll for 2011-2012 collected by the Ontario Student Information System (OnSIS) and in coordination with Statistics Canada National Household Survey (2011) which reported 78,000 school-aged Aboriginal children, it was revealed that approximately 14, 000 students were being educated on the First Nations leaving a total of approximately 64,000 Aboriginal children located in the PFSS. Evidently, the volume of Aboriginal students choosing to voluntarily self-identify their status within the PFSS is steadily growing and self-identification shows an upward trend since the launch of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework (2007a). As of April 2013, the Ministry reported that 76 School Boards have developed self-identification procedures (OME, 2013).

There are many interconnected issues surrounding the establishment and continued practice of voluntary Aboriginal self-identification. Whether it is intentional or not, this

initiative, collecting data in this manner, contributes to the construction of a binary relationship. Wilson (2007) would call situations like this "…an us and them dichotomy" (p. 194). These concerns are further explored as a part of the current study.

Protective policies. Freedom from harassment, and discrimination statements are ubiquitous in school policies in Ontario. For example "Ontario law requires that every employee has the right to freedom from harassment" (e.g., Superior Greenstone District School Board, Policy 700). Racism falls under the category of vexatious language with harassment definitions provided by the Ontario Human Rights Code or the Occupation Health and Safety Act as "comments or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcomed" (i.e., Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Policy 6.69.1; Thames Valley District School Board, Policy 3004). Most School Boards provide details of "Antiracism and ethno-cultural equity policy." Some Boards have developed a committee that reports data to the Director of Education annually (The London District Catholic School Board) and provide details of the complaint resolution process (York Catholic District School Board) or include formal complaint forms.

The development of, and access to, policies and procedures as they pertain to anti-racism and ethno-cultural equity are not consistent. The computer provides access to 83 school board policies and procedures. All Ontario school boards' websites and subsequent policy particulars can be found at: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/sbinfo/boardList.html and 83 of them contain policies and procedures. However, some school board websites are easier to navigate than others. When policies and procedures appear on the home page rather than under a tab, heading, or button (e.g., About us, Board, Our Board) user friendly accessibility is increased but many boards list their policies on files that have to be sifted through. Some website designs show separation

between policies and procedures. When policies and procedures are presented side by side, or can be accessed simultaneously, comprehension and navigation of the regulation is improved. Time limits on reporting complaints are also not uniform. Some boards (Toronto Catholic District School Board, Lambton Kent District School Board, and Upper Canada District School Board) indicate that complaints should or must be registered or filed within a six month time frame, others say it should be within ten months (Keewatin-Patricia District School Board) or one year (Nipissing Parry Sound Catholic District School Board), or within 20 days (Thunder Bay Catholic). However, most indicate that extensions are possible "…at the discretion of the board" (TCDSB) "by consulting the principal, supervisor, or superintendent" if there are "…extenuating circumstances and "nothing precludes the complainant from initiating a complaint after the timeline set out in this policy" (Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board Policy 820). There is a lack of consistency in anti-racist education and ethno-cultural policies among school boards in Ontario.

Although progress is being made in disclosing and accessing human rights and antiracism policy data from School Boards in Ontario, it is within the individual schools where the weakest link lies. Few systems have strong mechanisms in place and few have clearly communicated plans to inform all staff (teaching and non-teaching) of what constitutes vexatious language. Many do not provide consistent on-going training or emphasize procedures to report human rights infractions at the school level. Several school board policies indicated that the policy related to harassment and awareness of what that entails, must be posted in the workplace (Huron-Superior Catholic District School; Halton Catholic District School Board) or that it is incumbent on the principal of the school to demonstrate yearly the "duty to communicate" the workplace harassment policy to staff (Renfrew County Catholic District School Board). This

patchwork of policy and accessibility to the policy creates a situation in which the critical consciousness of the individual must be elevated before they become aware of racism and makes it unlikely that people will actively pursue strategies to prevent racism.

Critical Consciousness. The educational outcomes for Aboriginal students are compromised by a multiple of intervening variables such as transition and travel, environmental concerns, diminished self-esteem, poverty, regularity attendance of Aboriginal youth, and lack of visible, active, and properly supported cultural role models. Teachers with an Aboriginal background find themselves in the forefront of complex reparation attempts, and, as we see within their stories, this position is often solitary and unsupported one.

Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system may be unaware of their own marginalization within the system, especially if they are isolated from others and do not realize that the harassment or oversight they are experiencing is not the norm and may be related to the racialized structure of the institution. With time and the emergence of a critical consciousness, an Aboriginal teacher may be able to will a change in their positioning within the school, through mobilization of their accumulated knowledge in the presence of colleagues. Addressing their own circumstances via courageous conversations (the open act of sharing all varieties of stories, the good and bad) is necessary to empower Aboriginal teachers toward decolonization of their integral selves. Then, and only then, they can work toward effectively addressing the needs of the Aboriginal children and their peers.

The development of a critical consciousness is an important milestone in the decolonization process (Battiste, 1998, 2008a; Lateroute, 2007; McCaslin & Breton, 2008; Nadeau & Young, 2006). A critical consciousness differs from awareness in that it is rooted in action. Awareness is having the ability to decode a message, perhaps in the moment, but more

than likely later, resulting in little or no action and therefore little effect. A critical consciousness it is not only about receiving and hearing a message but it is also about having the wherewithal to send one back without delays. A critical consciousness is the ability to decode a comment in the moment and respond with counter opinions, and feelings and/or objections. A critical consciousness is about knowing yourself intimately and understanding how you may be deterred or discouraged based on your attributes and preparing a response in anticipation of receiving negative or biased commentary. A critical consciousness is the cure to enduring prolonged mind games and enduring dissonance. It is the pathway to establish respectful boundaries with others through the action of courageously projecting what is tolerable and what is not acceptable as it pertains to your own sense of self and wellbeing.

Definitions

An inquiry of this nature requires clarity of key definitions. For the purpose of data collection, while seeking participants, and during discussions with them, these terms were defined as follows:

Aboriginal Educator: The Aboriginal educator can be defined as a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit person. However, on some First Nation jurisdictions, the term “Aboriginal” continues to be contentious (Toulouse, 2013). In this study, the term Aboriginal educator will include educators of Aboriginal ancestry that have chosen to disclose and self identify in accordance with the Aboriginal Education Office/Ontario Ministry of Education’s “Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework” (2007a) which states Aboriginal people are:

> The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35 (2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, which states: ‘In this Act, Aboriginal peoples of Canada

includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.' These separate groups have unique heritages, languages, and cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Their common link is their Indigenous ancestry. (p. 36)

In accordance with the definition above, I have consciously chosen to use the term Aboriginal and it has not caused any offense. Later in the study, First Nations, First Nations Canadian, Native, and Indigenous were also used based on the voice and self-identification of individual participants.

Experienced classroom teachers: Experienced Aboriginal classroom teachers are teachers who have completed the probationary teaching period and have amassed in total five or more years of consecutive experience as a classroom teacher in the publicly funded school system.

Race: "Currently defined as a biologically based social construct involving the classifications of persons (typology) into hierarchical categories (taxonomy) on the basis of real or imagined characteristics. Race has neither empirical validity nor scientific value; nevertheless, people continue to believe it does and act accordingly with terrifying real effects, thus reinforcing the sociological axiom that phenomena do not have to be real to be real in their consequences" (Fleras, 2012, p. 389).

Racialism/Racism: a) "a doctrine or feeling of racial differences or antagonisms, especially with reference to supposed racial superiority, inferiority, or purity, racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination" b) "The program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation, persecution, and domination, based on racialism" (Webster's Dictionary, 1960, p. 1485). c) "A hostile attitude or behavior to members of other races based on a belief in the innate superiority of one's own race" (Collins Canadian English Dictionary, 2011, p. 699). d) "Prejudice against a

person or group because of difference of race or of cultural or ethnic background; belief in the superiority of a particular race" (Nelson Gage Canadian Dictionary, 2013, p. 707). e) "Racism is a complex set of feelings, behaviours, and rationalizations that deny the wisdom of the sensibility of respectfulness. Racism is not concerned with the promotion of right relations or harmony but becomes an instrument to justify disrespectful, harmful, and oppressive actions rendered by force or by more gentle methods like legislation" (Calliou, 1995, p. 68).

Heterogeneous Racism: Cultural identity is challenged and de-valued by members outside of the cultural group.

Homogeneous Racism: Cultural identity is challenged and de-valued by members of the same cultural group.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the research question was "What are the lived experiences of Aboriginal Educators in the publicly funded school system?" The answer to this guiding question evolved through discussions with the Aboriginal educators in coordination with the "emergent design" of the narrative inquiry study that "involves data collection and analysis that can evolve over the course of a research project in response to what is learned in earlier parts of the study" (TCPS 2, 2010, p. 144).

The methodology used here was a combination of narrative inquiry and Indigenous research methods. Narrative inquiry aims to provide a temporal interpretation, construct a fuller understanding, and ultimately make meaning of experience (Andrews, 2008; Atkinson, 2007; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; 1990; 2006; Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1988; Squire, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Narrative inquiry finds parlance within the Indigenous research paradigm (Absolon & Willett 2004; Steinhauer, 2002; Weber–Pillwax, 1999, 2001; Wilson, 2001, 2008) because its impetus is based on conducting research with participants (relational) rather than on participants (external).

Indigenous Research methods

Indigenous research methods (IRM) focus on constructing relationships and knowledge about phenomenon through oral communication (Bazylak, 2002; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Curwen-Doige, 2003; Gaikezehongai, 2003; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Meyer, 2001; Weber-Pillwax, 1999; Wilson, 2001, 2008). Oral history is essentially a collection of narratives. The term IRM continues to evolve as Indigenous scholars are currently describing their own

research paradigm. However, relationship construction is the essential component of ethical Indigenous research (Bishop, 1998; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Meyer, 2001; Weber-Pillwax, 1999; Wilson, 2001, 2008). The focus on multivalent relationships is best comprehended through a discussion of the necessity for harmonious interaction between and among Indigenous ontology (the nature of being), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and axiology (the nature of value).

Indigenous ontology is about acknowledging the possibility of multiple realities. Wilson (2008) has stated that there are “many realities specific to the people and locations that hold them” (p. 37). It is the 3Rs of Indigenous research “respect, reciprocity, and responsibility” (Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2008) that frame and maintain the relationship between researcher and participants, and researcher and community (Hermes, 1998; Louis, 2007; Pidgeon & Hardy–Cox, 2002). This is similar to the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (2010), which posits that a research project should be framed by the principles of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility.

When the ontology of multiple relationships is accepted the methods for describing the realities or nature and attainment of knowledge (epistemology) follows. Indigenous epistemology consists of adhering to an attitude of inclusiveness and cooperation so that partnerships will holistically (intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually), and collaboratively construct the realities in a particular context. An indigenous epistemology is about partnerships in knowledge construction “built upon the relationships between things, rather than on the things themselves” (Wilson, 2008, p. 74).

Indigenous axiology, that is, the primary ethical consideration or value grounding the ontology and epistemology, is described in the literature as the concept of sustaining “relational

accountability" (Wilson, 2008, p. 100). The core principles of, respect for people, concern for welfare, and justice, applies to all research involving Aboriginal people (TCPS 2, 2010). Indigenous research paradigms marry well with modern western research methods (Absolon, 2008; Castellano, 2004; Graveline, 1998; LaFrance, 2004; O'Reilly–Scanlon, Crowe, & Weenie, 2004; Wilson, 2003). The Indigenous researcher "must become more skilled at both pivoting between and building bridges across native and non–native discourse systems" (Benham, 2007, p. 529). I used narrative inquiry as a complementary strategy to add reciprocity and strength to this study. This alliance represented the rigor of hybridity meaning that two methodologies in combination become more than they were previously when standing alone.

Applying Indigenous Inquiry to this research. In order to respect the interactive relational commitment to respectfulness and accountability in seeking multiple truths, I located myself within the study as one of the participants. This was necessary in order to operate transparently. In the dual role of participant researcher, I had better opportunities to use the process to improve the situated context of the research participants. This is an important departure from many research techniques, which seek truth from participants who are expected to remain unchanged throughout the research process. In Indigenous research, the seeking of truth within the researcher, participants, and within the research community, represents the hope of a greater understanding of human kind as a whole (Battiste, 2008b; Cardinal, 2001; Denzin, 2007; Graveline, 1998; Steinhauer, 2002; P. Steinhauer 2001; St. Wilson, 2001).

In this study, respect was expressed by the "securing of free, informed and on-going consent of participants" at every stage of the proposed research (Tri–Council, 2010, p. 109). There was continual "consideration of participants and perspective participants in their physical, social, economic, and cultural environments, where applicable, as well as concern for the

community to which the participants belong" (Tri–Council, 2010, p. 109). In this study, the theme of justice is about articulating the mutually beneficial research goals (free and informed consent), and investing the time to establish relationships based on the concepts of imagination, mutual trust, reciprocity, and on going communication (Tri–Council, 2010). In all, the traditional Tri–Council document and the pillars of Indigenous research methodology substantiate and support one another.

In this Indigenous narrative study, the participation of the Aboriginal teachers was activated as part of the narrative process. There were two points for narrative exchange, first in the interviews and then in the focus group process. The reciprocal exchange between the participant/researcher and among participants (relationship) in the focus group interview was intended to unearth storied themes around common phenomenon. These interactions had the power to promote a bi–lateral learning experience in which all parties could learn, gain, and change in the experience. This exchange was fundamental to integration of narrative inquiry and the Indigenous research protocol. Indigenous methods brought a component that focused on the possibility of change through the research process. This extension of awareness through the examination of relational truths joins with the narrative inquiry process to spin a web that extends and complements both the Aboriginal and narrative inquiry components. What it is to be an Aboriginal teacher in the public school system will become more fully known to the participants as well as the readers of the study by employing these methods. The narrative approach combined with Indigenous expectations ensures the uniqueness of the study as it provides a wide access to and readability of the data contained in the study.

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in my home on the traditional land of the Anishinabek (Ojibwe people of Lake Superior) and the participants were not representatives of this aforementioned First Nation's band membership. The five other participants were selected through homogeneous sampling (Creswell, 2005). I knew of other Aboriginal teachers in the system, approached them and used a "snowball technique" (Creswell, 2005; Creswell, 2008; Johnson & Christensen 2000; Mertens, 2010). I asked them if they knew of others so that I could approach them in person. The common link amongst the participants is their Aboriginal ancestry as defined by the Canadian Constitution section 35:2 and the fact that they were currently employed within the publicly funded school system.

Data Collection Procedures

The focus of this study was the patterns, themes, and meaning gathered from the narratives of the six Aboriginal educators as first expressed, and secondly checked by the participants in relationship with the participant researcher. This included making sense of and negotiating the meaning of critical events, common issues, and the essence of what it means to be an Aboriginal staff member in the public school system in keeping with Indigenous research methodology (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Battiste, 2008b; Bishop, 1998; Menzies, 2001; Pidgeon & Hardy–Cox, 2002; Piquemal, 2001; Smith, 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001, 2003, 2008) and methods of narrative inquiry (Bell, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2007; Mishler, 1995; Pinnigar & Daynes, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Data collection consisted of two tape-recorded interviews with each of the five other participants. The transcribed interviews were each an hour long and were one-on-one. These were conducted between March and June of 2012. These interviews were followed by a focus group interview.

The gathered responses and analysis of these initial interview questions served to guide the question construction for the second interview sessions and the questions used in the focus group interview. The questions that evolved from this process are recorded in the instrument section below.

To assist in the data collection phase, I maintained a field logbook to capture the details related to my own observations, thinking, feelings, experiences, and reflections throughout the research process. The logbook, interviews, and member checking were used as the source of a preliminary analysis of the experiences and understandings drawn from the collected experiences of the participants (triangulation). This preliminary analysis took place between interviews and was expanded and interpreted as part of the data collection process. It also served as a first draft of findings.

The preliminary analysis and review was discussed with each of the individual participants prior to the focus group interview meeting. The preliminary analysis served as a reference point for the focus group experience, which drew the participants together for data checking and the opportunity to address and comment on the entire focus interview question guide.

Research Instruments

Interview Guide: Session One

1. Describe in as much detail as possible, your teacher training and certification. Where and when did you receive your training and degree(s)?
2. How long have you been teaching in the publicly funded school system (PFSS)?
3. Do you have any other teaching experiences in other educational systems?
4. Describe the history of your teaching assignments. What grade levels and/or subjects where you assigned?
5. What do you recall about your first full time teaching assignment in the PFSS? How would you describe the critical learning(s) during this period of your career?
6. What do you recall about your social experiences and exchanges with both students and their parents during your first few years of teaching? Are there any specific stories that come to mind?
7. How would you describe your relationship and/or conversations with school staff members during your first few years of teaching? Can you tell me about the memories that remain?
8. With due respect to self–determination, how do you choose to self identify? Can you describe incidents or practices when an educational stakeholder has tried to identify or name you?
9. How would you describe the essential nature of your teaching philosophy?
10. As we close this interview session, is there anything else you would like to add or ask me about the process covered here today?

11. I thanked the participant for rendering their time/responses and made arrangements for the second interview session.

Interview Guide: Session Two

1. Thank you for coming. It sometimes happens that memories occur after interviews. Is there anything that you thought of or even wrote down after the 1st interview was over that you would like to start with now? Your report of _______________ was quite powerful.
2. Undoubtedly, pockets of resistance to the Native language program and perhaps toward Aboriginal people, exist in the provincially funded school system. All participants have reported instances of both overt and covert racism. Inside or outside of the working venue is there any instance or story that you can add to this theme of racism at this time?
3. There are two paths when dealing with instances of racism. On one hand, a person may chose to hold back responses, maintain silence, and survive the encounter. On the other hand, one may chose to respond and confront racism via a courageous conversation. The question is what do you tend to do about racism?
4. Several provincially funded school systems have opted to maintain the Aboriginal self–identification program. What do you think about this initiative?
5. The lack of Aboriginal parental engagement is an educational issue. Do you have any thoughts on why this phenomenon occurs and what can be done to remedy this trend?
6. What has been your experience with the administrators of the schools you have worked in? I want to learn more from your stories. Could you give some detailed examples?

7. Career paths unfold individually based on opportunities, experiences, and interactions. How would you describe your growth and change since starting your career in the publicly funded school system?
8. With great increases in Aboriginal resources, budgets, and networks, can you see any further improvements that can be made in regard to the native language programming in the publicly funded school system? What remains to be done?
9. Thank you for your gift of time and responses. Is there anything you wish to ask me?

Focused Interview Questions

1. Along the pathway to becoming a teacher in the PFSS, could you describe some of the challenges that you experienced prior to or as you went through the university program as an Aboriginal person? Could you provide some examples and how you felt at times? What was it that kept you going? What did or would have made it less stressful?
2. With the knowledge of growing Aboriginal populations in this community and within the Nation of Canada, what would you say to other aspiring and graduating Aboriginal teachers that might be beneficial as they try to enter the publicly funded school system? (Pre-service/PFSS).
3. What is the nature of the challenges that a newly employed Aboriginal teacher in the publicly funded school system (PFFS) will experience?

   With a focus on guidance, what specific knowledge will Aboriginal teachers benefit from at the start of their career? Keeping in mind that new situations bring in their own element of naivety.

4. Racism does exist, forms of racism adapt. What would be an example of racism in a school environment, and what are your thoughts on what to do and not to do about racism in a professional teaching environment? b) In the community in general? c) How should a new Aboriginal teacher deal with this?
5. In regard to critical events in you career (researcher's narrative examples), what would you do or say differently when faced with a similar situation?
6. How do we improve the perception of the Native languages program amongst other teacher colleagues in the school?
7. Could you describe forms of assistance or improvements that could extend capacity and sustainability for Native language instruction in the publicly funded school system?
8. Given your teaching experience, what does it mean to be an Aboriginal teacher in the publicly funded school system?

Data Analysis Procedures

Data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously in this Indigenous methodology based informed narrative inquiry study. "In qualitative research, emergent design involves data collection and analysis that can evolve over the course of a research project in response to what is learned in earlier parts of the study" (TCPS 2, 2010, p. 144). During data analysis the data were organized chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded until no new themes emerged from the codes. Field notes, logbook, and drawings were regularly reviewed.

At the end of each interview, the taped interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcriptions were immediately used for the data analysis process. The data were coded using as

many categories as possible. The tools I used to assist me in this endeavor consisted of a stack of recipe cards (with the participant's exact words), a variety of colored notepapers, and a very long table. Each of the participants' significant exact words and phrases composed a row in the matrix. The similar responses emerging were tagged by assigning a coordinating colour. New codes, as expected, emerged as each interview was transcribed and coded. The goal was to use the coding process to identify and describe patterns derived from narratives collected to illuminate the experiences of the participants. The codes allowed me to draw together similar themes within the narratives and attempt to assign meaning to them in order to better understand these events, patterns, and themes. As a basis of organization I identified events in terms of "critical, like, and other" as defined by Webster and Mertova (2007) as follows:

> Critical event: An event selected because of its unique, illustrative and confirmatory nature. Like event: Same sequence level as critical event, further illustrates and confirms and repeats the experience of the critical event. Other event: A further event that takes place at the same time as critical and like events. (p. 79)

I was aware of the availability of computer software intended to aid in identifying and sorting events and information gathered, but sorting software assistance was not required or desired because I wanted to listen repeatedly, reflect, breath, and concentrate on the participants' voices on multiple occasions to authentically hear and visually see what they had articulated. However, my role as researcher/participant extended into the analysis process. I was also the instrument for understanding and interpreting the data. The gradual collection and creation of codes as they were generated during and after the interviews provided a structure that helped organize the incidents described. These codes were closely aligned to the content of the interviews

themselves, which provided the significant cues necessary to assign the material to the appropriate code, be it critical, like, or other event.

The evolving code structure also indicated areas in which there was need for further thematic probing. This process generated fresh questions to be used in subsequent interviews. The action of sorting and coding ultimately remained under my direction and was guided by the content and context of the interviews themselves. These critical, like, and other events, once coded, melded into the narrative and once they were identified in groupings they were used to shape the narrative itself.

Reporting the Findings

The findings of this study are presented using descriptive narrative texts with emphasis on the codes that evolved through the data collection process. Thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the critical, like, and similar events were used to construct a holistic picture of the experiences of Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system. The narrative was a reconstruction of the participants' experiences and the meaning that the participants themselves ascribed to these experiences. "Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 80). The use of narrative allows the reader to grasp the challenges and phenomenon associated with the experience of being an Aboriginal educator. It describes encounters and provides a window through which readers can view and gain understanding of the participants' point of view in order to give voice and identity to that which has been previously under-examined in the lives of Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system.

Ethics

Qualitative research protocol demands that the researcher fully articulate the ethical considerations of the proposed study (Creswell, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Josselson (2007) frames the matter in these terms: "In essence, ethical practice and ethical codes rest on the principles of assuring free consent of participants to participate, guarding the confidentiality of the material, and protecting participants from any harm that may ensue from their participation" (p. 537). The essential duties of all qualitative researchers are to "respect the rights, confidentiality, needs, and values of the participants and protect the confidentiality of any data collected" (TCPS 2, p. 127). I used the following measures to protect the participants.

The purpose and objectives of the research were clearly articulated in conversation and in writing so that the research objectives were fully understood by the participants. Specifically, informed consent to participate and proceed with the study as explained was received from the participants. For evidence of ethical protocol compliance, please see Appendix A. A research application was filed with the Institutional Review Board or Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University.

The participants were repeatedly informed of all data collection devices and actions and informed of the secure storage protocol of the data collected. Maintenance of anonymity was key to each participant's decision to participate in this study. In ethical Indigenous research the decision to authentically self-identify honors the participants' will, voice, identity, and self-determination in the research endeavor (Absolon, 2008; Graveline, 2000).

This study was about Aboriginal teachers' experiences in the publicly funded school system in Ontario and represented both status and non-status Aboriginal people in the sample of participants. It is imperative for future researchers to note that if an Indigenous study targets

participants from a specific First Nation, then a separate and non-negotiable protocol for access and approval of the research from the Aboriginal group's perspective must be respected, sought out, and secured (Benham, 2007; Hermes, 1998; Hudson & Taylor-Henley, 2001; Lomawaima, 2008; Louis, 2007; Meadows, Lagendyk, Thurston, & Eisner, 2003; Menzies, 2001, 2004; Niles, Byers, & Krueger, 2007; Pidgeon & Hardy-Cox, 2002; Piquemal, 2001; Weber-Pillwax, 2001). It is paramount to remember this distinction. When researching with community members from a defined First Nations' tribal jurisdiction and territory "the research should empower and benefit Indigenous communities and cultures, not just researchers, their education institutions or Canadian society" (Battiste, 2008b, p. 501).

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was confined to collecting and constructing the critical event stories (Webster & Mertova, 2007), of six experienced Aboriginal educators within Ontario's publicly funded school systems. The purposeful sampling procedure that involved selecting Aboriginal educators in one area decreases the generalizability of the findings. Although this study is not to be immediately generalizable to all Aboriginal educators working in publicly funded schools, it does provide an effective framework for examining other situations.

Another limitation might be what Clandinin & Connelly (2000) described as "the intersubjective quality of the inquiry" (p. 181). Narrative inquiry is both personal and interpersonal; denial of this can only lead to claims of narcissism and solipsism. Therefore, a critical awareness of this research is that in sharing stories "it is experience, not narrative, that is the driving impulse. We come to narrative inquiry as a way to study experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 188). In all, what is essentially important is that: "…the life story is deemed

trustworthy, more than ‘true’. We are, after all, seeking subjective reality” (Atkinson, 2007, p. 239).

Internal Verification

Validity specifically refers to the strength of the data analysis, believability of the data, and ability to access the data (Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007). In order to aim toward “verisimilitude” (Huberman, 1995) the following measures were employed:

1. Member checking: The participants served as checkers throughout the analysis process. An ongoing conversation regarding my interpretations of the participants’ lived experience and the meaning of their words ensured the accuracy of the data. Interviews 2 and 3 with each participant began with a member checking process, discussion, and interpretation sharing.
2. Investment in the community: As a participant/researcher and an Aboriginal educator my research must represent an investment in my own community. All interviews were conducted in my home on the First Nation territory and an invitation to attend a culminating feast will be presented to Chief, council, community members, and participants as a motion of conclusion and gratitude upon completion of the dissertation.
3. Clarification of participant/researcher:
   The researcher’s identity and participation has been articulated under the heading “Researcher’s Role.” This topic is revisited during the conclusion of this study.

External Verification

In narrative research, reliability refers to the dependability of the data collected (Polkinghorne, 1988). “Reliability is achieved not by the stability of the measurement but rather

the ‘trustworthiness’ of notes or transcripts” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 93). The main strategy used in this study to ensure external validity was the process of recording rich, detailed descriptions of events to provide a solid framework for reference and comparison (Merriam, 1988). All data collection and analysis strategies have been reported in detail in order to provide a transparent and accurate picture of the methods used in this study. All phases of this project were subject to rigorous examination by a research committee who are experienced in qualitative research methods. Ultimately, it will be the readership (participants, research committee, and audience) that will decide on whether the results reflect verisimilitude.

Chapter 4: The Narrative

Role of the Researcher (Part 1)

To be in harmony with Indigenous research methods it is necessary to introduce and locate myself (Absolon, 2008; Absolon & Willett, 2004; Allen, 1998; Graveline, 2000; Monture-Angus, 1995; Smith, 1999). Similarly, narrative inquiry also asks me in the interest of "wakefulness" to account for who I am in the study and who I am in relation to the participants (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connolly, 2007). Let it be so.

Sego/Boozhoo: I am James Leonard Angus of the Kanehsatake Mohawk people (Kanien' keha:ka). Although I am from these people, I do not speak for all Hotinonsho:ni, nor does my voice represent all of my relations across this country. As an elementary school teacher, former principal designate, member of school council, after regular hours school tutor on the reservation and in the inner–city, and as a residing member of Anishnaabe land called Fort William First Nation (Lake Superior Ojibwe territory), I find myself standing on a bridge quietly attempting to enhance positive communication between the Aboriginal and non–Aboriginal worlds. As my education progresses, I desire to gain the consciousness and sensitivity to move both worlds toward Bimaadziwin (the good life path) based on the guiding principles of respect, reciprocity, and responsibility.

Early in life, I was raised in the urban setting. I then emigrated back to the reservation. I have traversed the circle and remained intact enough to respond well to the publicly funded school system experience. I have found opportunities for engagement with schooling programs at various levels, maintained sken-nen kowa (peace between people), and have witnessed and participated in constructing the educational success of Aboriginal students and their peers

enrolled in an inner–city elementary school. Consistently, I have maintained relationships with students and their parents through the use of agendas, phone calls, conferences, and visitations. Recently, I have participated in strategic planning at the management level to discuss initiatives and practices that could enable and assist Aboriginal parents, learners, and their peers. Additionally, I sit on a school board's Aboriginal advisory council. It is affirming to feel this trust.

I will be the primary data collection instrument (Creswell, 1994). My perceptions of Aboriginal educators' narratives of experience in the provincially funded school system have been shaped by my personal experiences in the system (1992–present). As a status First Nations Canadian, I believe that my understanding of the elementary learning environment and my long standing service in the publicly funded system, enhance my sensitivity, awareness, and knowledge of the many challenges and communication issues encountered by Aboriginal educators. These factors assisted me in relating to and drawing data from the participants in this study and the experiences and events helped me to become a stronger Indigenous researcher.

As a result of my personal experiences of working in an elementary school with a diverse population of staff and students for decades, I acknowledge that I am called upon to position myself in the research and bring forth many of my own life recollections into this study (Absolon & Wilett, 2004; Monture-Angus, 1995). Precautions and awareness/wakefulness were made to ensure objectivity because I wrestled with the tensions between being looked upon as a rigorous researcher and/or a good Indian (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000). Additionally, Tierney (2002) has advised: "I have ostensibly criticized authors for their obsessive uses of the 'I.' I am now suggesting that qualitative researchers need to concentrate on their voices" (p. 395). From here on in, I maintain that the way I viewed, interpreted, re-storied and understood the data I collected

and the way I reflected back on this through the lens of personal experience and the way that I reviewed my personal journals were always a valuable part of my life experience and remain a definitive *strength and not a bias* of an Indigenous researcher and this feature will be integral to all future Indigenous studies. “We as narrative researchers are crucially a part of the data we collect” (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 17). However, any semblance of “personal bias” has been countered because I have recorded five other voices in which the collective sample of these participants’ voices overrides my own volume (which could be interpreted according to positivism or post-positivism as a vividness bias) and a recollection of those combined voices also includes contradictory evidence which remains an important strategy for interrupting confirmation bias (Katz & Dack, 2013). In the words of Tierney (2002): “Author, insert yourself into the text, yes, to represent reality; but include others in order to paint the picture of a phenomenon in a wider social context (p. 395).

I began this study with the expectation that an Aboriginal educator located in the publicly funded school system would face particular challenges from a variety of stakeholders. In the interest of what Absolon (2008) called *Kaandosswin* (how we come to know), I began this study by sharing my highly personal, professional narrative openly with the participants in this study. As a result, I anticipated that other Aboriginal educators would be ready to speak to me about their experiences and critical events within the public school system. In between sharing food, stories, and laughter, our interviews and focus group event were largely open–ended and sincere conversations with prepared questions inserted in the gaps. And as it should be from one Indigenous age to the next, we constructed this knowledge with responsibility and great reciprocal respect for one another.

Introduction

The narrative is the story of six Aboriginal teachers working within the publicly funded school system in Ontario. These stories are being told by one of the six. I serve as the narrator who is recording, quoting, and reporting our collective experience, but I write on behalf of us all. The evidence has been confirmed by all of the participants and our relationship is continuous. The narrative is limited to our experiences within the school system amidst the implementation of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit educational policy framework (AEO, 2007a). Although there were instances when the conversations moved toward powerful personal experiences associated with being an Aboriginal person living in a particular community or examples that went toward personal opinions about the politics that encompass Aboriginal issues in general, these have not been recorded here. I have consciously limited the study to the experiences associated with being an Aboriginal teacher employed in the publicly funded school system.

The narrative will unfold in several ways. First we will describe who we are and the gathering of academic credentials, and how our racial consciousness unfolded in the context of continuing careers within the publicly funded school system. This section is entitled, "The Journey". Then we will return to specific stories that helped to shape that journey–our relationships with colleagues, administrators, students, their parents, and the expectation for self-identification. This section is entitled the "Elements of the Journey". We will then address specifically the topic of racism. In the next chapter, we will reflect on how this knowledge has helped us to remain and thrive in the publicly funded system with experienced-based advice for others who follow.

The Journey

The characters self–identify. The names of the participants and location of employment within the Ontario publicly funded school system have been changed to protect everyone. It is from here that I will assume a pseudonym and I will be writing in the third person for this section. The six participants identified themselves as follows:

1. Patricia identified herself as an Oji-Cree woman. Her parents are from Treaty 3 and Treaty 9 First Nations in Ontario. She identifies herself as Anishnaabeikkwe. When initiating an introduction she will introduce the clan she comes from and the teachings she represents. Patricia reminds us that when you open a learning time, you open in your Anishnaabe way and close in your Anishnaabe way.
2. Cassandra is a member of a northwestern Ontario First Nation. She identified herself as an Ojibweikkwe (an Ojibwe woman).
3. Andy described himself as a First Nations Canadian. He is a member of a First Nations community located outside of the province of Ontario. He has been working in the Ontario public school system for decades.
4. Karen approached the question of self–identification by stating: "nobody decides what or who I am but me." She identifies herself as First Nations, Native or an Aboriginal woman.
5. Eric identified as a Native Canadian. He additionally related that he strongly identifies with a sparrow because his travels and education gave him the opportunity to find his way home.
6. Lynn is an Ojibwe woman (ikkwe). She is a member of a Northwestern Ontario First Nation. Lynn introduces herself in the Anishnaabe language and the traditional territory

that she is from. Out of respect, she then introduces herself in the English language that she learned in the Day school.

Pathway to teaching: Gathering academic credentials. Participant experiences as they prepared for becoming a teacher were also varied.

1. *Karen*. Karen was an early childhood educator for a decade then taught Early Childhood–Education (ECE), to adults at the college level. Looking for a way to advance, she enrolled in a Native teachers' program, studied Indigenous learning and earned her Bachelor of Education degree at the primary/junior level. Her strength as she gathered her academic credentials came from within and from the fact that her family was in close proximity while she was studying.

Karen had to cope with discrimination from the beginning of her program. First Nation students would question and challenge her identity. Karen sensed a tension between the urban Aboriginal and the Aboriginal people residing on a reservation in the program. In the midst of commentary around her lack of traditional knowledge (i.e., how to kill and prepare a moose), Karen struggled with her identity. She had faced isolation from her own relations and these comments made her dwell upon the question of what it means to be an Aboriginal person. She chose to keep to herself and only confided in her family. She finished the program and graduated successfully.

2. *Andy*. Andy'***s*** pathway to teaching began with what he described and once believed to be a chance hallway encounter with a non–Aboriginal guidance councilor while in the last month of his high school career (in a provincially funded institution). To his complete surprise, Andy had been nominated for and then voted to become valedictorian for his graduating class. He was on his way to the office to receive instructions when a councilor re–directed him to the

guidance office (a place he had never been to before). The guidance councilor began to speak to Andy urgently about his future. The councilor told him that his grades warranted the continuation of his education at the university. This process was not familiar to Andy and no one in his immediate family knew anything about it. Andy told the councilor that he was destined for a good future and would make an honest living in one of the trades because of his family's background as builders, hard workers, and skilled laborers. Nevertheless, Andy remained open to the idea. The proper applications (with surprised parental approval) were completed, and Andy was accepted. In the backdrop of the Oka Crisis, Andy completed his two degrees and graduated with honors.

Andy described his university experience as an amazing learning curve, a real turning point that introduced him to new opportunities for which he will be ever grateful. For Andy, University training was and remains an exercise in dedicated time management, a blue-collar approach to which he was well suited. Andy was able to deeply connect with his university professors because they would see him on a daily basis. He was attentive to whatever they were saying, and he met his due dates. "I never missed a class; I was too afraid that the professor might hold a bad opinion of me or I would miss out on something important or a reference that might help me on my term papers or examinations." Andy also reminded me that his education took place long before the establishment of Aboriginal education departments, services, or support offices. Andy related that there were a few uncomfortable incidents.

> I would notice derogatory graffiti from time to time, and absorb an unkind racial joke from time to time. I was also able to cope with an instructor or two that were unusually hard on me, but I would win them over with effort in lieu of quick defensive words. I listened. I adjusted, and survived.

Andy didn't really become involved in the after class university social environment. He wonders now if these connections would have helped or hindered his university experience. However at the time, he stated that he had too much to learn:

> While my classmates were headed to destinations to discuss and commiserate in the latest, I headed to the Library to gather up all I could from the stacks and to follow up on the leads, apart from the basic text, that some of the professors described in class.

This pathway paid off. He has been working full time in the provincially funded school system for over two decades as a mainstream regular classroom teacher.

In retrospect, Andy suspects that his chance encounter with the guidance councilor was not merely happenstance. It has only been recently that Andy can see that his community work within the school (school co-president, captaining multiple athletic teams and membership in multiple clubs), and being an active community member outside of the school community (music bands, military affiliation, and church community) that the chance encounter was not all that it appeared to be, but it was the insight and ability of the councilor to envision Andy's potential future that remains important. Andy wished to close the session with a heart-felt thank you to the councilor (whom he has never seen since), and to all of the individuals on his pathway that may have been involved in this process of becoming who he is, what he has become, and where he is today.

3. *Cassandra.* Cassandra's pathway to teaching began when she graduated as a developmental service worker (DSW). She had the experience of working in several group homes, hospital settings, and a placement in the public school system working with physically challenged people as a student support person. As she became familiar with the workings within

the public schooling system, Cassandra decided to go back to school to become a certified teacher.

There were times when Cassandra wanted to quit. Her cultural identity was challenged with commentary such as: "Oh really? You don't look Native." This is a theme that would surface with more intensity during her teaching career. Amidst the problem of addressing who she was, Cassandra related that it was the support of her family that kept her moving toward graduation. She had a family relation at school during the same period. This person introduced her to the Aboriginal support offices and they would go there often and relax and talk to like–minded Aboriginal people.

4. *Patricia.* Patricia left her home community at the age of eleven to attend school. She was a Northern boarding student. Her schooling experiences would have a profound and lingering effect. Patricia described her early schooling experiences as horrible and oppressive. She described an extended period of being truant and disengaged. She knew at an early age that a career in education would be one way to try to improve the schooling experience for students that shared a similar background. In the middle of her University training, Patricia returned home, for what she described as a period of re–identifying with herself and to remember who she was. The end result was that she successfully completed a Native Teacher Education program and went on to complete her Bachelor of Arts and a community based teacher education program. Patricia related that being able to gather her credentials in her home community tribal area, as important. She was able to do blocks of learning close to home and she thrived in this environment because the program was created to be culturally responsible. Patricia has six years of teaching in a private First Nations High school, three years as an educational assistant in the

public system, and she has also served as a special education resource teacher back in her home tribal community. Patricia is currently employed as a teacher in the publicly funded system.

5. *Lynn*. Lynn was born and raised on a Northern Ontario reserve. Her pathway toward teaching in the public system began with volunteering in a Native language class in her home community at a school she had attended in her youth. Lynn claimed that she learned the art of teaching under the guidance of a skilled First Nations teacher. Her (wo)mentor encouraged her to pursue a career in teaching and Lynn enrolled in a Native Teacher Language program at the university.

Lynn described being overwhelmed by circumstances. She was a young mother and felt alone. In the beginning, she had been unaware that the program was a four-year commitment. Her troubles were compounded when her language credentials where challenged by the supervisor. Lynn was asked to re–test. The test was to describe a picture in the Anishnaabe language. She retested without difficulties or objections, but Lynn described being uncomfortable with the feeling of being judged.

Lynn described the experience of being a 'blind–sided outsider' but she would not give up. She knew that in order to secure her future as a teacher at home or abroad, she would have to graduate and earn her certification. Lynn graduated with her Native Language Instructor's certificate and diploma. She became a full time Native language teacher in the publicly funded system. Lynn also worked in the federally funded school system but she has since returned to the publicly funded system.

6. *Eric*. Teaching was not Eric's first career. He has a construction, aviation manufacturing, and business background. He described the dilemma of enjoying the communities he worked in, but not fully enjoying the job. With encouragement and support from

his family, Eric decided to go back to school and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education degree. Upon graduation, he could not get an interview with the local publicly funded school board. He sought and secured employment away from his home community. At first, he worked as a long-term occasional teacher and a criterion based reference testing support teacher. Then he became a Native language teacher in the publicly funded system. Eric said that the success he experienced in this position (positive references), and his education afforded him the opportunity to come home and secure employment. He is currently a full time high school teacher in the publicly funded system.

These are the people whose voices you will hear as part of the following narrative. As a result of the nature and context of the research that emerged and my unconditional need to protect the participants, in the narrative the voices will comingle and the participants will not be referred to by their pseudonyms.

In the beginning. At the beginning of her career, the first participant described being overjoyed to secure a job. However, she would soon realize that she had little time and few outlets for socialization and conversation in the schools. Nevertheless, she described herself as being quiet, safe, and trusting (vulnerable/naïve).

At the start of her career, the second participant found herself engaging thoughts of how to fit in, which included listening to everything she was told (compliance). Although she described feeling isolated, she was safe. She often held back her comments, was reserved, and kept the peace. At this stage she felt vulnerable/naïve.

The third participant used her past educational experience in a federal funded schooling system to gain entrance into the publicly funded school system. At the outset, she found herself

working toward further visibility of her presence, establishing legitimacy and space for her program (critically conscious/mobilization).

The fourth participant was thankful to have a job and a space to pass on her language and heritage. She described listening to her supervisors without questioning her workload, timings of her classes, or the space that was provided. She made no demands and she was concerned with making no waves or "stepping on anybody's feet." She was keeping to herself and was always on her own, and always on the move (awareness/compliance).

At the beginning of his career, a fifth participant recalled that he was glad to have a job. "I needed to pay rent." He did not involve himself in the school's social culture. He described being able to take in anything at this time and he admits that he was unaware of expectations and subtle messages just like any other beginning teacher in a new situation. Nevertheless, he felt a sense of acceptance and was trusting and feels that he was trusted (vulnerable/naïve).

In the beginning, the majority of Aboriginal teachers in this study expressed a gratefulness to have a job within the PFSS, were attentive to the demands to the best of their abilities, and compliant toward the routine and authority established in the school(s). The participant that responded differently and entered with a mindset to advocate for the importance and build up the profile and capacity of her Native language program, had amassed years of experience in both a Federal and privately funded school systems. She did not arrive in the publicly funded school system as a neophyte.

The context for Aboriginal teachers in the public school system. The participants currently teach in the publicly funded school system. Five out of the six were first hired as Native language instructors. The job that they were being asked to do was not always well supported. Four out of the six participants reported that they had very few resources to support

planning, teaching, and programming at the start of their career. These four reported that they had dictionaries at their disposal and these dictionaries served as their basic textbook. These participants found themselves making their own resources on a day–to–day basis, or being up late developing paper work using their own language abilities and knowledge. One participant made specific mention that resource teachers, including the Aboriginal liaison, were not helpful at this time.

One participant reported that the classroom was well equipped and another said that their classroom was fairly well equipped. In both cases, these teachers pointed out that they had inherited materials from the teachers before them. In these two cases the program and assignment had been established in the room for some time.

All participants indicated that they were highly independent in planning their program and making preparations for their classes. For example, one participant stated that she was never asked: "How are you doing?" or "How are you coping?" She is still waiting for that support today. Another participant described feeling like an outsider. In her words, she was: "not recognized," she was "ignored, and shoved in a corner."

Half of the participants noted environmental issues that had direct impact upon their programs. For instance, one participant's classroom was located in the basement. There were no windows, and it was extremely warm. It was difficult to focus on the tasks at hand and even more difficult to promote steady attendance. Secondly, with four others being constantly on the go and transitioning from class to class, school to school, because they did not have a permanent classroom, made it difficult to establish collegial relationships and goodwill. At this time, four out of six participants had to carry their resources and everything else in and out of the school. They would cart materials and/or travel with bags from room to room.

The experience of teaching in the publicly funded system was afforded to teachers whose Aboriginal background included the ability to speak a Native language and training in teaching Native language. Once hired, the participants often found themselves working independently, without access to materials and in classrooms that were in the less desirable parts of the school buildings or serving as itinerant teachers moving from room to room carting their materials with them. All of this contributed to a sense of exclusion. Further emergent themes were identified in the interview conversations with the participants as they took a temporal inventory of their teaching careers (past and present). This movement on a learning continuum was named and began with feelings of being vulnerable and naïve, toward awareness, yet compliance, and eventually toward becoming critically conscious and initiating mobilization. It is the nature of this becoming that is examined below.

Finding awareness. Although most of the participants entered the publicly funded school system with an expectation that they would be treated the same as their colleagues both by other colleagues and the administration, each was able to describe a time when they became aware that there might be something different about the way they were treated and the difference was based on their Aboriginal heritage. For example, one participant described her moment of awareness as a moment in which she realized how upset she was becoming in the staffroom, having to defend herself from comments about Aboriginal people and responding to colleagues' experiences with Aboriginal people in general. She also felt like her program was not being viewed as respect worthy, so therefore she was not worthy of respect. At this point in her career, she was beginning to understand that she might be amongst faux allies and camouflaged racists. She decided that the best practice was to ignore racist commentary, but she started to understand that her silence was not strength and her silence would not interrupt the negative commentary.

This second participant was aware that she was inside the school, but was a social outsider. She made an attempt to blend in: "because nobody really knew who I was." She heard racial comments and knew that teachers were withholding students from her class. She also knew that they had spoken to the parents of students in her class without her immediate knowledge. When she learned about it, she felt that she would be better off if she remained quiet. At this time, she learned to fear reprisals and negative performance reports and held it all in. She left the school upset on many occasions and experienced a great deal of dissonance.

A third participant became aware of her challenges as an Aboriginal educator when she found herself having difficulty coping with the environmental space she had to teach in and the large number of students with academic and social needs that she was tasked with instructing. She described the situation as overwhelming and colonizing. She felt she had no space or room to make requests or challenges to the status quo. She related that she did not have the words or enough experience in the public school system to get out her expert knowledge.

The fourth participant recalled that his awareness arrived when his education allowed him the opportunity to come back to his hometown and teach. In his new position, he quickly became aware of the expectation that he was to run a Native language program that was greatly removed from the status quo, meaning establishing higher academic expectations and he was told this with great urgency. He also became aware that his presence in the Native language program would be challenged by a variety of contingencies and he was accused of not being Native enough.

Another participant described how she became aware that her program had a lower priority amidst the process of constantly moving from school to school and carefully positioning herself into workspaces. She felt that she had been put off to the side, or hidden somewhere in

the school, and knew that she was not included in the conversation. However, she resolved to stay respectful to all no matter what.

Critical consciousness. The critical consciousness stage for one participant involved an attempt to decolonize by making sure that everybody knew that she was Aboriginal and that there are degrees to what it means to be Aboriginal. Within this disclosure, she found herself becoming the “all knowing defender of the Aboriginal movement.” Some of her colleagues provided her with “Indian” stories on a regular basis. She described another aspect of critical awareness in that she was conscious of being denied information about choice workshops and involvement in conferences to expand her professional development beyond Aboriginal content. She also felt that she was growing distant from the staff and did not feel apart of the school or the system for that matter. She began to question the point of her participation. She described feelings of mistrust.

Another participant traced the emergence of her critical consciousness to the point where she decided to take a stand and respond to the racial comments she heard and the racial actions she saw. She confronted teachers about withholding children from their Native language class and made an attempt to tell them that her program was just as important as the homeroom instruction. They did not care. She also confronted a co–worker about a racial comment about First Nations having everything paid for them and getting free money. In this case, an apology was rendered, and the commentary ceased. However, in her need to “fire back” she learned that she was now under more subtle surveillance expressed in the fact that she had several culturally affirming initiatives taken away from her. She described not knowing how to feel when things like that happened to her.

Another participant's critical consciousness contribution can be described as being prepared to cope with surveillance: "because it is always going to be around if you are an Aboriginal person." She has also learned to move toward addressing racial comments and demeaning practices with academic references. She relates that it is critical to "nip these events in the bud." Her critical consciousness reminded her that she must be confident when speaking about Aboriginal education (her lived experience) and she stated: "learn to speak their language." At the mid-point of her career, she learned to gather support for her position and program within the school by having meaningful conversations with grassroots personnel.

Another participant recognized that he lacked face time with other colleagues. He didn't have the opportunity to really get to know anyone. He resolved to cope with space arrangements and schedules, and continue to build up his own resources. He became more conscious of his role and the message he wanted to present to the Aboriginal students he serves. He realized that it has to become more than just passing grade twelve. "Aboriginal people did not arrive in this country poor…to be successful, it will take all of us. Parents need to be convinced that we are doing all we can to help their son or daughter to become successful."

As she moved from school to school, the last participant decided to concentrate on the students in front of her in whatever space she was given. Although she sensed racism, she consciously chose to not give racism any power by confronting it head on. She was stoic in maintaining her position to: "listen, respect, observe, let go, and move on."

Presently: Teaching today. The conversation about beginnings within the school system and the awareness of social consciousness encouraged participants to examine their careers to this point, and to reflect on their current positions. For example, having looked back over her career, one participant pointed out a few changes between then and now. She related

that she is now more confident when speaking out for herself, for her program and for the needs of her students. She now reflects longer on comments made and if need be, she will prepare before responding. She is focusing more on creating allies and professional networks, but reported that she has been struggling with regaining trust. “I am definitely in the angry stage because I am not growing.” The participant felt that she has grown in understanding the depth of the program she is teaching, but other than immersion, she has taken it as far as she can go: “The more I’m feeling stunted, the less I want to do.” The participant felt that she is not moving forward but is standing on the critical consciousness or an angry reactionary step in her development.

Another participant reported that she is looking for opportunities to contribute to the conversations. When facing or hearing challenging comments she will take more time to reflect and then respond with control. She related that she is learning to frame her words carefully “to get words out in a positive way.” On the other hand, the participant reported that she is happy and is enjoying learning more about her culture everyday. The fact that she can share parts of her culture is exciting and satisfying. This participant felt she is on the critical consciousness or reactionary step.

Another participant has become more humble about how she approaches others. Over her time spent in the publicly funded school system, she recognizes that non–Aboriginal staff may not be as advanced in understanding or servicing Aboriginal students. She takes immediate measures to address potential difficulties and hurtful language. To do so, she uses progressive language, which includes personal “I” statements and scholarly references. She stated that she has always had a strong sense of empathy because of her own dismal experiences in school as a disengaged youth. As she looked back over her long career, she reported that she did not have

the skills, knowledge, or experience to support her expertise. Now, she is trying to create space for a fuller mobilization of her First Nations knowledge. This participant indicated that she now feels established and is clinging to the advocacy/empathy step.

One of the participants disclosed that like others, he was naïve when he first started teaching in the PFSS. When he moved home to take a new position, he related that he was naïve again, but he became quickly aware of what was expected. He was to create and operate a classroom that was different from the way it had been run previously. He reported that one definite change is: "I'm not afraid to speak up and confront someone if it needs to be said." He has grown in this manner because he worries less about what people say or think of him. However, right now he is critically more aware of watching his words and being more aware of whom he is talking to. In regards to teaching, he is taking more action to educate his students that "school has to be more than books and receiving a grade 12, it has to be about being successful for the rest of your life." The participant felt that he is on the critical consciousness step but he has to be vigilant in watching both his words and his future steps.

Another participant indicated that a major change in her career between that start and now is that she is able to speak out more for her own well–being. She has found this strength because she reported gaining support from her colleagues: "you are doing a good job with those kids." She also felt more motivated to contribute within her school. For example, she has taken measures to establish an after–school program and extends invitations for her colleagues to attend. She goes on to speak about a difficulty she had with a recent supervisor who did not want to deal with Aboriginal students sent to her for disciplinary reasons. She reported being yelled at and was told that she needed to take care of more of these problems in class. She did not let this go and she took the matter to a higher level and was supported. She related that she is not in a

space where she has to take it anymore and now will stand up when she feels she is right and will object with respect. The participant indicated that she is on the advocate/empathy step.

Elements of the Journey

The evolution of critical consciousness and growing understanding of racism comes from a variety of experiences. The experiences of these participants have been collected into "like" incidents around interactions with colleagues, administrators, Aboriginal students, parents and the self–identification option employed by the public school system. As part of the conversation, we shared both the stories behind the critical incidents and our perceptions and ideas on how we responded and how we might have responded differently. These two aspects of the journey are included here as "Illuminating Incidents" and "Strategies and Advice" within each of the elements of the journey.

Experiences with colleagues. The experiences with colleagues are divided into illuminating incidents around "exclusion and isolation" and strategies and advice around "countering colleagues" and "establishing collegial relationships."

Exclusion and isolation. As mentioned earlier, most of the participants entered the school as teachers of Native Languages. The sense of exclusion engendered by the lack of resources and the isolation of the Native languages classrooms was further exacerbated by the attitude of their colleagues towards the Native languages programs that they were responsible for teaching. Four out of six participants made note of an established practice that required the Aboriginal students to complete homeroom classroom assignments or incomplete homework before they were even allowed to attend Native language class. One participant described this expectation as a way in which colleagues used the withholding of access to cultural

programming as "punishment." When this happened, the teachers would often keep students behind without even informing the participant of the reason. "It was almost like the respect of the program wasn't there, so therefore I was not worthy of their respect." Another participant said that she could readily sense that homeroom teachers did not recognize how important the Native language program was for these Aboriginal students.

The participant was left with the additional difficulty of interpreting the colleagues' words when they said things like: "Aw really? You are here now?" as if the Native Language teacher was interrupting more important work. In their initial years of teaching, three participants chose not to challenge this practice or the convoluted words that represented this demeaning attitude. The devaluing of the program was not limited to the treatment of the Native Language teacher or the dismissive attitude. Four out of the six participants reported that it was common for regular classroom teachers to devalue the program by telling students and parents verbally and through telephone conversations that Aboriginal students were going to fail or miss out on important academic work if they continued to attend Native language classes. One of the participants felt that kids were being and are still being openly discouraged from participating in their own culture. This happens when teachers tell students that they are missing out on the important subjects by attending the cultural classes.

Strategies and Advice: The strategies and advice concerned countering colleagues and establishing collegial relationships.

Countering colleagues. The participants felt that countering the notion among mainstream teachers that Aboriginal students are missing out on important academic programming is a dilemma. The options are to ignore the commentary and/or the practice,

confront it, or report to administration. All carry consequences. The participants gave three examples.

In one instance a participant who chose to report a colleague's disrespect for the program was told by the principal: "you make her understand that your time and program is just as important as hers." When the homeroom teacher was approached the teacher's attitude did not improve. The colleague became more adamant that the program had little value and the participant was told that the colleague simply did not care. Then the conversation shifted into the personal space. The colleague demanded: "So are you a fluent speaker anyhow?" The participant reported that at the time she did not know how to handle this additional challenge to her credentials and her identity. The participant reported that if that happened today she would respond to the comment with: "No, I am not. But I know enough to teach these kids something that is important."

In a similar circumstance, a second participant reported being isolated in the staffroom with a colleague who related that her long teaching career began as a member of a religious organization teaching in the northern region of the province. She wanted to know if the Aboriginal teacher knew any of the Aboriginal surnames she was verbalizing and what they meant. The Aboriginal teacher said that she did not know what these names meant. The other teacher grinned and asked: "Can't you speak the language?" The teacher responded: "somewhat." Her colleague closed the exchange with: "if you can't even speak the language, what good are you here?"

Another participant who was encountering teacher comments that Aboriginal students were missing out on academic programming chose to confront this notion with what she described as "scholarly language." She had open conversations with these teachers and talked

about the significance of First Nation's knowledge for all of Canada. She maintained throughout these conversations that the study of Native Language "is most certainly academic."

All of the participants reported struggles with non-Aboriginal teachers' perceptions of Aboriginal teachers and the Native language program. One specific perception was a notion that there is no control in these classrooms. One strategy that emerged during these interviews was open dialogue to remind homeroom teachers that many of these Aboriginal students come to class not only with academic needs but with unmet social needs as well. One participant recalled an exchange that she had with a colleague about the realities surrounding an Aboriginal student's continued misbehaviors. The student's family is being divided, the caregivers are white, the caring teacher is white, and there can be pre-natal issues and she vividly recalls the colleague's explosive anger that came out of that attempted conversation. Overall, the participant felt it was a good thing for the ethnocentric teacher because it would now and forevermore assist the teacher to think reflectively on her role in a First Nation's child's life: "It is good to think critically about these dynamics and situations." Another participant framed the matter this way: "We need to remember that students are traveling away from their space where they have their routines and are coming into a common learning area and that makes it difficult. So transition is an issue."

Establishing Collegial Relationships. The theme of transition has a further layer. Aboriginal teachers are often on the move, going from school to school or grade to grade. This makes it difficult to establish collegial relationships. Established collegial relationships would make it easier to address these issues when they surface. Being mobilized makes that almost impossible and being the only Aboriginal teacher on staff confounds the issue since the Native language teacher becomes the only person confronting teachers about comments and perceptions of Native language classes. The Aboriginal teacher without the use of scholarly language,

rootedness in the school community, and a strong declaration of self, will most likely be dismissed and/or ignored.

This was not always the case. One participant reported a relatively peaceful coexistence while working in the publicly funded system because of two distinguishing factors. This participant had developed a strong professional and social relationship with the Principal and the Native language program was well established and accepted. However, interacting with a school staff on a regular basis was difficult. He reported that the staff is tricky and “cliquey” and it feels like being an awkward teenager all over again. He did not feel that he had been disrespected socially, but he is not included in the conversations, extra–curricular gatherings or events. Once again, going between schools made it difficult to establish relationships and there were always a lot of people he did not know.

This participant identified an important function of the Aboriginal teacher that made him feel included. He maintained that the only time he was elevated as an equal was when a teacher was being accused of being particularly hard on a student. “They don’t want to say things to kids that get turned around and turned on them.” In these instances, he is often approached to talk to the Aboriginal student about their performance or address accusations. In these instances, he says he will readily assist. The experiences of these participants confirm that it takes a great deal of time and dedication for an Aboriginal teacher to establish trust with colleagues and to gain a greater understanding of their roles with students and homeroom teachers. Most are assigned to teach Native Language classes in a program that is often seen by their colleagues as an add–on, an unnecessary part of education. As such, they perform their jobs in isolation, either assigned to marginalized parts of the building or as itinerant teachers. They are normally the only teacher of Aboriginal descent in the building and, as such, become the defender of the Native language

program, all cultural initiatives, and the Aboriginal students themselves. Mainstream classroom teachers often view the Native Language programs with suspicion and even disrespect. They speak disparagingly about the program to parents, withhold attendance in classes from students and marginalize the Native Language teachers. When this happens, the Aboriginal teacher, working from a position of marginalization and isolation, must either accept the situation or become a vocal target. As one participant said: “Just because someone is First Nations, it does not mean that they are automatically at risk.” Or does it?

Experiences with administrators. Administrators are gatekeepers. They are the lever in between senior management and the teaching staff and have the power to withhold information, diminish teacher autonomy, and affect teacher promotion. By the same token, administrators can reward people, help them enhance their reputations with committee work, conference attendance, provide choice assignments, and endorsement of proposed initiatives. A teacher, and in particular an Aboriginal teacher that does not secure the communicated support of the administration forfeits the semiotic support the principal can project to the rest of the staff. The negative perception of the program and the status of the Aboriginal instructor reported by participants cannot be countered unless administration is supportive of the program. We have seen that Native language classes and their instructors are not on par with other language classes offered in the publicly funded system. In this section we examine the role of administration in these situations. The illuminating incidents with administrators focus on the differing levels of support experienced by participants. The advice for dealing with administrators focused on being prepared.

Differing levels of support. Three of the participants reported that initial contact with administrators at the start of their careers was positive. For example, one participant described

the principal as “supportive” and said that the principal exhibited an attitude of working steadily to establish a healthy relationship with the local First Nation. He would attend community events, consulted the First Nations community and extended invitations to both cultural and regular school events. The principal solicited advice on the direction of Aboriginal programming within the school in a conscious effort to avoid offending anyone. In a similar vein, another participant reported that her first Principal was “amazing and supportive.” Her professional judgment and proposed initiatives were never questioned.

Another participant’s career began in a community school outside of the publicly funded system where the supervisor was “highly supportive.” That principal gave her a positive letter of endorsement as she left the school community to work in the public school system. Over time, these participants who reported positive experiences early on, would also be challenged to deal with the polar opposite.

In one instance, the principal was non-supportive from the beginning. As this participant has already reported, she approached the principal for assistance when homeroom teachers diminished the value of Native Language programming. She related that the onus was placed on her to confront teachers about withholding Aboriginal students in their homeroom during Native language classes. She felt that it would have been better if the principal had communicated support for the program at a staff meeting. She saw this as a “divide and conquer” event that split the good will between staff members. The event left her with an overwhelming feeling of being unwelcomed. She reported that she would often leave the building crying at the end of the day. The lack of support from her administrator had an effect not only on the program, but also on her personally. She began questioning who she was, why she was there, and entertained thoughts of quitting on a daily basis.

Without the Principal's communicated backing in deeds and words, the challenges escalated. The participant recalled three further events that left a troubling impact. First, the participant would work each year to construct an Aboriginal culture display in a highly visible area of the school. The Principal dismissed this display by reminding her that she would not be receiving any release time to make future displays and telling her that the principal most certainly did not want the display coupled with the "welcome to Junior Kindergarten" events. Although other teachers, including the librarian, were allowed to maintain their displays in coordination with the JK event, her display was not included.

In another instance, the participant's long–established annual classroom feast was called into question. The participant was called into the principal's office where the principal yelled at her and intentionally embarrassed her. Although the participant felt like crying and running out of the office she felt it was necessary to hold her ground and advocate for the importance of the annual feast. The participant questions whether or not other teachers have had to ask for permission to bring something into the classroom (i.e., treats and other incentives) and suspects that is not the case.

In the third instance, a cultural celebration in the form of a pow–wow was planned for the entire school and the participant arranged for the drum group to officiate. During the widely attended event, the participant felt slighted, ignored, and uncomfortable. The Native language class had constructed gifts. The administrator herself distributed these gifts to dignitaries in attendance without acknowledging the participant. The participant felt that this happened because of the incident around the display and classroom feast events. She felt that the lack of recognition was backlash meant to embarrass her. The participant referred to this event and

similar events as a “flex–back to get back” reaction that may not necessarily be isolated to Aboriginal teachers.

A second participant related that her relationship with her administrators was virtually non–existent for a number of years. She described that she was ignored and “shoved aside” and related feelings of being an outsider, not to be disturbed, acknowledged, or recognized. She noted that the Native Language program was being consistently downplayed. Parents were not informed about the availability of the program. Many parents were not aware that the program existed. She noted that there was no advertising and said that the downplaying still continues today. Although she has described “being passed by, shunned, or put off to the side” by administrators, her attitude remained one of thankfulness. She remained pleased to have the continued opportunity to pass on her culture and language to the children. Although she did not feel included or recognized in the elementary panel, she still looks at her supervisors with respect and continues to instruct in the nooks and out of the way places that she is directed to without complaint.

One participant recalled an incident when a principal requested her presence in the office. The principal began to yell at her for sending students down to the office for disciplinary reasons. She was informed that she needed to take care of her own problems and her own kids. In this instance she decided not to ignore, absorb, or dismiss the commentary in her customary obedience. She called her principal’s supervisory officer and this changed the relationship. The participant felt strongly that it was not her job to discipline the children and her decision to defend herself was affirmed by the supervisory officer. Whether or not reprisals are forthcoming remains to be determined.

One participant had difficulty answering this question in a positive or negative way but rather recalled two unusual events with his administrator early in his career. In the first, the participant was marking papers in the staffroom when the principal approached, clearly upset. The principal inquired about the teacher's educational background and thoughts about career planning. The participant told him the particulars of his training and said that he enjoyed teaching and would continue to work as hard as he could. The principal then showed the teacher a picture of a cartoon Indian brave and said, rather excitedly: "Would you be offended by this?" The participant replied: "No, why?" The principal continued: "I included this picture in our newsletter announcing the beginning of our Native as a second language class in our school." The intercom broke in and the principal was needed in the office. He ended the conversation by stating: "Just remember that the Board Office has big plans for you." At the time, the participant struggled to determine what this exchange meant, but recalls that it did feel somewhat complimentary.

In a second incident, in October, the participant was leaving the school when the principal called the teacher back saying: "I need to see you for a moment." The teacher returned and without any preamble the principal demanded: "I need to see inside your briefcase." As the participant opened the briefcase he noticed staff members peering out from their doors and from the staffroom. The principal asked the participant why he had all of those books in there. The teacher told him "its just my marking." There were no further words exchanged.

Another participant reported that she felt that Native language teachers were treated as if they were the addendum or extra teacher on staff by administration and that there was a perception that they did not have classroom management skills. "We are not equal to the French teachers and that's what it feels like often." Native language programs are not offered in every

school in the system and are not on par with French language programming. There is no immersion class and the NL classes are available to primary classes in selected schools. For the 2011-2012 school year, the OME reported 5970 students were enrolled in Native language classes and 13, 375 students were enrolled in Native study offerings (OME, 2013).

She has also experienced administrator interference with behavior management. This participant would like administrators to understand that she needs to build relationships with her students in her own way. "I only have 40 minutes a day with students and there is not other time during that day that I can repair damaged relationships." The actions of stepping in and constantly listening in "administrators have been quite oppressive." She recalls that she has had to defend her program, behavior modification techniques, and initiatives often.

Strategies and advice: Preparing to make requests. Upon recognizing repetitive interference from administration a participant said she has become skilled at preparing herself thoroughly before making requests. For example, a critical event that she recalled was when she prepared a proposal for a program targeting Aboriginal students' literacy. The proposal was accepted. It was subsequently confronted and the principal made an attempt to stop it. The participant was told that she did not follow proper protocols. After this exchange, the principal did not talk to her for several days. She took the initiative by going to see the principal with the Ontario First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007a), explained that it was a Union sponsored program (external funding), and that she had contacted the supervisory officer. The initiative was allowed to continue. "My principal has not yet said that I am less than, but he has tried really hard to support where I am coming from only because I am so confident in knowing where I come from." This participant is qualified to teach a variety of educational

courses including higher education and as a result of these accumulated credentials, she feels it lends credibility and validity to her comments and her conversations are taken more seriously.

In a like event, another participant related that she is sensing changes now. She feels that she is being supported, recognized, and occasionally praised. She reported that her colleagues are more apt to give her verbal support and praise. The participant feels the changes are due to the fact that she is able to advocate for herself and is now instructing in one school, which means there is more opportunity for conversation and more time to develop relationships and mutual respect.

The participants' experiences reflect a variety of ways to deal with administration. When experiencing difficulties they used three different ways to proceed, each with its own set of consequences. Aboriginal teachers can chose silence and compliance, which is safe, but does not address the problems of isolation and evaluation of the program. Secondly, they can hold their ground and respectfully advocate their position. Third, they can report conversations and actions to senior management.

When deciding to employ the last two procedures, participants felt that it was important to prepare by thinking deeply about the potential questions and scenarios that might arise when approaching any administrator with requests and reporting the events. Based on the data the participants provided, becoming stationary in one school and accumulating further academic credentials seems to have a positive effect on the perceived value and acceptance of an Aboriginal teacher and consequently the Native language program within the school. Nevertheless, an Aboriginal teacher that remains on the move from school to school, from class to class, from grade assignment to grade assignment, may indeed avoid harsh commentary, uncomfortable conversations, and de–valuing situations to a lesser degree.

Experience with Aboriginal students. The participants recognized the complexities of dealing with Aboriginal students in the context of the history of Aboriginal education. They concurred with several recommendations made by various task forces on Aboriginal education (NIB, 1972, 1980; OME, 2009, 2012, 2013; RCAP, 1996; TCPS, 2010), but also provided strategies that are practical and can be implemented without delays. The illuminating incidents concern dealing with poor student attendance, lack of structure at the school level, Indigenous students not enrolling in Native Language classes and issues of self-esteem. The strategies and advice included the use of humour in the classroom and creating a welcoming and respectful learning environment.

***Illuminating Incidents:** Poor Student Attendance**.* Promoting and maintaining Aboriginal students' attendance in class is an issue. All six participants reported that they have few student behavior problems in their classes, but regular attendance remains a problem. As for causation, one of the participants reported that Aboriginal students miss a lot of school because they do not grasp the long–term importance of securing an education and future opportunities and that racism is contributing to this phenomenon.

As far as repairing the engagement and attendance issues amongst Aboriginal students in the public school system the participants suggested some concrete remedies. In the midst of Aboriginal students dropping in and dropping out it is important that Aboriginal students hear about the educational pathway and success coming from the Aboriginal mentors standing in front of them in the classroom and in the school. As one participant said, he always tries to relate his own story to the Aboriginal students in attendance and repeatedly tells them: "education will give you the opportunity to go home successfully." Likewise, "your education will provide the accumulated courage to move on to the next success."

Aboriginal students need to understand that there are opportunities for Aboriginal people to become successful in the mainstream Canadian society and that it is not anomalous. One participant suggested that focusing on Aboriginal contributions (inventions and innovations) as well as key biographies of distinguished Aboriginal people needs to be "taught with greater urgency if we want to help and inspire Aboriginal youth." This participant also reported that he is honest and flexible with assignment due dates because he wants his students in class more often.

Lack of structure at the school level. One participant described learning at the secondary level as mayhem. "It was overwhelming because the classes were so big." In a like event, another participant has suggested that it is the guidance department that is channeling Aboriginal students into classes instructed by the Aboriginal teacher and that the swelling numbers represent a critical mass that can not be properly supported and consequently, students are either disengaged or choosing not to attend class or attend to their studies.

Indigenous students not enrolling in Native Language classes. One participant noted that she sees many Aboriginal youth that would benefit from taking the Native Language class. She projects two reasons for this lack of interest in attending the Native Language class. First, she reported that many Aboriginal students have been conditioned to be shy of their own culture and race. Secondly, if the older Aboriginal generation, the primary care givers, do not practice the culture, do not speak the language, and do not see the benefits of identifying with their own cultural heritage, then they might not give permission for their child to attend the class. There may be a perception that their child will be better off socially and eventually economically if they remain within the mainstream educational structures. In some cases, the Native language

class may be devalued by Aboriginal parents themselves. This phenomenon could be a prospect for future studies.

Issues of self-esteem. Several participants reported that transition and self-esteem issues plague Aboriginal students' progress in the public system. "We have to remember that we are teaching a group of people that have been historically oppressed. It is natural that you will have all kinds of issues coming into the classroom." Likewise another participant reported:

> When you look at my students, the students that come to Native language, they're most likely going to have attachment issues and whatever cultural baggage. They're coming there with social needs not just academic needs and they are having to travel away from a space where they have their routine and go into a common learning area and that makes it really difficult.

Strategies and Advice. The participants suggested that there was a need to use humour in the classroom and create a welcoming and respectful learning environment.

Use of Humor in the Classroom. Four out of the six participants have indicated that they use humor on a regular basis in order to capture and sustain the attention of their students. For instance, a participant will often put a song into her voice when instructing and the students remember this action and the words she is targeting. Another participant uses humor on a regular basis in order to engage students. Over her career, this participant has noticed that Aboriginal students will often tell Aboriginal based jokes. Although she understands that these students are taking ownership over these jokes and rehearsing responses for potential future attacks, she is quick to tell them that these jokes are not appropriate in the classroom, no matter where they are coming from.

Creating a welcoming and respectful learning environment. Three suggestions that pertain to maintaining positive classroom management and promoting attendance of Aboriginal students emerged. First, an atmosphere of respect must be created. This includes making sure at the beginning of class that everyone feels welcomed through pleasant greetings and reminders that there will be no put–downs tolerated, especially amongst the beginning or emergent speakers of the Anishnaabe language. It is about stressing respect on a daily basis because it is one of the greatest grandfather teachings in Aboriginal culture.

Secondly, it has been suggested that there should be a hard cap or a lower student–to–teacher ratio in all Native language classes and as these classes continue to grow, open up another language class or section. That way, students would have more personal time with their instructor. Additional sections should progress toward providing Aboriginal students with more options and Aboriginal course selection as they progress through the grades (i.e., language, syllabics, legends and stories, pre-contact history, Aboriginal inventions/innovations, Aboriginal art, historical treaties, traditional territory mapping, Aboriginal law, Aboriginal medicine, distinguished Aboriginal Canadians, so on and so forth). Naturally these options would include opportunities to visit and learn on and about the traditional territories prior to the settler's arrival and establishment of the Nation of Canada. Aboriginal peoples did not arrive in this country poor and therein remains the opportunity to create and restore meaningful and culturally relevant educational experiences for future generations of Aboriginal students and their allies in the public school system.

Third, the participants suggested the construction of learning stations where the children work with a skilled helper in the group. The use of cooperative learning amongst Aboriginal

students and its reported pro academic and social gains has a highly supported place and traceable progression in the academic literature.

For the Aboriginal educator in the front line in the public school system, the challenge of fostering First Nations' cultural pride and self-esteem in fruitful collaboration with respected others can be aided by delivering instruction that acknowledges Aboriginal values, and delivers a curriculum that is divorced from the competitive model (Hampton, 1995; Harris, 2006; Maina, 1997; Pepper & Henry, 1986).

Experience: Understanding aboriginal parents. Participants unanimously reported that all have knowledge of the residential school era, but the settler population's knowledge of events is not as intimate or complete. Participants also reported that open house and parent–teacher events are not being well attended by Aboriginal parents. Illuminating incidents include examples of poor teacher/Aboriginal parent communication and lack of Aboriginal parent involvement and suggested strategies to engage Aboriginal parents.

Illuminating Incidents: *Poor teacher/Aboriginal parents communication.* One participant described the communication between teacher and Aboriginal parents as being limited. In her case, since the start of her career, she has always been challenged from the parents that do visit. "Are you Native? You don't look Native?" The participant now responds by explaining where she is from and the Nation she represents and speaks Anishnaabe language to them. She reported that the typical response is one of relief. The participant stated that many of the Aboriginal parents she serves are "laid back and take the blame for their child's poor performance or lack of attendance in school." She suggested that many Aboriginal parents are struggling to see the value of education for their child's future or they just don't trust the system and the personnel.

Another participant reported that she does not see many Aboriginal parents about the Native language program. Last year, she had one parent–teacher interview with an Aboriginal parent. Nevertheless, she looks for opportunities to engage Aboriginal parents through personal conversations. For example, a parent might be dropping items off at the school such as a lunch or work. She sees another opportunity to dialogue when a baby is born. She suspects that some Aboriginal parents might think that Native language programming is just a part of the regular classroom program and parents will direct inquires to the home room teacher. Additionally, she related that the experience up north is dramatically different. The parents and entire community were always there and parental involvement was quite distinct and different. She reported great parental participation in events such as "cultural week and learning out on the land."

Lack of Aboriginal Parent Involvement. One participant stated: "I have only had a few interviews with parents in the five years that I have been doing this." He also commented that he had only seen a few parents during the open house events. He recalled an incident in which a parent called him before she knew who he was and claimed: "You are picking on my son because he is Native." The teacher explained that he also was Native, named the places that he had taught, and explained that he understood why she might feel that way. After this revelation, she immediately changed her tone.

Another participant reported that when she first started teaching there was no parental involvement and she always wondered why. "They would not even call to ask how their child was doing." She felt that in several cases the Aboriginal parents were unaware that Native language was being offered in the school. "There was no advertisement or notification going out to the parents." She related that there were no interviews and there were never a lot of First Nations parents in attendance at open houses in all of the years she has taught.

Another participant reported that most of the exchanges and feedback from Aboriginal parents had been positive. The parents she typically saw are the parents of the students that are doing quite well in school. She maintained that it is a direct result of the children's urging that parents will decide to visit her classroom, which is a common learning area. One conversation that she attempts to have with all Aboriginal parents is to request that they speak the language at home.

The evidence from these participants indicates that Aboriginal parental involvement in their children's education is lagging and at times, contact has been confrontational. Regardless, all participants recognized that it must remain an on-going initiative for an Aboriginal teacher on staff to look for opportunities to engage Aboriginal parents and to help them to become re–invested in the school community and to help the school system re-gain their trust.

Strategies and Advice: Engaging Aboriginal parents. The need to engage Aboriginal parents in the publicly funded school system to ensure an invested partnership in the educational processes for their children was mentioned often. A collection of the participants' comments about supporting parental engagement has been included here although there is no consensus among participants as to how best to achieve this.

One participant felt that there should be an entire community gathering such as a fall or spring feast annually. She felt that bringing all of the cultural partners into the school (i.e., serving traditional dishes, wearing traditional garments) and celebrating in that manner would be powerful. It could even be accomplished during Remembrance Day.

A second participant reported strong mixed feelings about parental involvement. She had "a lot of negative feelings about that. They don't read the reports or notes. Parents are rude to me when they first meet me." Every year she has to defend her cultural identity by telling parents

where she is from. This participant also stated that substance abuse could be another major problem that could serve as an area of future study.

A third participant stated that she would like to have the opportunity to visit the nearby First Nation community and, with board support, offer a language recovery program for the parents. She envisions offering a parent-child language program where they could learn what their child is learning together. If the program were to be offered in the community she believes that the comfort level, and trust would increase and distance, and travel would be less of an issue.

Another participant stated that there are not enough Aboriginal parents involved in their children's education and that she still does not have parent-teacher interviews. Further probing revealed a strong personal response. She related that she has often felt like she is not part of the school, or an important part of the system:

> "If your own Aboriginal staff member does not feel like a part of the school, a part of the system, then how do you think the parents feel? The question becomes, how do you make them feel part of it? Why would any parent want to come to school if all they are hearing is negative things about their child?"

Another participant felt that parents were not involved because they are shy and uncomfortable. He felt that Aboriginal parents do not trust the educational system, partly because of residential school (RS) fallout. As for addressing the issue, the participant responded this way: "We need to move in the same direction; we all need to teach an attitude of doing what is necessary to move onto the next success."

The evidence of very few "like responses" in this section indicated that the issue of engaging Aboriginal parents is complex, but a historical look at the nature of Aboriginal

parenting and a deeper look at Aboriginal peoples' history of schooling in general would provide valuable insight. This issue remains a prospect for future study.

Experience: Self-identification. Section 35(2) of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982 clearly defines that an Aboriginal person includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Nations. When the option to self-identify Aboriginal heritage is presented, the purported benefits, along with reasons endorsing self-identification are included on the forms (usually folded pamphlets). It is obviously a contentious issue. The data below represents the opinions of the experienced Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system. The participants questioned the need for self-identification and had varying opinions regarding it.

Questioning the need for self-identification data. Some of the commonalities expressed by the participants on the self-identification piece included questioning what purpose this data gathering serves. "Why do you want to know how many Aboriginals you have in your system? Will it mean more visible representation of Aboriginal people?" and "What is being done with the information?" are three such responses.

The participants agreed that there needed to be more transparency, disclosure, and accountability with the numbers, "to arrive at the last set of figures pertaining to Aboriginal students one must remember that there are a lot of moving parts at play." And "…are they really self-identifying? Or is the school doing that for them?" But more importantly, they wanted to know how this piece of data benefits the school. The unanswered question became: "Is self-identification about capturing additional funding or is it about supporting advanced student achievement and servicing Aboriginal children?" One participant strongly expressed an opinion that it was a further means to isolate Aboriginal people in the system and that it inadvertently give cause for further separating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interests.

Varying opinions regarding self-identification. Two participants expressed an opinion that self-identification was a positive development. The first felt that it was a great accomplishment to be at a point in life where an Aboriginal person can self-identify, but said that if there is a benefit to it, then maybe all teachers should be identifying as well. The second participant related that her supervisor encouraged her to start an after school program projected to run within the Native language class. She felt the programs might help reserved students with their self-identification and it is important for students to self-identify because they are shy and quiet. Language instruction combined with an after-school program may help Aboriginal students become more comfortable in assuming their own cultural identity and they would be in a safe environment to do so.

Consensus amongst the participants revealed that in spite of the potential benefits of Aboriginal student self-identification, the initiative was deemed problematic. It was felt that there had not been enough of an effort made toward recording and releasing specific non-Aboriginal ethnic identification figures simultaneously with the Aboriginal data gathered. Given this context alone self-identification continues to be a subversively divisive practice. Breaking the numbers down to a comparison between Aboriginal, English language, and French language learners and reporting on each cohort separately is suspect and problematic. The participants related that benefits of only Aboriginal people self-identifying is questionable and the purpose needs to become transparent to all stakeholders.

All differing stakeholders should also be presented the option to self-identify for demographic purposes. If the reason for Aboriginal self-identification is not expressly financial or because it is part of the means to conduct further camouflaged research, this in itself is oppressive. Aboriginal researchers do not necessarily need to lead and conduct research with

Aboriginal populations, but Indigenous methodology and methods should be employed and verified without any exceptions.

Self identification extended to all staff may also expose the realities of Aboriginal peoples' under-representation in the teaching ranks, as well as in the non-teaching positions within the public school system (administrations, custodial, secretary, student support personnel, and additional parental and community supervisors).

The conversation suggested that the issue of self-identification of Aboriginal students in the public school system brings up more questions than answers. The question of self-identification also leads the conversation into the primary context encompassing these Aboriginal teachers in the public schooling system. The issue of exposing, coping, and countering race, racism, and racialization in the public school system from the perspective and experiences of the 6 participants is the primary focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Responding to Racism

Although my voice is included among the voices of the other participants, my growing understanding of racism throughout my career became an important context for this study. I summarized this growing understanding here in an attempt to separate what I learned from this study from what I knew before it began. Once this has been established I will use the responses of participants to reflect on our collected experiences with racism in the context of the publicly funded school system.

Experienced Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system have experienced and have been able to articulate abundant contacts with perceived racism. These events are captured within narratives and identification of homogeneous racism and several examples of heterogeneous racism. The heterogeneous examples are divided into overt and covert examples. The overt instances are so openly racist that they can be named and recognized as racism. They are personalized and identifiable. However, covert institutional racism is less easily identified. In this section I will specifically describe situations and circumstances perceived to be examples of covert racism, that is, racism that is impersonal and institutional. It is far more difficult to discern covertness of racism and often instances cannot be proved as racism because they involve competition for space, jobs, desirable working conditions, and promotions. Decisions about these things are made behind closed doors. The perpetrator can hide behind the institution and may be unaware of his or her role in the racist consequence. The chapter also includes a story in order to illuminate how difficult it is to separate perceptions of racism from actions that may or may not be racially motivated.

The final segment of this chapter is a collation of advice for those wishing to improve the circumstances of Aboriginal teachers within the system and for Aboriginal teachers entering the publicly funded system. This advice takes the form of two open letters.

Role of Researcher (Part 2)

As I look back on my experience as a full time teacher in the publicly funded school system, race has always been a factor and it does matter. At first it was difficult to fathom the concept of racism through the barrier of my naivety. My focus was on trying to survive in the mainstream system. I was not concerned with perception or how I was being perceived or even aware of racial overtones in events that happened to me.

However, after many years of service, I began to recognize repetitive patterns. As I steadily increased my level of education, I began to recognize incidents as racially rather than personally motivated. My understanding of racism emerged, and would become more complete through education. Looking back, I can define my own growth in stages, starting at a baseline of relative naivety (teaching entry point), then sensing a disconnection from colleagues and then moving towards a stage of new awareness of the racially charged words or jokes or actions. I began naming as racism some of the things going on all around me.

I have been teaching in the publicly funded school system for more than two decades. As I looked back and reviewed my journals (records that I kept from year to year when something bothered me) and revisited lingering recollections (i.e., I can still remember the exact particulars of a close early childhood friend that pointed out my difference), I realized that I have not remained stationary but have progressed through a series of growth stages and memories have remained flash frozen until I intentionally recalled, retrieved, and needed them. Anyone that has

experienced a "critical event" in their own life can remember every detail including the aspects of minutia. I arrived in the public school system at the bottom of these self-discovered five steps (which I will name below). I was eager, energetic, and entertained thoughts of changing the world of the students that I would encounter. I was completely absorbed in this quest, but I was also completely vulnerable and naïve (step one) of the politics surrounding the business of schooling in the Canadian context. During the first five years, I would develop a sense of awareness. In my deep desire to make a difference, I sometimes felt that the words, actions, or reactions of educational stakeholders (colleagues and administration more than parents or students) were not random. There had to be a deeper meaning; what were they trying to infer? I was determined to decode. Listening and breathing more than speaking, taught me to decipher their inferences and to alertly search for hidden meaning within exchanges both verbal and non-verbal with colleagues.

Many times, their objections broke down to racial remarks, but why? For protection purposes and in awareness of reprisals, I learned to guard my words, plan my actions, and most of all observe and respect the being of others and their words and their actions through compliance (Step 2). Although I was safe, I realized that I could have worked myself toward death in this stage, and it wouldn't have mattered to anybody else but my students and their parents if I chose to be martyred in this manner. That is, I accepted the status quo, always accepted the expectation that I would focus on teaching the difficult students, and in the less desirable parts of the system. Subsequently, I did not escape from those boundaries. It is here that I began to question if it always had to be the same teacher taking on these challenges.

In the back half of my career, my situation changed drastically. I discovered that the third step in my professional development was extremely slippery and I almost fell. It happened

because I consciously and critically (Step 3) began to respond in words to what I perceived as disproportioned assignments and lack of professional opportunities. I discovered that there were educational conferences, professional development, alternative employment opportunities, and positions of added responsibilities. I decided that I might want to participate in some of these ventures. However, it is here that my pathway crossed the pathways of others and their desires. I had now stepped into the world of competition, potential backlashes, imposed limitations, and blind-sided comments; I was unprepared, but undeterred. I happily remained in the classroom with one distinguishing difference. I became critically aware of how exactly I would be deterred when I decided to engage and explore other opportunities again.

During this third step in my development, I decided that I would confront faulty assumptions about Aboriginal people with respectful conversations, mentor others when able, and participate fully in the system when asked. But this time I would employ portions of my education and reveal my lived reality as an experienced teacher in the publicly funded school system. The result of this stance and way of being in the world has been met with mixed results. In some spaces my words are dismissed, "so what, who cares." Other times, they are heard but not understood or maybe not acknowledged. In others, they are heard and responded to in a meaningful conversation. But in some spaces, even today, my words and my being in the publicly funded system are met with furious opposition. For example, I was recently informed by a self-identified, second generation Canadian principal that this is their turf. I have come to understand that everything I do and say from this stage forward will continue to be under a microscope and examined for cracks and opportunities for confrontation or rebuttal. I am willing to defend anything that I have written or said. For me the weaponry of racism has been confronted and defeated. This is mobilization (Step 4).

I have met the neo-colonialist bully. I shook the hand. I absorbed and distanced myself from the many attempts to interfere with me. I will continue to try to convince them that I am not their foe and I have never felt that way about them. I continued to respect them in places that they did not know or view, and this steadiness helps some see that I am an ally and I am worthy of their respect. I have forgiven and I have survived. I am now turning my full efforts toward demonstrating that I am an experienced empathetic advocate (Step five) with something to say. I have arrived at the same ground from which I start. That is, I am again filled with tremendous optimism and empathy for everyone. Once upon a time, my myopic lens was focused on making a difference but I did not quite know how this was going to be accomplished. Now I am seeing a pathway to empathy with educated eyes and with a wider lens that captures more light. Like the lens itself, it is not a linear progression it is circular. There are degrees to this insight.

This was my self-constructed pathway of progression in the public school system as an Aboriginal teacher. My question was this: Do all teachers go through these stages of growth? Do they arrive in the system on different steps of development based on their previous lived experiences? What did the Aboriginal participants have to say about their own growth and development? Will my answer “yes” to the questions above be affirmed? After careful examination of their words, told in their own way, these are our stories.

The power in attempting to name is extreme and this is where racism awareness begins. Thoughts of confronting racism became the early formation of my critical consciousness. Speaking about overt instances of racism is not without consequence. Instead, when it is named, racism goes from the overt to the covert. It goes from what was once heard and felt to what is only being seen, but still felt (i.e. semiotics, surveillance, negative depictions, lack of

opportunity, undesirable situations or positions). This is how my awareness of racism evolved, by observing how a racist adapts.

Out of this critical consciousness, when it was tempered with time, the stage of deeply knowing the subject of racism grew. This deeply knowing in my situation was achieved through the recognition of the overt and detection of the covert racial pathway. Racism can then be witnessed throughout the introduction to and interactions with new non-Aboriginal people. The repeated pattern cannot be random (Allport, 1958).

I wanted to uncover the possibility of an evolving awareness of racism as part of the understated reality of other experienced Aboriginal educators. Were they also experiencing this progression in the recognition of racism?

At this stage my personal growth moved from just deeply knowing and into action expressed in research, not driven by anger, but by empathy. Although I can now view, comprehend, choose to respond, and predict racism, I refuse to be defined by it. I am not a victim. I refuse to be romanticized or pacified. Instead I study the phenomenon further so that others may benefit from where I have been and then use my knowledge about racial tactics. Perhaps in this way, ultimately racism can be prevented before escalating. If so, a great deal of unnecessary growing pains can be eliminated for all Canadians.

Encounters with racism

This section grew out of the need to talk about racism, and then specifically how racism is perceived by Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system. I began by describing the pattern of my own responses to racism.

"The Pattern" . My own experiences with new and unfamiliar non-Aboriginal people in the school setting was uniformly difficult at one point or another. There was a pattern to these relationships.

1. Most new people I encountered knew little about Aboriginal people, their history or their worldview. They would often tell "Indian stories" in order to relate or use racial language when verbally interacting. Some of the new acquaintances want to know about an individual's status. Their intention in telling me an Indian story could be about lessening the tension with the unfamiliar or it could be about building a bond; but at times it appeared to be about building a social bomb. The power to name someone is extreme and this naming is often a reminder to a potential competitor that they are locked in a racial structure with differentiated privileges (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005).
2. One of the unnamed roles assigned to an Aboriginal person on staff at a publicly funded school is as liaison between Aboriginal students, their parents and non-Aboriginal teachers and administration. Any time there is a complaint of "racial slurs" or "racial bias" from a parent or student, the administration will visit me. I was hopeful that this pattern is about positive consultation and I happily assumed that role. However, there were times when the consultation was less positive. I felt through tone and body language, that there was the suspicion that I must have put the parents or the Aboriginal student up to reporting the racial bias because I am one of them.
3. Aboriginal educators may be more likely to be reflective and non-reactive while non-Aboriginal personalities tend to speak or dispatch comments quickly based on assumptions rather than fact seeking. The Aboriginal strength expressed in silence and additional processing time, needs to be reinterpreted by portions of the settler society. It

is not a weakness or deficit; its about thinking deeply before you speak so that the accuracy and consequences of each word can be measured. A reduction in "thinking on your feet", and more reflective thinking with the head before speaking (a degree or two of mental separation), would be a good progression. These differentiated ways of being and responding in the world, are not a case of right and wrong or superiority vs. inferiority, they are just different. This is the fact that needs to be recognized and affirmed.

4. Until recently, I did not recognize the urgency of reporting inappropriate actions and spoken words of those lacking in knowledge of policies. I believed that reported incidents would be dismissed and power a larger cycle of ill returns and the possibility of revenge. Instead, I maintained a patient and quiet demeanor. This has been my strength but it has not insulated me from personal and racially motivated attacks. Internal strength can be overwhelmed. Non-reporting might mean extending racial difficulties. Incidents must be named in order to be understood and improve communication.
5. It is necessary to express your legal rights of self-determination and it is advisable to make that declaration. The incident must be addressed and named. Failure to do so will result in a continuance of naming and/or some other power game such as hit and run comments, blaming the victim, negative semiotics, rumors, passive/aggressive harassment, and the scenarios that remain hidden.

Now that my narrative has surfaced and it shares commonalities with other Aboriginal educators' narratives, I must deal with these experiences by searching for and articulating the cause and hopefully a plausible solution. The holistic purpose of my life narrative and that of my study is to bring about more productive and trusting relationships in classrooms and schools, with less pain, and in the least amount of time. Healthy relationships in schools between

Aboriginal people and their co-workers can be built by lessening the unfamiliar, sharing our unique narratives, collective experiences, and our classroom spaces.

It was with this background that I approached the topic of racism with the participants in this study. I wanted to find out if a similar pattern emerged for them. The sections to come represent what the participants told me of their own experiences. Although experiences, settings, and characters do vary, all of the Aboriginal participants have all experienced what they have described as racism, and being "raced" at several points in their careers. The experiences are similar for both men and women.

Overt racism. From date of hire to the present, all 6 participants had been racialized in some way. We all thought that we were an equal part of the public school system but feel that we have not been treated as such. We are in the publicly funded system because of our race or language background, and are allowed entry only as necessary and as funding demand remain constant. Only one of the six has been assigned to a mainstream homeroom teaching position. There is no "normal progression" for an Aboriginal teacher in this system. The over-arching questions were: How have you experienced racism within the publicly funded school system? When did you recognize that you were being racialized? What did you do about it? The following participants' recollections are a sample of reported like events.

Although this study is limited to the experience of teachers in the publicly funded system, it must be understood that the participants' experiences with racism started long before their employment in the public school system. For some, racism was heterogeneous. For example, one of the participants indicated that when he was a young urban Aboriginal, he learned it wasn't a good thing to be "Native" and he wouldn't go out of his way to tell anyone, but nor would he deny it if asked. He learned how the non-Aboriginal people treated Aboriginal people through

observations, which included his grade school experiences, and through the testimonials of his mother. “They treated my mom like garbage, so I never told anybody. It made it hard. I didn’t want to go through that.”

Homogeneous Racism. Some of the participants experienced homogeneous racism. One participant experienced homogeneous racism from her relatives and peers while growing up in a northern community. She was eager to attend school and took readily to learning English in the Day school setting. Community members, including her own school peers, would refer to her as “the apple” (mishiimin). They would tell her that she is not an Aboriginal person anymore because she spoke the English language well. “You are not an Aboriginal!” and the participant would respond: “Yes, I am. I have a brown skin too!” For another participant, the homogeneous racism occurred while completing her educational studies. In this case, the wholeness of her *Indianness* was called into question because she was raised in the urban setting.

Homogenous racism persisted, for 2 of the 6, into their employment. One participant revealed that he is often accused of not being Native enough to be a Native language teacher. There are questions and comments when he identifies as Anishnaabe. Typical questions from Aboriginal parents when he has a problem with a student include: “Who are you? Where are you from? What are you teaching this for? Are you a fluent speaker?” He related: “It is difficult to deal with that everyday.” He stated: “I am tired of it.” He talked about his exposure to racist terminology, alien to him, but not uncommon in the local vernacular. These laced and somewhat camouflaged derogatory terms such as “apple, bogaan, transformer, and bishoo-bishoo” (double letter/double identity) were being widely used in the school community. He was surprised to learn that his own parent had definite knowledge of these terms, while he remained insulated from their meaning.

Recently, this participant had a Ministry of Education official ask him directly if he was "Indigenous" and what tribe he was from. The official went on to tell the participant that he asked him about his cultural origin because he exhibited certain features such as high cheekbones and wider cheekbones than his ears (racial profiling).

Another respondent spoke about homogeneous racism. Aboriginal parents and staff assumed that she was a white woman. Yearly, her cultural identity is challenged with: "Are you Native? You don't look Nish." She powerfully related how racism and non-support from any cultural side impacted on her program and her personally. Like the participant that experienced racism in her university programming, this participant started to question her purpose and identity: "Like who am I? Obviously, I'm nobody. That's what I stated to think of myself." The participant considered quitting the profession because: "I don't know who the heck I am…and it was like I didn't want to be who I wanted to be, just because of all the negativity that was going on around me."

Heterogeneous racism. Heterogeneous racism or challenges to cultural identity by members outside of the Aboriginal culture group were more common as both overt and covert racism experienced by all six participants. Many of these incidents happened in the staffroom. In one instance the comments came from a newer teacher who was completing her final probationary year of teaching. This person was well known to the Aboriginal teacher because they had known each other as youths and had completed portion of their academic training together. She was talking about how long she had to wait in order to be considered for a full time job and commented on how "citizens plus" seemed to get everything. She then directed her comments and anger directly toward the uninvolved Aboriginal teacher by saying: "See, he was hired right out of university and you know why. You of all people should know why and how."

Later that day, a student arrived at the participant's door with a note. It was a letter of apology. The participant recalled that at the time that this gesture of apology was accepted and no further action was warranted.

Another participant recalled a conversation between the principal and a newer teaching staff member in the staffroom. The non-Aboriginal teacher was relaying to the principal, in front of others, that there was a lack of cooperation in the school. She said she had too much to do, and that the kids were getting on her nerves. As the participant was exiting the area, she heard the end to the conversation. The new teacher said: "You want to know the problem in this school? There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians!" When she noticed the participant standing there, she covered her mouth and apologized.

Comments made in the staffroom often involved resentment concerning tax status. One participant reported that she does not spend much time in the staff room other than to pick up her mail and use the washroom. However, on this occasion she was unable to escape hearing a conversation about Indian status cards and the advantage of not having to pay tax. The staff member directed her comments toward the Aboriginal teacher as she was passing through "Isn't that right? You belong to club 'I' and don't have to pay tax. You must love your status card." The participant recalled that she gave a shrug and left without giving a verbal response.

Another participant related that the principal wanted to see him in her office. She wanted to know about the participant's educational credentials and thoughts on career planning. The principal then asked him about his other status. The participant responded: "I'm a status Aboriginal Canadian and I live on the reservation." Then the principal spoke about her family and gave a detailed description of her daughter's shopping. "With your status card you could probably save her a lot of money when shopping." They parted ways with a chuckle, but later

that day the participant found out from a colleague that there had been a parental complaint of racial slurs being made in the school. At that point, the participant recalls: “I was not sure why I was told this information, but I do remember feeling empathy for my co-worker” who was accused of making the slurs.

These comments about Aboriginals not “paying taxes” reflected a huge misconception amongst the settler population. All Aboriginal teachers’ pay is subjected to taxation in the publicly funded school system and there are steeper taxes to pay other than exemption from a portion of the sales tax. The concept of tax exemption is not within the scope of this work, but it is part of the original terms of Treaty negotiations between Canadian government and First Nations. The topic of tax exemption remains a prospect for future study.

Another common example of overt heterogeneous racism heard in the staffroom is when non-Aboriginal colleagues declare: “Everyone knows that all the crime in this community has been committed by Aboriginal people.” These comments are often coupled with blatant racist editorials in the local newspaper. One participant said that these daily conversations grew heated and she found herself in an isolated defensive mode. She felt physically upset. She decided that she would no longer partake in these discussions and in response to racist remarks she leaves the room.

Another participant was present in the staffroom when a colleague was commenting on the practice of a First Nation community funding their students to go on field trips: “Oh ah, those Indians get everything handed to them, here have some free money.” At this point in the relationship, the speaker did not realize that her colleague was Aboriginal. The participant walked out of the staffroom as the conversation continued.

Participants also encountered comments around the abuse of alcohol among Aboriginal peoples. A participant recalled that a probationary teacher was discussing her plans to host a year-end gathering. She told one teacher: “I won’t have enough booze for you.” She then turned to the participant and stated: “We’ll have a whiskey drinking party at my place between you two. There will be no funnels allowed!” The participant left without responding.

Another participant recalled an incident that occurred during the year-end luncheon for the graduating class. Parents, students, and community partners were all invited and tables were arranged in a circular manner. One of the community members, a new immigrant parish priest was invited to the table. As he surveyed the table, he announced loudly: “Time to break out the whiskey. Where is the whiskey?” He sat down and went around the entire table asking everybody about their ethnic background. When his attention was on the participant, with an upward flick of his hand he said: “Oh, you…you’re a half and half.” There was a period of awkward silence. One of the community members left the table shaking his head. The priest then said: “No, no, no, that’s good. I just don’t see many like you here or in the school.” When the participant later approached the principal to ask what that exchange was all about, she responded: “I didn’t see anything wrong with what he said” and walked away. “Inaction in the face of racism is racism” (Pewewardy, 1999, p. 186).

Several participants described these uncomfortable situations and brushes with overt racism occurring particularly with *new staff members*. For example, a new secretary remarked: “Don’t you know that you are really a day late and half a buck short?” This was followed by the clasp of hands and the remark: “Remember…I’m that good and quick.” A new co-worker concluded a conversation on the phone to a parent, then wheeled on her heels and stated: “I am the master of my own wigwam!” She repeated those exact words even louder and left the area.

A third participant recalled waiting at an intersection in town and a co-worker new to the school happened to pull up along side. Her partner in the vehicle rolled down the window and remarked: “What are you doing up here? You’re not supposed to be up here. Go back to the other side of the tracks!” The participant was not sure what motivated this comment, but she did know that he was referring to the tracks and bridge that separate the town from the First Nation community.

Another participant related a series of incidents that involved a new teacher who was filled with questions and was apparently struggling to make gains with her class. She would often seek advice, vent her frustrations, and ask for the participant’s opinions about classroom management. Retrospectively speaking, the participant reported that she should have put up her usual boundary and kept to herself. The new teacher began to talk about the dated stupidity of the Huron Carol and how Tom Jackson (from the TV series *North of 60*) did not deserve the recognition. On the last day of school prior to the Christmas holidays at a staff lunch the new junior teacher came to sit with the participant and remarked: “Do you see ________ over there? She’s not 100% Italian. And do you see __________ sitting over there? She’s not 100% Italian. But I’m 100% Italian and you have no idea what I can do to you.”

One participant detailed a series of non-solicited encounters with overt racism from various school stakeholders that began on his very first day of employment in the publicly funded system. As he reached for the entrance door, a seasoned teacher who was coming out remarked: “Perhaps you are a little over-dressed for this occasion. Actually, your are all dressed up with nowhere to go.” Once inside the school for the first time, the participant was sought out and confronted by a long-term occasional teacher who aggressively told the participant “you took my job!” Later that same week, another staff member, a grade partner came calling and

introduced herself. Amongst her remarks, “I thought you were one of us, I did not know that you were an Aboriginal.” In mid-year, the participant was walking to his vehicle with a box of marking when an elderly staff member told him to: “Forget that shit! Just go out and get drunk! Yeah, just go and get drunk.” At the end of the year, despite a glowing positive evaluation, he was declared redundant. However, on the last day before vacation he received a call from the Board Office informing him that he had been rehired. This was this Aboriginal teacher’s introduction and welcome to teaching in the publicly funded school system.

In the incidents described thus far, this group of participants has been able to absorb and withstand overt heterogeneous racial attacks by not recognizing it immediately, choosing not to acknowledge it, ignoring it, avoiding others, and not reporting events. However, one participant recalled an incident in which another “self-identified” Aboriginal person joined the staff and was unable to withstand the racism. The participant related that a co-worker described the new Aboriginal teacher in the staffroom as a member of the “Fugawi tribe.” The term stems from a racial joke based on the words (pardon the language) “Where the fuck are we?” This racial barb depicts Aboriginal people as lost, lacking organization, lacking direction, or lacking identity. This was the name that several on staff used to name and describe this person from then on. “I even heard them call her Humpty Dumpty and that she was about to fall.” As predicted, this staff member could not cope and moved on. The participant stated: “I felt bad, but did nothing. I was a bystander.”

The fate of this teacher is an extreme outcome of racism. In the experience of the participants, although racism does not cost them their jobs, it may hamper their advancement within the system. What happens to the Aboriginal teacher that has been able to cope well, is able to absorb commentary, and is generally able to maintain positive collegial relationships by

remaining stoic, and "passes" these testing situations? Are they slated for promotion? This opens up another level of unpleasant revelation.

Covert racism. For these participants, covert racism took the form of limiting teaching assignments (Aboriginal focused positions), exclusion from conference attendance, unequal or unfair classroom assignments, inequitable class lists, increased surveillance, interference, tampering, and coping with negative personal and professional assumptions. Several of the participants indicated that they felt limited by being hired and designated to teach in an Aboriginal focused position. One of the participants related that there were no opportunities for advancement and that when she has applied to become a homeroom teacher she has been told on numerous occasions that she is specialized.

Feelings of being intentionally limited within the school system. One participant's comments demonstrated an emerging knowledge of being intentionally limited. Regular classroom teachers who are Aboriginal are not only underrepresented in the publicly funded school system, but the Aboriginal teachers that are within the system are not migrating to homeroom assignments. "We are regulated and placed and locked in this Native language thing." Most Aboriginal educators are hired not as a mainstream homeroom teacher, but as a culturally visible person intended to address parts of the system that don't fit or where it does not make sense to have a non-Aboriginal person in that position. When another teacher expressed her interest in new teaching positions following the proper protocols and transfer forms, she was told that she should just be thankful that she had a job. In response, she asked, "Are they saying this because Aboriginals are always thankful? Of course I'm thankful!" Similarly, another participant reported that although he applied yearly for new classes to teach apart from Aboriginal programming and content, the student composition of his newly constructed classes yearly is

entirely Aboriginal students. Additionally, his student list always included a very high number of Aboriginal students on Individual Education Programs (IEPs), which complicates instruction.

This cultural inclusion piece is required in the publicly funded school system protocol (AEO, 2007a) but it is not necessarily endorsed, understood, or embraced. Aboriginal children are part of that inclusion and are for the most part absorbed into the mainstream classroom; the Aboriginal teachers are not.

Difficult class assignments. The theme of being handed difficult class list assignments continues amongst other participants. One described being assigned to teach in a portable far removed from the main school building. This was the only one “out there in the field”, and this building had no running water and hence no washroom facilities. She was on the way out to set up this classroom when, a teacher with experiential knowledge of the school community and demographics, asked to see the class list assignment. The experienced teacher went down the list shaking her head and stated: “This isn’t right. They can’t do this to you.” But it was already done.

Another participant reported that after a week of working with a group of junior level students at the start of a new school year, the teacher sensed that the arrangement and division of students was not equitable. Many of the students were far behind the grade level and far too many students expressed an open and violent dislike toward one another. When the participant approached the principal with the possibility of separating some of the problematic pairs of students by exchanging students into the much smaller grade partner class, the principal responded: “No, the class lists are staying exactly as I made them.”

Later that week the principal approached the participant in the staffroom with teacher evaluation forms and stated: “I know its early, but you are up for evaluation.” To which the

participant responded: “I am glad that it is you doing the evaluation.” The principal then left the room shaking her head. The participant had no way of knowing whether or not the early evaluation had anything to do with the request for a change in student assignment. By arranging the difficult class assignment and then adding the pressure associated with the teacher performance appraisal, it is clear that the principal was trying to undermine the Aboriginal teacher’s balance and presence in the school. It was an abuse of the TPA process. “Through work ethic, determination, building a bond of belonging, accountable talk, and respectful connection to one another, the class carved out a group identity and performed well” (as witnessed by EQAO results and other criterion based reference testing). The Aboriginal teacher survived the class assignment and “unnecessary” TPA process. Although the TPA was mainly positive (with some unkind personal inferences such as a lack of emotions and social knowledge), in retrospect, the participant related that he should not have signed off on the report, reported on-goings to upper management, (that may or may not have been directing the events), made an appeal to the Human Rights Commission, or at the very least, request that he be granted the respect to comment on the principal’s management skills (or lack there of based on approved policy criterion not emotion) in a principal performance appraisal. “That’s what it would take to level the playing field for an Aboriginal teacher and avoid the employment of the TPA weapon.” As it turns out, any move the Aboriginal teacher would have made to challenge would have all been for naught as the principal and segments of upper management left the school board the following year. As the participant related: “This was a parting shot of an extreme racist born of another century and I hope never to see the ignorance of them again.”

Lack of professional development. Another problem is the lack of inclusion in professional development opportunities. For example, one participant recognized that she did not

receive information about conferences and workshops to further develop her professional learning. “The principal picks and chooses who goes to these events.” She revealed that being intentionally left out of the loop was frustrating and described this compartmentalization as “being placed in a box.” She did not have access to conferences other than Aboriginal themes “which I already know.” This had been the pattern within all of the schools where she has worked.

Surveillance. Another conundrum that was common amongst the participants was a perception that they had to cope with persistent surveillance, interference with managing Aboriginal students’ behavior, and in some cases tampering. During the course of the school year, one participant recalled that he began to notice a high degree of surveillance. Even though the entrance door was locked, he noted that on several occasions his desk had been run through and the locking storage and closets had been rearranged. “It was clear that the organization of my teaching materials and neatly arranged rows of student workbooks had been disturbed.” On return to school one evening, the participant noticed that the key to the filing cabinet, which always remained in the lock and was difficult to pull out of the mechanism, had been removed. Even more disturbing was that two pieces of Aboriginal art had been clearly tampered with. One of the hanging pictures was lying on the floor in the corner and the other piece of art had been removed entirely from its frame never to be seen again. When informed of these occurrences, the principal responded with: “I’ll look into it.” He never did get back to the teacher to inform him of the results of his investigation.

In a similar event, a second participant reported that two weeks into the school year the principal informed her that she would be moving out of the school and into the portable. Although it was a considerable hardship and the timing was less than ideal, the move was

completed. As the year progressed, she felt an uneasy sense of surveillance that was later confirmed. In conversation with the custodian, the teacher came to understand that the principal would often circulate from room to room with a clipboard and conduct inspections. One night, the participant returned to the school and witnessed this activity first hand. The participant described the principal standing on a chair, clipboard in hand, and with white gloves on, running his free hand along the top of the coat room/classroom divider. "When I said hello, I thought he was going to fall off that chair." The participant did not ask what or why, but gathered the books she had came for, bid him "good night." From this night onward, items in the participant's room remained stationary.

Use of racial plays by other faculty and staff. Another possible example of covert racism common to these experienced participants was they began to discern and recognize racial ploys in instances that first appear as innocent story but turn out to be a means to create further separation. For example, one participant related that it does not matter where she sits down, a person in the gathering will always say, I have "an Indian story for you." This has happened time and time again to several participants. They begin: "Oh, this Native person lives next door to me…" Or "Did you hear what happened at my Aboriginal neighbor's house?" One participant felt that they bring up these stories because it is the Aboriginal person's presence in their space that is on their minds and they may feel that a story or perceived common ground is all they can talk to you about. Another participant described the Indian story ploy as more of an early warning. He described the stories he received upon meeting administrators for the first time. This is one of them:

> I was brought here from England you know, because there just wasn't anyone qualified to run the schools in the north. One of the first things I did when I got up north was to go

> for a snowmobile ride with the local Natives. Well we came off the trails and onto the ice and around the next corner I went through the ice! They led me to a hole, which they went around while I went in it! Yeah…they thought it was funny, just like you do.

The participant described having no comment, but was left with a feeling that he was indeed on a patch of thin ice.

Difficulty in addressing covert racism. Covert racism is not easily identified. The structure of the publicly funded school system ensures that decision making on classroom assignments, number of students in classes, location of classrooms, promotions, and professional development opportunities is done by administrators and the reasons for the decisions are confidential. Within the confidential structure, covert racism has opportunity to flourish. For example, two of the six participants have been promoted within the publicly funded school system (one female, one male). The other four remain in their originally designated position. One of the promoted Aboriginal participants has just secured her new appointment. The details of the process of gaining additional responsibility are given here as an example of how difficult such a transition can be. I include this story in its entirety because it demonstrates how subtle covert racism can be.

Some incidents involving a principal designate. The events unfolded while the participant was serving as the principal designate for a principal about to retire. The decision on who was to replace the outgoing principal was being made during this time. He recalled that it did not take long for racial tensions to surface. “My presence in the office was too much for some traditional competitors to handle. Thus far, an Aboriginal teaching in a mainstream classroom was tolerable, but somehow having me in the office was deemed threatening.”

The first incident in a long string to follow concerned a staff member who would daily escort Aboriginal students to the office and walk away leaving them at the door where the participant was expected to discipline them. One morning, the participant was isolated in the staffroom when the teacher stated: “Say something for once. Say something smart; I dare you! Do you see those kids outside the office door everyday? What do we call them? What do we call people from two different cultural parents?” She then ran out the door. The participant described this by saying: “I knew I had just experienced a hit and run strategy. This was an attack on identity and an attempt to power over the right of self-determination.” In retrospect, the participant stated: “I should have told my supervisor immediately. I now know that it is unwise to let an incident like this go unchallenged because the next step in racialization is to blame the victim.”

A short time after this incident, the principal started to act and speak differently toward the principal designate. At first, she made her comments out of earshot of other staff members. Amongst these early comments: “So you think you can come out of the closet eh?” And then: “Don’t forget, my husband is 100% (specified culture).”

One morning the principal visited the participant’s classroom and loudly announced, in front of the students and another staff member: “I need to see you in my office immediately and I don’t care who you call or what you say!” The participant asked if he could come at the planning period. She agreed.

When he arrived at the office the principal was standing behind the desk holding a piece of paper and was shaking. The participant remembers feeling empathy for her and wanted to ask her what was wrong, but he chose to be quiet. She asked: “Did you put these copies of the school behavior reports in the mailboxes?” The participant responded: “Yes.” Before he had a chance to

explain she yelled: “You’re not supposed to do that! That is my job! Are you telling me that I am not doing my job?” The participant tried to remind her of the policy that she herself had put in place during the September meetings. As stated at the top of the report itself: “All students being sent to the office for discipline must be accompanied by a behavior report and the report needs to be signed by the teacher completing the report.” The participant revealed that staff members were dropping students off outside the office more and more frequently without the paperwork. She responded: “That happens all the time, you don’t even know how often. Just remember that you are not management yet.” She then asked the participant: “Are you alright? Do you want to take the rest of the day off?” As the participant got up to leave he responded: “No, I’m OK. I’ll just go back to my room where I belong.”

Looking back, the participant is glad that he did not go home. “At the time I thought it was a generous offer, but now I can see that this was not a benevolent act.” The participant agreed to meet in the office alone because he believed that it must be some parental problem or something to that nature, and remained optimistic that it could be resolved. However he stated: “I now realize that I should have called in my unit president or at least called Human Resources.”

During his time as principal designate, a second opportunity for advancement appeared. Senior staff at the board office invited him to compete for the new position of Aboriginal liaison officer. He declined the offer. “I thought she would be happy that I made the decision to stay, but that was not the case.” She sought him out and stated: “I did not block you!” And then she went down the hall shaking her head.

With the holiday season approaching, the participant sensed that another verbal barrage was imminent. “It seems that sometimes they look to attack you just before holidays, breaks, or even on your birthday.” In this instance, the principal requested the work and folders of one of

the participant's pupils that he described as "being in crisis." She did not explain. The student's books and work folders were in the principal's office when the foster parent came to the school and asked for the student's homework and books. The participant, in his role as principal designate, had the keys to the office and retrieved the books and set up a few days worth of work for the student to do at home. The principal arrived later that morning and began to yell: "I feel like I am bombarding you, but nevertheless I don't appreciate you going over me to get into the office. If it is locked, it stays locked until I open it. If I'm not here the parent has to wait." She did not allow room for any further dialogue and walked away at a rapid pace.

In the next event, the participant was in the gym with students. The door to the homeroom classroom had been locked in accordance with new Safe School Policy because it was near the main entrance. During the physical education class, the principal stormed into the gym and came within inches of the participant and stated loudly: "Where is your classroom key? Give it to me now!" The participant complied. At the end of the day, the principal came to the participant's class and returned the keys and said with a calmer tone: "Do not lock the door during school hours. Do you understand?" And then she left.

The New Year brought about more "goofy" events such as commentary on the clothing the participant was wearing, walking into the room with greater frequency, talking with an Aboriginal accent, and the warning that he needed to sign out for lunch. The principal also remarked that the participant's class didn't need a babysitter. She inferred that she was listening in via the intercom, and stated that the participant "needed to go." According to the participant, she tried every strategy that she knew to unsettle the participant. He had the perception that she was trying to make him quit.

The principal came to the participant's classroom to make an announcement in front of the class: "I need to see you now and I'll arrange for release time. Mrs. ____________ will take over your class." After a pause she continued: "You may want to make a phone call or have union representation present. And if you threaten me with your lawyer, I'll threaten you with my judge." Upon closing the office door, the principal started yelling: "You wouldn't have tried that with me! I would have chopped you off at the knees! At the meeting yesterday you were rude and obnoxious." To which the participant replied: "No, the meeting went quite well; I was positive, prepared, and humorous" (She was not present at the meeting for the Aboriginal student in crisis and was relying on another staff member's agenda). Then she continued: "Well, I don't care. I want your additional notes from the meeting and I want them now. And you will give them to me if you know what is good for you." The participant gave the principal the additional notes. Later that week, she expelled the student for the remainder of the school year. The participant was offered no explanation but was told: "I caution you to keep your mouth shut."

Not long after this event, at a school mass, the immigrant priest made his way to the back of the church and stopped intentionally where the participant was seated. He leaned over and stated: "I hear you are going to have a new boss and I know him! I guess you are not going to be the boss. Just remember you are never going to beat an Italian." At the end of mass, the participant invited the priest over to his house for a visit and to discuss his comments. The priest has never followed up on that repeated invitation.

In a final event, following a successful yearly wrap up event (graduation luncheon), the principal took the graduation cake and left early. Back at the school, although the principal agreed that the event went well, and was well attended, she accused the participant of giving a speech that was too involved and too good for the audience. She tapped her temple saying:

“These people don’t really matter.” The participant learned that she took the cake and left because the audience continued to talk and visit while she tried to speak.

The participant’s yearend teacher evaluation report indicated that he was an exemplary teacher and that he should pursue leadership opportunities. On the last day of school, there was a present from the principal in his mailbox. He has never opened that present but stated: “I know that through patient listening, and not pulling the pin, that I quietly helped this struggling person transition into retirement.”

The Media. Another aspect of covert racism is evident in the reactions of colleagues when information about Aboriginal issues is part of public media coverage. Participants made comments about visual, audio, electronic, and printed media coverage of Aboriginal issues in the local community and about the abundance of publicly accessible, Aboriginal focused educational materials and initiatives (frameworks, goals, progress reports, monographs, statistical data, dedicated money figures) as probable contributors that feeds racial comments made by segments of the settler population. For example, one stated:

> The media coverage irks me; I find it very stereotypical. I find that the media puts things out there that they really didn’t have to print… It does bother me. The media covers the negative, why not something positive? Our culture is not just pow-wows and that’s not the only positive thing about us.

A second participant responded this way:

> I can see how the public will be asking: “What do they want now? Our community does have a high Aboriginal population. Another point is Native language is not being advertised. Are you saying you don’t want Aboriginal students in your classes? It should be on all advertisements.

The third said:

> The media's goal is to promote assimilation. There is an underlying agenda against Aboriginal people in this country. They would love it if everyone became Métis because they don't have original treaty rights. When status is gone then treaties are gone. They are quick to show the money part so it pisses everybody off.

At a glance it may appear that the media and attention elsewhere is doing the Aboriginal population a good turn by covering their stories through various media. However, that may not be the case. The over attention is creating a negative under-current. This protocol may indeed be doing harm and inadvertently or even purposefully promoting racism and separation by steadily bombarding the audiences with information and updates on the continued *statistical* gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal achievement levels in reading, writing, and math (Ontario Ministry of Education 2009, 2013), huge money figures ($10.5 million in 2007; 42.8 million in 2012-2013) establishing First Nation, Métis, and Inuit advisory councils (2009: 30 school boards report they are in place and by 2012: 50 school boards report that advisory councils are in place and that 64 school boards reported having an Aboriginal educational lead in place).

Apart from the educational venue there is an abundance of pushing, often leading with, Aboriginal issues in the news media (e.g., land claims, mining disputes, truth and reconciliation hearings, Idle No More rallies, Aboriginal business advantages, educational funding, the development of an Aboriginal education act), which is then continued in the realm of public discourse. Indeed, several of the participants indicated that racial backlash has increased along side the launch of the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework (2007a), Building bridges to success for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, developing policies for voluntary-confidential Aboriginal student self-identification (2009), Aboriginal perspectives: A

guide to the teacher's toolkit (2009), and the progress reports on the implementation of the Ontario First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework (2009). With knowledge of media coverage, and having to endure the rollout of initiatives and documents amongst non-Aboriginal colleagues, a fourth participant stated: "It may be time to revisit and recreate a new education for all document and a cogent inclusion in that document should be a summary of the original treaty rights agreements."

Racism in the public school system and elsewhere is not bound by words alone. The issue of racism and racialism in this Nation is problematic. It is the repetitive experience of it that makes racism a recognizable and tangible phenomenon. As racism becomes more established with this age and racists discover that the tactic can be used as a means to power, maintain power, or maintain order as they see fit in a multi-cultural country (the status quo based on the maintenance of their own cultural upbringing and assumptions), racism and its employment will adapt from the easily overt varieties toward the evolution of the means and motivations becoming dangerously camouflaged, sophisticated, and subtle.

Experienced Responses to Racism

The experienced Aboriginal teachers in this study have experienced both overt and covert racism. The following is a collection of race related verbalizations and actions these participants experienced within the context of their jobs within the publicly funded school system.

Verbalizations included:

"Oh, you can pass if you try hard."

"Aboriginals are always getting free money."

"Are you coming out of the closet?"

"Here comes another Grey Owl."

Talking in an Aboriginal accent.

Making ubiquitous references to alcohol

The use of specialized coded terms for Aboriginal people

Downplaying well-founded complaints

Blaming the victim for the racial comments: "Its all in the mix."

Complementing or perhaps threatening comments like "I'm surprised that you have lasted here this long."

The non-verbal examples of racism were usually associated with administrators who did the following:

Surveillance: listening into classrooms via the intercom system

Going through closets, desk, markings, and filing cabinets

Moving or removing things from your classroom

Difficult grade assignments and inequality in class lists and numbers

Importing challenging students from other schools or classes

Exclusion from professional development opportunities and conferences

Disrupting or removing positive past practices

Moving classroom space and assignment from year to year

The participants in this study have responded in many ways to these incidents. An accumulation of verbal and non-verbal racial incidents can lead to an outburst or objection to this treatment. This, in turn can result in a biased performance appraisal or negative teacher performance appraisal (TPA). Participants suggested that teachers be solicited and empowered to comment on the principal's performance as well.

Racism has many inconspicuous layers. When a decision is made to confront it, consequences will most certainly follow. One participant described building up enough courage to confront her supervisor for discrimination towards her as an Aboriginal person and a woman. The supervisor "freaked", that is, he made a very loud objection, and as a result the participant walked out of the area. She took a risk by entering the office alone. This action resulted in the loss of autonomy, increased surveillance, mispronunciation of her name, and the lack of acknowledgement during events. Although this participant lost some of her status with this particular principal, and had to endure some hardship, she believes that this administrator is now more receptive toward promoting other Aboriginal initiatives and out-reach to the First Nations community. These events illustrate one of many strategies that these experienced Aboriginal teachers have learned to employ when dealing with overt and covert instances of racism.

Most educators begin their careers filled with optimism and purpose. Some educators who do not face racism are just as unaware of it as those who do. Those who do not perceive or experience racial events in their lives never need to become aware of it, unless someone who has coped with racism explains it to them. There are several pathways an Aboriginal teacher can traverse when recognizing and measuring a response to perceived racism. The teacher can choose to absorb it, ignore it, leave the area, confront it, or report it.

Strategies for dealing with racism. The participants had tried a variety of strategies for dealing with racism including avoidance, withdrawal, silence and speaking out.

Avoidance. One participant spoke of comprehending that racism surrounded her, but she avoided it by being mobile, not making expressions or desiring what others might want, showing respect and by keeping to herself. The participant related that she does not go out of her way to get to know anybody personally. Inadvertently, the participant has learned that fewer interactions

and silence has meant fewer racial incidents. This is a common starting point that other participants have traveled as well.

Withdrawal. The second strategy that emerged as a common experience, was to immediately leave the area of offense or to avoid the firing line altogether. One participant believed that individuals that choose to use racial language are truly ignorant and will never change. She reported that she will not acknowledge or give power to racist comments/questions and generally will not associate with individuals that use racist language (in her case it was the head custodian). Similarly, a second participant said that when dealing with subaltern or racist speak, she gets up and walks away with the hard fought realization that if someone continues and chooses to be ignorant, then she cannot help them and it is not worth her time to give them any attention.

Silence. A third participant suggested that dealing with racism depends on your personality. "Some individuals may think that they are better off if they do not say anything." This participant said that she had learned through direct experience that if you choose not to say anything racism will continue to affect you and the offender will continue to offend. She further related that when she is really angry about a racially motivated comment, she will walk away and may choose to address the person after a day or so. Overall, many of these Aboriginal teachers are reserved peacekeepers and want to maintain employment security. However, there was a time in this participant's career when she was holding too much in, and out of necessity she had to learn to flush it out.

Another participant said that she has chosen to be silent for a long time and refused to let racism affect her. Her four-step approach to coping with racism was: "to listen, to observe, to take it in, and to let it go." The participant felt that if she let comments go, then racism had no

power over her. She related that many Anishnabek are affected deeply by racism. “They will feel downgraded and not equal. We are made to feel less, but we are really not.”

Another participant reported that he has used multiple strategies and they have clearly evolved over time. For dealing with racism and racists there is not a “one size fits all” solution that fits all situations. When he was young teacher, he chose not tell people that he was Aboriginal because he felt that disclosure would lead to issues, assumptions, differing expectations, and eventually discrimination. Today, he reported that he attempts to educate people about their assumptions and comments by using his perspective and story of what it has meant to be Aboriginal. “I am no longer afraid of saying something, if it needs to be said.”

Speaking out. When racism becomes more masked and sophisticated, a response to it can also under go several transitions and these experienced Aboriginal teachers reported that the most effective strategy is found in initiating a continued courageous conversation. The conversation does not need to be about racism. It can be based on a concerted effort to communicate. For example, although one participant’s previous strategy consisted of observing, absorbing, and moving on without a response, she has developed a novel approach in order to deal with racism and the racist. This participant will go right up to them and compliment them. She looks for opportunities to reach out to them instead of standing back and letting racism happen. This move counters the status quo and alters the relationship. For example, she recently told a non-teaching racist staff member upon returning from a holiday: “Oh my goodness, you look great! You are just as brown as me. You are now my brother.” Another participant referred to this as “diffusing them with kindness.” It is hard to dislike someone who is providing a compliment. The participant explained that she pushes kindness toward a racist so they will have little or no choice but to talk to her on a regular basis.

The strategy of “reaching out to a racist”, was confirmed by other participants. One participant said that although she has experienced racism during several points in her long career in education she felt strongly that it is important to get at the root of the problem by maintaining communication. She felt it is never wise to cease all form of communication with a colleague. Persistence and preparations might get a racist to think critically about their comments and perceptions. Reaching out may cause dissonance and challenge a racist’s faulty thinking and previous learning. In effect, it may free the racist of their past negative practices and words (See Friere, 1970, 1975, 1998).

In one case, speaking out required a few words. A participant recalled an odd occurrence with a staff member’s marital partner (yet another dimension of racism) that highlighted how his strategy transformed from the silent modality. When the participant and this person’s paths would cross within the school, the person would greet the participant by raising his hand in pledge form and stating: “How.” On one occasion, he asked the participant if he was teaching the “song of Hiawatha” and asked him what has been happening on the “Moccasin telephone.” Calmly, the participant chose to respond this time with: “Pardon me?” He looked directly into the offender’s eyes. “He did not utter any more words and I do not recall any further negative conversations from that point on.” When the participant’s co-worker retired later that year, she passed on box after box of quality teaching materials, which her husband carried in. The teacher stated: “I know you will make good use of my stuff.” Retrospectively, the participant felt that he must have responded properly and wished that he had done it sooner. He now recognizes that it is extremely hard but necessary to question or challenge what a person is saying but carrying ignorant comments around is not healthy.

A third participant referred to the action of confronting comments as an early intervention and in her words: “I’ve always been quick to nip that in the bud.” Her self-described strategy is to address it immediately with scholarly language, “in an attempt to educate someone that their perceptions could be wrong.” In her dealings with racism she has continued to use many “I” statements, provide her personal stories, and talks about being a parent, in order to connect with and perhaps correct the offender. She is also quick to defend the Native language programming: “I’m very open about going around talking about the significance of First Nation knowledge in, in you know, traditional knowledge in curriculum for First Nations, for all of Canada; not just for First Nation kids.” Within this common respectful space that has been established, she will then work to respond to the claim that Native language programming is not as important in the realm of learning in the publicly funded school system. On several occasions and with a multiple of colleagues she has stated a prepared response:

> I tell them, that it is most definitely academic because if our Aboriginal kids don’t have a sense of who they are and a lot of them struggle with it because they are being raised in an urban environment, then it’s the schools’ opportunity to provide that opportunity.

Another participant reported that if you are being discriminated against in any way the absolute worst thing is not to say or do anything. This participant detailed her experience of racism with one of her supervisors. The attacks never went beyond the building and in looking back she felt this was wrong. She wished that more people knew about it. If it ever happens again she has stated that she is not going through the growing pains of awareness or what she called: “the baby steps…because those measures will get you nowhere.” She has disclosed that she cried daily and nearly quit teaching altogether. Next time, she is going to the top. “Do not keep it in, make sure it is known.”

One participant related that she has observed that today more people are educated and recognize, but not necessarily accept, that there is a broader definition describing Aboriginal people. She referred to the March 2013 edition of the *Professionally Speaking Magazine*. The magazine makes reference to the new happy faces of Aboriginal education, which begs the question what did the previous face of Aboriginal education look like? Despite the campaigns of educating non-Aboriginal people on Aboriginal identity and presence within the public school system, this participant has reported that the assumptions about her and negative comments about the program are persistent until she confronts the comments head on and without delays.

Confrontation, for this participant is a little different. She reported: "I don't have the dark skin, and there is an assumption that I am a white woman." When a colleague starts to speak racially around her, she has developed a prepared statement: "Wait a minute. Are you saying something about my culture? Because I sure ain't talking about your culture." The usual result is that the individual will typically go quiet and then apologize and it is over. However, some non-Aboriginal personalities are more aggressive and continue to question. In the latter case, the participant has heard the response on several occasions: "Oh, you're Native? Are you now?" And this too is met with a resounding response: "Yes, I am."

In a similar situation, another participant described her strategy for dealing with the racism she has come to anticipate. When her cultural identify is challenged with questions such as: "Are you Native? You don't look Native?" She will start speaking Anishnaabe and identifies herself and the First Nation she calls home. This self-declaration strategy and preparing for what might be coming, provides clarification and places a powerful boundary around the issue of race. Moreover, it is the counter to the boundary that a racist and their racist speak try to place and lace around the Aboriginal person in the first place.

The participants concur that a non-response to racism through silence is a faulty construction of strength. Although being stoic is a noble trait, if an Aboriginal teacher chooses not to act upon racist comments the events may continue, be downplayed, and outright dismissed, but not forgotten by the victim.

The proper guidelines and policies set forth by Human Resources departments should be followed. But telling a colleague, Union representatives, or immediate supervisor may be the proper protocol. The protocol may not provide enough protection. Aboriginal teachers are advised to investigate and know their rights so they can go above and beyond the workplace interference when necessary. In effect, cultural supremacist assumptions that drive racial commentary and racist actions need to be confronted and corrected by authority above the offender or in the extreme by necessary legislation.

Racism can flare up in an instant and at times it is difficult to recognize in the moment. Repetitive experience with racism "improved the vision" of these Aboriginal teachers until they developed an ability to view racism and name it from multivalent angles. Aboriginal teachers within the publicly funded system may be at differing stages of understanding racism. Their journeys are further complicated by the opportunity to "self-identify" and their ongoing role model status in relation to Aboriginal students in their classrooms.

Mixed in with the participants' words were the words of Aboriginal students who are simultaneously trying to identify with Aboriginal and popular culture. Self-identification may be counter to becoming what is popular and by choosing not to self-identify both teachers and students can avoid the self-selected trappings of dealing with enculturation. Yet the Aboriginal self cannot be avoided. As Akan (1999), described it, to be truly courageous and strong, you

must first know your Aboriginal self. "It is not good to deny our identity, our Indianness, but neither is it to proclaim it or impose it on others. We are only called to *affirm* it" (p. 38).

If Aboriginal people are able to affirm self-identity early in life, (as in the case of students), then it will become less of an issue as the individual grows. It is inevitable that "the call" (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2008) or the conversation and challenge of identity will come up later in life, because "race matters" (West, 1993). The individual will know how to diffuse racialism by simply stating who they are strongly and thus avoiding the long-term and lingering prognosis of pain born out of a lack of self-cultural knowledge. It is here that self-identification and further cultural programming may prove useful.

Although the Aboriginal student body is growing within the publicly funded school system, Aboriginal people are grossly underrepresented in all employable pools in the publicly funded school system. Aboriginal teachers who have gained entry to the system have been stifled and compartmentalized. If this situation is to change, as the population of Aboriginal students justifies, there will be more Aboriginal teachers entering the system. These newly minted Aboriginal teachers arriving in the PFSS will need to be aware of the situation and prepare themselves with strategies and responses honed by pioneering Aboriginal teachers that have gone before them. At present, Aboriginal teachers within the publicly funded system often begin their careers hoping to ignore racism within their daily interactions and avoid confrontation. However, all of the participants in this study concurred that there is a need to immediately confront racism. This should be done in a serious and scholarly tone coupled with the use of "I" statements. The participants suggest that racist comments, actions, and semiotics need to be confronted with a respectfully firm declarative statement and an immediate accompanying statement of self-

identification. This self-help should project a powerful message and save the opportunity for continued and productive relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

It has been an extremely slippery slope for Aboriginal teachers to gain entry, establish traction, and maintain peaceful careers in the public school system. Although some have succeeded there remains a conditioned assumption that an Aboriginal person within the system secured the job only because of their ethnicity. These Aboriginal teachers concur that when choosing to speak out about racism, when the day comes that the Aboriginal teacher decides not to absorb or forgive, he or she must be vigilant because it is never over.

The participants also agreed that the process for speaking out must be carefully planned and the Aboriginal teacher must be prepared for possible escalation. If the words are not just right and they do not offer an equal out the relationships will be set back. When this happens there may be unanticipated backlash.

There is always another form, another expression, another cloaked weapon, of racism available in response to an Aboriginal teacher becoming "idle no more." All of the respect that has taken so much time to create can be immediately diminished if not destroyed entirely. It is about being proactive and preparing with both a respectful and intelligent responses before hand.

Looking to the Future

These conversations with experienced Aboriginal teachers within the publicly funded school system provided opportunity to meld the learning that came from their experiences into advice for future Aboriginal teachers. I formulated this study with this in mind. I asked the questions, aware that the responses, once they had been recorded and retrieved, would eventually provide practical advice for future Aboriginal teachers. This section is our collective attempt to

produce reciprocity. We must give back and provide opportunity for all others (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), who desire to learn, succeed, and enter the publicly funded school system.

This advice is separated into two sections. The first section includes suggestions from the participants on how to organize and plan a smooth entry into the profession and maintain relationships within the teaching community as part of the job. This section includes advice on enhancing the profile of Native Language classes. The second section speaks specifically about how to respond to racism as it is encountered on the job.

Smooth Entry. Currently it is difficult to obtain employment in the publicly funded system because there are many underemployed teachers on supply teaching lists. Entry is even more difficult in situations in which racism is a barrier to employment. Participants had the following advice for all teacher candidates regardless of their status:

1. Get to know people in the system by various means and become active in the community.
2. Promote your experiences, demonstrate your knowledge, and advocate for yourself.
3. Keep an accurate employment history and find strong, genuine references.
4. Maintain a clean criminal check; be aware that victim's checks (vulnerable persons check) can be problematic as well.
5. Monitor Internet postings and Board websites. Rigorously follow up on postings.
6. Adopt an attitude that you can teach anything at any level; take anything that is offered.
7. Ask yourself and answer: "What do I offer that the employer could benefit from?"

For five out of six participants, teaching the Native language component served as the doorway into the system. For them, knowledge of the language and self-identification as an Aboriginal contributed to their opportunity to join the publicly funded system. Although at the time of this study four of the six participants were still looking for the doorway out of the Native

language compartment that leads into the mainstream, they recognized the importance of that initial opportunity. Based on that situation, the participants in this study made the following recommendations for new Aboriginal teachers seeking employment.

1. Get to know as many people as you can, particularly the people who can have an influence on future employment such as Principals, Superintendents, other teachers, and human resources personnel, and let them know you are Aboriginal.
2. Secure a place on the supply teacher lists with local Boards of Education as soon as possible. This will give candidates more exposure and the opportunity to make contacts and advocate for themselves.
3. Aboriginal teachers on the supply list should make sure that everyone including the administrator knows about their Aboriginal status. They should be sure to meet these people and express an interest in teaching a Native language class.
4. Community involvement can be key to employment. Teacher candidates should get out into the community and participate in events and work at becoming positive and active community members. In one participant's case, it was her child's involvement in lessons and attending advertised system events that led to relationships, familiarity, and opportunities. "Be aware of your role modeling in the community and that people's perceptions of you are important." Being a visible and healthy community member is important because when the opportunity comes "they could have passed you up for another person."
5. An Aboriginal teacher candidate needs to be a strong advocate for culture. "You must know your stuff, in order to speak with credibility and not everyone is going to want to hear it." Several participants also related that a candidate, despite pressure to assimilate,

accommodate, or code switch, should not abandon their culture and language because they will need it. People need to know where they come from in order to survive and then flourish within the public school system.

6. The Aboriginal teacher candidates need to continue to take extra courses during the employment seeking time. Additional training will widen your options and create distinctions.

Maintaining relationships. Once they have secured a job, the new situation will bring in an element of naivety. The following comments will assist Aboriginal teachers prepare for questions and situations they may never have experienced before.

1. All participants agreed that communicating with parents could be a problem. It could be a surprise for some non-Aboriginal people that an Aboriginal person is their child's teacher. "You're my daughter's teacher? But you are Aboriginal." Preparing for comments like these will be beneficial. September will be about earning the trust of your parents, so it is advised to communicate with them often and change their assumptions through action not confrontation.
2. Fully accessing the curriculum may be a difficult task because: "At the end of the day, it is the Aboriginal teacher's responsibility to look at the curriculum with a critical lens. To be fair, yet to promote Aboriginal history and culture but to do so without undermining the perspective of others including parents, students, and colleagues."
3. Asking for assistance is not to be harbored as a weakness. Although it may not be in a teacher's nature to ask for help, it is suggested that they seek out the expertise within the Board and employ their services. This outreach will expand a teacher's network, but it may bring about new awareness of successful pedagogy. Every participant reported that

they did not have all of the resources and support they needed at the start of their career. New teachers may have to go out and find that support.

4. A new Aboriginal teacher needs to be fully aware that there are finite politics surrounding the social culture of the school. It is strongly advised by the participants to not underestimate what the administrator or your colleagues for that matter, can try to do to you from year to year.
5. Always maintain professional relationships and maintain the trust with your colleagues: "make sure you know your stuff and that you learn their language." Learning to speak and to respond in a professional manner will allow you to defend your pedagogy, position, and personhood without losing respect. You will be questioned, you may hear racially motivated remarks, but the first few years are about successfully establishing allies that will help you to promote and safeguard your place within the school, but ultimately protect the survival of the Aboriginal self in a place where there are not many.
6. Be immediately aware of surveillance when you arrive in the public school system. A long seasoned participant refers to this as: "Being on the watch-out." Like your colleagues, you are constantly being observed and evaluated in multiple and non-formal ways. All that is interpreted is data (Glaser, 1992, 1998).
7. If you desire to secure your post or you find yourself wanting to work towards a new position you will need to advocate for yourself, distinguish what you offer, and attempt to take it. With money involved you need to accept that the educational systems are businesses.

Building capacity in the Native language program. The current model of education in the publicly funded school system projects the wants and needs of the prevailing dominant

cultural structures and continues to reproduce it-self (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Freire, 1970; Lomawaima, 1994; McLaren, 2003; Yosso, 2005). Native Language classes are a challenge to the dominant culture. As one of the participants posited: “Aboriginal people have had their education taken away from them for hundreds of years and it is our job to give it back.”

The Native Language program and Native studies programs are crucial aspects of preserving Aboriginal culture. As such, they deserve a more central position within the publicly funded school system. There has been a significant increase in Native language and Native studies courses since the onset of the FNMI document. In the 2005-2006 school year, 18 Boards reported offering Native language and Native studies courses. During the 2007-2008 school year, 35 Boards indicated that Native programs are offered and running within their systems (OME, 2009). The participants in this study made the following suggestions for preserving and improving the Native programs offered in the publicly funded school system.

1. These programs deserve a larger monetary budget to draw upon when paying elders invited into the classroom to make cultural presentations. The skills and lived experiences of the elders, qualify them as the experts in the field of Aboriginal education. Currently, Native language teachers are not allowed to access their budgets to make proper payments. The pens and other school tagged items do not justify the elder’s time, let alone their transportation costs. These same elders have lived through times that may have impinged upon their own educational aspirations, opportunities, and monetary gains. Therefore, it is only right and just to give them what is owed.
2. Primary Native language classes should be uncombined (a mirror reflection of the junior French language instruction program delivery). Combining Native language classes and instructing Native language during regular class time are both problematic. Native

language classes need to be coordinated with the French language classes in the elementary panel, and multiple sections need to be opened up in the higher levels when required.

3. The courses should be re-structured into a three-year cycle of lessons. The group felt that there should be a coordinated effort on behalf of the Aboriginal staff (release time), to construct units. Such support would be an investment in the future and an endorsement of the program and the personnel in those positions.
4. Provide support for the Native Language classes to host a community feast prepared by the class. The entire school community would be invited to the event on a day set aside to celebrate all cultures.
5. Native language students as well as their non-Aboriginal peers should be going to the local First Nation for programming. In this way, students would become more familiar with the traditional First Nation lands, understand that the settler community now occupies a section of the traditional lands through treaties, and for the non-Aboriginal student or staff, the process of unfamiliarity breeding contempt and speculation, can begin to be challenged and demystified within their own circles of communication.
6. Provide appropriate space. "Giving and guaranteeing a physical space is critical."
7. Community learning or knowledge holders should be in the school on a more regular basis. Students should have the opportunity to prepare, sample, and share traditional foods.
8. Multiple school boards should come together and share ideas and strategies with the intent of moving Aboriginal education forward.

9. The right person with the right supports in the Native language classroom is critical. A fluent teacher assistant operating under the guise of an experienced class manager will prove valuable. Pairing instructors will decrease feelings of extreme isolation and despair, which can lead to resignations especially amongst new NL/NS instructors.
10. Building First Nations languages and culture must be initiated at an early age and extended to the very youngest of the school population. The participants envision starting Native language instruction at the Junior Kindergarten & Senior Kindergarten levels, intentionally at the point where students are beginning and extending their language acquisition skills.
11. Expressing the desire to help, hiring First Nations councilors, and retaining First Nations people in the mainstream school frame is not potent enough to bring about cultural consciousness and fluent language acquisition. The language must be lived.
12. In coordination with growing Aboriginal student populations and a noticeable rise in class numbers, the middle schools needs to open up another section and employ another Native language teacher. Native language teachers require their own stable classroom space to teach in.
13. Native language classes need to be offered in all schools on par with French language instruction or risk loosing this growing population to First Nation and alternate private or Federally funded school locations.
14. Aboriginal teachers need more informed access to professional development opportunities and time provided to gather as a group to plan and share best and next practices.
15. A wider inclusion on any Aboriginal advisory committees is desirable.

16. Program concerns and success from the elementary, middle, and high school need to be discussed.
17. Integration in the Canadian school context should allow all interested non-Aboriginal students to participate in the Native language program (barrier-free). Within the NL classes the NL teacher participants have begun to notice that in their classrooms they can no longer easily discern if the students are "Aboriginal" or not. There seems to be many mixed cultures in these rooms. One participant related this way:

> It would be difficult and disrespectful to ask about cultural identities. I do not ask, I just accept who they are. I stress that I now teach a multicultural class in coordination with the four colors of the medicine wheel.

Racism was encountered by all of the participants in this study. Participants concurred that for Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system becoming a target of racism is not a matter of if, but when. Racialization is not confined to particular venues or assigned to particular stakeholders. New teaching staff and established teaching staff, retiring staff, non-teaching staff, staff partners, administrators, and parents have all participated in creating this picture of racial events surrounding Aboriginal teachers in the system. Racism occurred in the hallways, in the office, during school gatherings, and in the community.

Chapter 6: Summary

This study was an investigation of six experienced Aboriginal educators' narratives from within the publicly funded school system. Experienced Aboriginal classroom teachers are teachers who have completed the probationary teaching period and have amassed in total five or more years of consecutive experience as a classroom teacher. The six participants represented a sample of both status and non-status Aboriginal participants working in the elementary, middle, and high school environments. All of the participants are Aboriginal as defined under section 35 (2) of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982.

The initial purpose of this study was to explore Aboriginal educators' professional experiences and critical events at different points in their careers in order to obtain a descriptive essence of what it means to be an Aboriginal educator in the mainstream schooling system to both insiders and outsiders. However, as the study progressed an important and major context emerged. We became interested in recording, constructing, and reporting a narrative section based on the perception of Aboriginal educators' collective experiences with the dimensions of racism including how it manifested, and what could be done to correct the persistent dissonance.

These narratives of events were collected, sorted, analyzed, and reported by integrating the tenants of narrative inquiry and maintaining adherence to the Indigenous research methodology and expectations. Data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously in this study. During data analysis the data were organized chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded until no new themes emerged from the codes. Field notes, logbook, and drawings were regularly reviewed.

In this Indigenous narrative study, the participation of the Aboriginal teachers was

activated as part of the narrative process. There were several points for narrative exchange, first in the interviews and then in the focus group process. The reciprocal exchange between the participant/researcher and among participants (relationship) in the focus group interview was intended to unearth storied themes around common phenomenon. Interviews and the focus group event with the participants began with a member checking process, discussion, and interpretation sharing. An ongoing conversation regarding my interpretations of the participants' lived experience and the meaning of their words ensured the accuracy of the data. The narrative was a reconstruction of the participants' experiences and the meaning that the participants themselves ascribed to these experiences. These interactions had the power to promote a bi–lateral learning experience in which all parties could learn, gain, and change in the experience.

The narratives were sorted in the following way. First, we described who we are and the gathering of academic credentials, and how our racial consciousness unfolded in the context of continuing careers within the publicly funded school system. This section was entitled, "The Journey". Then we returned to specific stories that helped to shape that journey–our relationships with colleagues, administrators, students, their parents, the expectation for self-identification and the accessible media. This section is entitled the "Elements of the Journey". We then addressed specifically the topic of racism. Further probing broke down the racism into further categories as homogeneous, heterogeneous (overt and covert), and institutional racism. The study provides the definition of each type of racism, in addition to providing the where, with whom and perhaps why these situations occurred. Finally, we reflected on the utility of this knowledge and how it has helped us to remain and thrive in the publicly funded system with experienced-based advice for others who follow.

Findings

As a participant researcher, I provide my experiences as well. I was encouraged when the study went down this path because I personally became quite adept at identifying when, where, and with whom vexatious language or racism was most likely to occur. Observation over time, and recognizing that a repeating pattern cannot be random, led to my understanding. In the second description of the researcher role (Part 2), I described several unusual and uncomfortable racial experiences with staff, teaching and non-teaching. In these instances, my construction of strength built on absorbing did not usually lead to furthering confrontation and reporting. I chose to power down racialized situations rather than powering them up. I needed to share this knowledge. But, this deeply knowing, like identity itself, can be challenged and it needed to be confirmed or refuted within the narratives of participants, which represented a wider social context.

I found out during the study that I was not alone and that having one strategy to deal with racism will not suffice for all situations. The Aboriginal teachers' voices in this study, overwhelmingly reported resistance, stifling, exclusion, and uncomplimentary comments all perceived as racism, and they employed differentiated strategies and provided further suggestions to confront and extinguish racial games and tactics. Confronting racism is not about remaining stoic and silent and then expecting to gain respect in this manner. Correcting racism is about continuing the conversation, stating how you feel, using scholarly references, and affirming your self-determined identification. Speaking out does not necessarily mean powering up these racist situations, but if your conversations are ignored and continue to be disrespected the situation should be brought through existing policies and legislation. We realized that it was better not to get angry or to retaliate with uncomplimentary returns. We confirmed the strategy of

educating the racist by articulating knowledge. The understanding of the importance of establishing an understanding of racism and building awareness of strategies to counter and cope with this phenomenon is a part of the Aboriginal teacher's experience.

One of the important findings of this research is an awareness of the effects of heightened media attention on Aboriginal teachers in the public school system. When Aboriginal initiatives and personnel are highlighted from within the schools and progress is reported via the accessible public media, Aboriginal teachers may face increased resistance from dominant stakeholders expressed in overt and covert racial tactics. A repetitive pattern of events reported from within the schools cannot be happenstance. All participants spoke of and verified racial events that had occurred in their professional careers.

Another important discovery was that, if a new Aboriginal teacher survived their initial years and did not resign, their professional development moved through a learning continuum. The participants were able to describe and name this becoming. It begins with feelings of being overwhelmed, vulnerable, and disconnected. The next stage was described as moving toward awareness, while continuing to be compliant even at a detriment to self. In the second stage, as in the first, holding it in or rather holding it together is the main part of the strategy. Eventually, over time and with accumulated experiences, the teacher will become critically conscious and initiate mobilization, which often results in the need to articulate feelings, and advocate positioning on issues without long delays. This stage is about educating and showing what you know.

Another important finding about our professional experiences within the publicly funded school system was the recognition that the Aboriginal self could not be denied, turned aside, hidden or transformed in the midst of relationships established and new. We have found that

Aboriginal issues, conversations, and angst circulate continuously in our personal lives, and extend into our professional lives as well. It is perhaps hard to recognize the totality of meaning of these events in the moment or in the dawn of our careers, but it is much easier to see in solidarity, in the similarity of shared critical events, and in communal retrospect.

It is important, even crucial, for Aboriginal teachers to comprehend that a person who has never experienced racism (uncomplimentary naming or treatment based on cultural background), will never need to understand racism unless someone who has experienced it is persistent enough and strong enough to explain it to them respectfully and it may have to be explained on multiple occasions.

Prior to the inclusion of the growing list of Aboriginal initiatives (AEO, 2007a, 2007b; OME, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013), and in the midst of ubiquitous media reports on Aboriginal affairs (television, radio, and newspapers), the Aboriginal teachers that are in the system would have benefitted from a stronger effort to communicate the protective legislation available to them through school board policies. Regulations regarding anti-racist education should have been communicated prior to the initiatives pushing Aboriginal frameworks, reports cards, tools kits, expectations for self identification, and released statistics and testing results. Anti-racist policies need to be communicated with greater urgency immediately.

At the end of the day, if headway (academic and relational) is going to be made between Aboriginal and non–Aboriginal interests RACISM MUST BE ADDRESSED FIRST. Even though the 83 school boards governance that I reviewed, have strong references to human rights and some have commitments to anti-racist policies and procedures, the means to communicate this at the school level to teaching and non-teaching staff (both experienced and new) needs to be much more stringent, consistent, repeated, posted, and documented. In all this we have learned

that the Aboriginal teacher in the publicly funded school system requires both collegial and legislative support. If an Aboriginal teacher is able to find and activate these aforementioned pillars of support and work toward a continued effort to decolonizing their integral selves, it will be then that they will be able to move with greater speed and efficiency to effectively administer to the needs of the Aboriginal students and their peers within their classrooms.

The Findings as Blueprints

The first of the two lists that end the study has been constructed, in the interest of reciprocity, as guidelines for all teachers at the start of their careers, regardless of their self-identification. The second is directed toward Aboriginal teachers that have entered into a publicly funded school because they will face differing and certain challenges. The participants also provide cues on building the capacity of Native language/studies classes.

The results were translated in two letters. The first letter is addressed specifically to future Aboriginal teachers. The participants wished to express what it would be like to be an Aboriginal teacher in the PFSS and speak of the need for Aboriginal teachers to prepare themselves for questions they would not naturally have about themselves. Here, they are reminded them that racial identity will most likely be challenged, socially deconstructed, and downplayed if they let it happen. Next, the future Aboriginal teachers are reminded to always protect their self-identification. They are advised to remember that they are who they think they are, they fit in culturally where they think they fit in. Any attempt to alter this mentality is infringing upon their right of self–determination and is essentially a racial ploy directed toward undermining their position in the school. However, retaliation with uncomplimentary words will not yield gains, but will result in the loss of ground. Instead, they are admonished to find strength

in the words of elders such as Linda Akan (1999): “The body is a wise and powerful teacher. It is not good to deny our identity, our Indianness, but neither is it to proclaim it or impose it on others. We are only called to *affirm* it” (p. 38). This stance provides balance.

Future Aboriginal teachers are reminded to remember always, that their presence in the PFSS represents progress for us all, and I do mean ALL OF US, with eventual international ramifications. We are never to forget that being guided (in deeds and words) by the Aboriginal cultural groups’ principles of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity that an Aboriginal teacher’s presence in the PFSS provides educational *relevance* for both Aboriginal and Canadian students within their classrooms. Here then, is the letter:

A letter from Aboriginal Teachers in the Publicly Funded System for those to come

Dear Future Aboriginal Teacher in the Publicly Funded System:

What has it meant to be an Aboriginal teacher in the public school system? Being an Aboriginal teacher in the publicly funded school system can mean progressing through periods of isolation and silence, through awkward awareness, critical consciousness, and ultimately toward knowledge of self and affirmation of place expressed in ethical action. It is your choice. The utility in what follows is intended to shorten the acclimation phase. Our comments as experienced Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system are intended to be practical and activated. Use them as you will; but continue to try, you must.

An Aboriginal teacher needs to be ever observant and “on the watch-out.” As one participant expressed: “It is unfortunate, but your defenses have to be up because you need to anticipate an attack from someone.” In order to avoid growing pains, it is suggested you prepare yourself for the questions you have never had about yourself. When you become able to

anticipate what hurtful comments might be made, you can spend some time practicing and preparing an intelligent and respectful response. Boundary created and confliction averted.

When an Aboriginal teacher emerges in the publicly funded school system, the Aboriginal paintings, texts, and art works do nothing to counter the undeniable under-representation of Aboriginal people in the public school system and the few that endure lack genuine allies. The findings of this study indicate that an Aboriginal teacher remains vulnerable and will be raced. The severity and duration of the "racing" period is contingent upon the amount of time it takes to gain awareness of the wide and varied overt to covert racial pathways. But knowledge is not enough. The Aboriginal teacher must become a vocal proactive self-advocate and continually develop, employ, and assess counter racist strategies in order to keep the adaptation of racism and racial tactics in check. It has been uncovered through the testimonials of these experienced Aboriginal teachers that the worst thing of all would be to do nothing about racism. A response must be made. It is suggested that you make a clear declaration of objection, clarified by an "I feel" statement, and end it well by affirming your self-identification.

It is envisioned that future Aboriginal teachers will be asked to self-identify. Question the meaning of this. Qui Bono? Is the invitation to self-identify extended to all in the publicly funded school system? We only ask that you consider the question because your identification may be used to justify lucrative tuition agreements, yet these do very little to increase a professional Aboriginal presence within the system, and the self identification program provides a platform for non-Aboriginals to conduct further research and analysis.

Being an Aboriginal teacher means you need to transition from absorbing/accepting to acting and advocating your feelings, ideas, and thoughts. Stand your ground and stand on guard for thee! But do so with caution because your words will be used against you in accordance to a

law of club, fang, and their thing. The participants would like to relay that an Aboriginal teacher eventually recognizes that they are placed in a box (marginalized) and that teaching choices, class lists, grade assignments, and professional development will be less than desirable and limited. One participant described this further as being intentionally stifled: “After five years of applying for transfers, I do not even get the opportunity to say no.” In her case, she has not had the opportunity for change and she notes that when she spoke out, she was told: “be thankful that you have a job.”

As in this example, an Aboriginal teacher will feel discriminated against from time to time, but you are not beaten. Think of it as being prepared for the road ahead. Look forward to making opportunities for yourself and demonstrate your skills on multiple levels. Get out there to system and community events if you want to depart from compartmentalization in the Native language program. Most importantly, your sophisticated responses, your physical presence, and your growing intelligence can dispel the myth of a “persistent gap” or what we would identify as a faulty notion perpetuating the inferiority of Aboriginal people in general.

It is now the seventh generation and the Aboriginal Nations have grown strong. We do not require anyone to speak for us. Your presence in the public school system is a sign of progress not only for First Nation communities, but this progress also will be eventually recorded in the narrative for all of Canada so easily read and respected by other Nations. There is still, much to work out. In the meantime, remain determined and hold on to the optimism that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples have grown closer and as it should be, we are much more in combination than before and together we are better for it.

Journey well.

The second and concluding letter was addressed to all educational stakeholders in the PFFS. In the spirit of equity, partnership, and alliance, we projected that there was a need for an advanced presence of Aboriginal people in all roles within schools. We asked stakeholders to please support the initiative and approach this partnership with an open mind. Expansion of the NL/NS programs and personnel in the PFSS will be an eventual benefit to all educational stakeholders. Our First Nation ontology or the capacity for accepting multiple realities, and our epistemology or ways of describing knowledge construction (knowledge is relational and cooperative), and the primary ethic (axiology) of relational accountability (in deeds and words) is justified because it is both a responsible and respectful approach positively affecting all relations within a school. It is also a way of being that we can all live and abide by.

A letter from the Experienced Aboriginal teachers to the Publicly Funded School System

Dear Stakeholders of the Publicly Funded School System:

The frontline workers in the publicly funded school system need to be representative of the children being serviced in order to advance relationships and communication with students and their families. There needs to be an advanced presence of Aboriginal people in the public school system in all of the roles that are available (secretarial, custodial, student support people, lunch helpers, councilors, teachers, and principals). “It is critical because then you wouldn’t have these huge issues because you would have the role models in the school.”

It is evident that the experienced Native language teachers should be assigned to a regular classroom assignment in order to build capacity and create the space for new Aboriginal teachers to staff the Native language classrooms. “If you had those Aboriginal teachers in front of the

classroom…" Aboriginal students that need academic support and guidance "would become the priority in the school."

In coordination with the tuition agreements between First Nation communities and the publicly funded school system, we sense that First Nations will begin to negotiate with greater rigor. In exchange for significant fees, the First Nations need to ask for more qualified visible representation of Aboriginal personnel in the schools at all employable levels. We ask that you support this development with an open mind. There is no need to conquer your allies (Longboat, 1987).

Within the memorandum of understanding (MOU), the First Nations could ask for a reasonable percentage of Aboriginal teachers in front of the mainstream classrooms. This MOU would also be the way to circumvent Union interference and regulation that management could use to block an Aboriginal person's employability as well as interrupt the current flow and status quo of social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Each year, school boards conduct routine police checks on all employees. Teachers seeking employment are also subject to the same process and therein a camouflaged problem lies. All victim dealings with police forces should not be coming up on police records checks for any of us. This "vulnerable persons check" should not be included in a police check because it can be grounds for faulty assumptions and directly impacts on employability.

Local First Nations and school boards need to coordinate excursions to the traditional land base for cultural and historical instruction on and about the land for all students. Visiting several locations and meeting First Nations representatives is academic, breaks assumptions of those that have never been on the land, and will further strengthen the concept of partnership as expressed in the original terms of a treaty. We invite you to join these excursions.

We would also like to inform you that there is also a need to bring more Aboriginal people with specialized skills into the classrooms. It is important to have First Nation members volunteering so that Aboriginal students can see themselves being equitably represented as well as envision there own success through these role models. On this point, elders need to be contacted and fairly compensated to conduct cultural teaching sessions. The latter group, most likely went through an oppressive educational system that has impacted on their life-long outlook about schooling and impinged on their own employable opportunities. This initiative is a chance to repair a long-standing injustice.

The existing Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system need to serve as bridges of support between Aboriginal parents and their child's regular classroom teacher when able and they need to be supported by all stakeholders. An important lever in establishing this new line of communication and relatedness is about gaining trust. It is suggested that Aboriginal teachers be encouraged, never subversively pressured, to reach out to and invite colleagues into their classrooms so there is no instructional mystery and lingering questions about competency and effectually not allowing an unspoken degree of separation to remain and/or grow.

All students within the Canadian educational system should be afforded the opportunity and given a choice to attend the Native language classes on par with the existing French language programs. This means Native language class needs to be expanded to many more schools in the public school system and ergo, employing more Aboriginal people. It would be a move that would address several previously mentioned concerns.

Mandatory cultural and sensitivity training and anti-racist education sessions need to be initiated for all school staff including the non-teaching members. There is a great need for the Canadian settler population to be educated about the nature of treaty agreements between First

Nations and government. In return for occupation and benefiting from the land and resources, First Nations negotiated compensation; nothing has been permanently legislatively stolen or given for free. It is important to understand that First Nations will no longer stand down when treaties are violated, but will continue to stand up when attempts are made to erode, alter, or remove treaty agreements. These democratic actions protect the rights of all of us. The lingering settler mentality that "Indians get everything for free" is faulty and racist. Racist rhetoric is oft born out of ignorance of these binding contracts, but it is projected that most settlers will understand and show greater solidarity with First Nations when the treaties are exposed, are elevated as integral to our collective history, and respectful scholarly language is used.

In conclusion, Canada has an internal identity crisis. It is a fact that we are a Nation of many strong cultures, all rightfully demanding space, acceptance, voice, and respect. The violation of any of these afore mentioned rights and in particular when racial boundaries are perforated, it creates an uncomfortable friction and uncomplimentary subaltern speak.

When ethnicity runs to proclaim its own place and expression within a multicultural Canadian Nationalism, colonies and tribes emerge. Are we collectively Canadian or nations within a Nation? We need to provide order to our complex relatedness; and if we are ever going to get over this lingering malaise, the schooling system is where we need to begin. Education in the publicly funded schooling context must continue to stress and celebrate that our collective National identity is unique and that is okay. Our Nation's identity, the ever-widening deep cultural gene pool, is not a weakness it is strength. It is within the Canadian schooling system that we instruct our students, the ones who will eventually proudly project to the world, how Canadians learned to assemble this strength alongside their First Nation partners, born out of a deep respect for self-determination and building the necessary capacity for our differences to be

supported by original treaties and legislative justice for all as persons. Above all else, we must never ever use the difficulty of race relations or our own race as an excuse to not succeed within the Nations located in Canada. It is with this attitude that the structures of impediment will finally come tumbling down. That is all we wish to say for now.

With respect and appreciation for all relations, we remain:

Experienced Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system

Considerations for future research

During the construction of this dissertation, some possible areas of future studies emerged. Since I have included them in the body of the text, I will only make a brief reference to them here.

1. Any Indigenous study that purposefully targets participants from a specific First Nation requires a separate and non-negotiable protocol for access and approval of the research from the Aboriginal group's perspective. This ethical approval must be respected, sought out, and secured in addition to the university's ethics review board's approval. In the interest of reciprocity, the research must also demonstrate a benefit to the community.
2. A study probing the particulars and justification of Aboriginal taxation and exemptions would be useful.
3. A study on the perceptions of schooling in the publicly funded system gathered from the perspectives of the current Aboriginal parental body will address a void in the literature.
4. A study further investigating why all Aboriginal students are not enrolling in Native language and Native studies course offerings is valid.
5. A study of anti-racist training and ethno-cultural policies and communication of these

polices and procedures at individual school levels in the publicly funded school systems needs to be evidenced and examined.

Final comments

The current study recording the lived experiences of Aboriginal educators allowed for a better understanding of the reality of racism. Through it, racism could be more fully understood and measures could be developed to first identify and then eradicate it from schools. Sharing the results of this study may help to re-define the ethical space. These stories are intended as a means toward improving cross-cultural communication and in the process effectually improving the learning atmosphere in the school. "The more we share our stories, the closer we will all become" (Atkinson, 2007, p. 241).

Sharing the results of this study may help to re-define the mutual ethical space. These critical discourses "…far from deepening the despair of the oppressed, lead to healing, liberation, mental health… Having heard another express them, he or she realizes, I am not alone."
Airing narratives with critical contacts breaks the painful silence and may lead the racist toward transformation and the realization that their words and perceptions could be wrong as they begin to question their own perception of perceived privilege (Delgado, 1989, p. 2437). These stories could be used to create and define new boundaries that we can all agree to live by and within. "If we would deepen and humanize ourselves, we must seek out storytellers different from ourselves and afford them the audience they deserve. The benefit will be reciprocal" (Delgado, 1989, p. 2439). Overall, these new stories are also intended as a means toward improving cross-cultural communication and in the process effectually improve the learning atmosphere in the school, which ultimately benefits the students. In closing, we present to you a passage from the

Aboriginal literature that projects an enduring reciprocal teaching, what we could strive toward together, and clearly reminds us of this Indigenous narrative study's intended contribution to the educational research field and what it offers to you as the respected reader:

> There are birds of many colours–red, blue, green, yellow–yet it is all one bird. There are horses of many colours–brown, black, yellow, white–yet it is all one horse. So cattle, so all living things–animals, flowers, trees. So men: in this land where once were only Indians are now men of every colour–white, black, yellow, red–yet all are one people. That this should come to pass was in the heart of the Great mystery. It is right thus. And everywhere there shall be peace. (Allen, 1986, p. 75)

In understanding the wisdom of this passage, we the experienced Aboriginal teachers in the public school system entertained, imagined, and acknowledged the possibility of co-constructing a new story to be secured in future classroom spaces. Within these spaces, we all can give ourselves permission to share our experiences, events, and pieces of our storied lives without fear, in order to learn from them bi-laterally. If these stories are bound in non-negotiable pillars of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity, we will eventually move toward a relevant transcultural narrative of notable consequence. In doing so, we would be building an example to be referenced often for those who desire to become educators. This skill would then be gifted to those young ones to be educated in the publicly funded school system. We strive always to be responsible and generous when listening to, and when presenting our narrative. It is an important and productive part of our common relatedness. Learning from many words, multiple world-views, and exposure to all available narratives, will always be more powerful in combination, than choosing to conceal our narratives and when learning alone.

References

Aboriginal Education Office. (2007a). *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework.* Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Education.

Aboriginal Education Office. (2007b). *Building bridges to success for First Nations, Metis, Inuit students.* Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Education.

Absolon, K. E. (2008). Kaandosswin, this is how we come to know! Indigenous Graduate research in the academy: Worldviews and methodologies. *Thesis Dissertation,* (Theses Collection 2nd floor).

Absolon, K., & Willett, C. (2004). Aboriginal research: Berry picking and hunting in the 21stcentury. *First Peoples Child & Family Review, 1*(1), 5–17.University of Toronto Library.

Agbo, S. (2002a). Decentralization of First Nations education in Canada: Perspectives on ideals and realities of Indian control of Indian education. *Interchange, 33*(3), 281–302.

Agbo, S. (2002b). Unstated features of cultural depravation or discontinuity: Culture standards for administrators and teachers of aboriginal students. *The Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations, 16*(2), 10–36.

Agbo, S. (2005). Perspective on local control of education with a future orientation: A view from First Nations. *The Journal of Educational Thought, 39*(3), 287–321.

Akan, L. (1999). Pimosatamowin sikaw kakeequaywin: Walking and talking. A Saulteaux elder’s view of native education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 23*(2), 16–39.

Alberta Learning, (2002). *First Nations, Metis and Inuit education policy framework.* Retrieved From www.learning.gov.ab.ca

Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal, 35. April 1877; November 1877.

Allen, P. G. (1998). Special problems in teaching Leslie Marmon Silko's "Ceremony." In D. A. Mihesuah (Ed.), *Natives and academics: Researching and writing about American Indians* (pp. 55–64). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Allport, G. W. (1958). *The nature of prejudice.* Garden City, New-York: Doubleday.

Andrews, M. (2008). Never the last word: Revisiting data. In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (pp. 86–101). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Antone, E. (2003). Culturally framing aboriginal literacy and learning. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(1), 7–15.

Archibald, J. (1995). Locally developed native studies curriculum: A historical and philosophical rationale. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 288–312). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Archibald, J. (1999). Editorial. Hands back, hands forward: Revisiting aboriginal voice and re-visioning Aboriginal research. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 23*(1), 1–5.

Archibald, J., Pidgeon, M., Janvier, S., Commodore, H., & McCormick, R. (2002). *Teacher recruitment, retention and training: Implications for First Nations education: A literature review,* Ottawa: Minister's Working Group on Education, Indian and Northern Affairs.

Armstrong, J. C. (1987). Traditional Indigenous education: A natural process. *Canadian Journal of Native Education,* 14(3), 14–19.

Atkinson, R. (2007). The life story interview as a bridge in narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology,* (pp. 224–245). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Auger, D. J., & Faries, E. J. (2005). *The history of education in Nishnawbe Aski Nation.* Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Barman, J., Hebert, Y., & McCaskill, D. (1986). The legacy of the past: An overview. In J. Barman, Y. Hebert, D. McCaskill, (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*, (pp. 1–22). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Barman J., Hebert, Y., & McCaskill, D. (1987). The challenge of Indian education: An overview. In J. Barman, Y. Hebert, & D. McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian education in Canada volume 2: The challenge* (pp. 1–21). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Barnhardt, R. (1991). Higher education in the fourth world: Indigenous people take control. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18*(1), 199–231.

Battiste, M. (1995). Introduction. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 7–20.). University of British Columbia: UBC Press.

Battiste, M. (1998). Enabling the autumn seed: Toward a decolonized approach to Aboriginal knowledge, language, and education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1), 16- 27.

Battiste, M. (2008a). The struggle and renaissance of Indigenous knowledge in Eurocentric education. In Villegas, M. Neugebauer, S. & Venegas K. (Eds.), *Indigenous knowledge and education: Sites of struggle, strength, and survivance,* (pp. 85–94.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review.

Battiste, M. (2008b). Research ethics for protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage: Institutional and researcher responsibilities. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds), *The handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 497–509). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Battiste, M., Bell, L., & Findlay, L. M. (2002). Decolonizing education in Canadian universities: An interdisciplinary, international, indigenous research project. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(2), 82–95.

Battiste, M., & Henderson, J. (2000). *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage: A global challenge.* Saskatoon, SK: Purich.

Baxter, D. (2006). *Anishinaape pimaatisiwin kikinoomaakewikamikong: Aboriginal presence in our schools*. Working document, Edition 2: Lakehead Public Schools.

Bazylak, D. (2002). Journeys to success: Perceptions of five female aboriginal high school graduates. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(2), 134–151.

Beckford, C. L. & Nahdee, R. (2011). Teaching for ecological sustainability: Incorporating Indigenous philosophies and practices. *What works? Research into Practice research monograph,* 36. Ontario Ministry of Education: Student Achievement division.

Bell, D. (2004). *Sharing our success: Ten case studies in Aboriginal schooling.* Kelowna: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education.

Bell, J. S. (2002). Narrative inquiry: More than just telling stories. TESOL *Quarterly, 36*, 207-213.

Benham, M. K. P. (2007). Mo'olelo: On culturally relevant story making from an indigenous perspective. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 512–533). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bishop, R. (1998). Freeing ourselves from neo-colonial domination in research: A Maori approach to creating knowledge. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies In Education,* 11, 199–219.

Bishop, R. (2005). Freeing ourselves from neocolonial domination in research: A Kaupapa Maori approach to creating knowledge. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 109–138). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007) *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture.* London: Sage.

Brade, C. R., Duncan, K. A., & Sokal, L. (2003). The path to education in a canadian aboriginal context. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(2), 235–248.

Brayboy, B. M., & Deyhle, D. (2000). Insider-outsider: Researchers in American Indian communities. *Theory into Practice, 39*(3), 163–169.

Brigham, S., & Taylor, A. (2006). Youth apprenticeship programs for Aboriginal youth in Canada: Smoothing the path from school to work? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 29*(2), 165–181.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burns, G. E. (2000). Inclusiveness and relevance in First Nations/public education system schooling: It's all about praxis of the aboriginal self determination in the tuition agreement education field. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 20*(1), 139–180.

Calliou, S. (1993). Toward community: The community school model and the health of sovereignty. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 20*(1), 27–43.

Calliou, S. (1995). Peacekeeping actions at home: A medicine wheel model for a peacekeeping pedagogy. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 47–72). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans,* December 2010.

Cardinal, L. (2001). What is an Indigenous perspective? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 180–183.

Castellano, M. B. (2004). Ethics of Aboriginal Research. *Journal of Aboriginal Health* 98–114.

Castellano, M. B., Davis, L., & Lahache, L. (Eds.). (2000). *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the Promise.* University of British Columbia: UBC Press.

Charters-Voght, O. (1999). Indian control of Indian education: The path to the upper Nicola band. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 23*(1), 64–99.

Cherubini, L. (2008). New aboriginal teachers' experiences: An undiscovered landscape. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 31*(2), 34–50.

Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: Methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education, 2*7(44), 44-

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. Jean Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35–75.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Coates, K. (1986). A very imperfect means of education: Indian day schools in the Yukon territory, 1890-1955. In J. Barman, Y. Hebert, & D. McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian education in Canada Volume 1: The legacy* (pp. 132–149). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Collier, L. (1993). Teaching native students at the college level. *The Canadian Journal of Native Education, 20*(1), 109–117.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners.* Toronto, Ontario: OISE Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). 'Stories of experience and narrative inquiry.' *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2–14.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (3rd ed., pp. 447–487). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Connolly, K. (2007). Introduction to part 2: Exploring narrative inquiry practices. *Qualitative Inquiry. 13*(4), 450–453.

Corson, D. (1998). Community-based education for Indigenous cultures. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 11*(3), 238–249.

Creswell, J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research, 3rd Ed.* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Curwen-Doige, L. (2001). Literacy in aboriginal education: A historical perspective. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 117–128.

Curwen-Doige, L. (2003). A missing link: Between traditional Aboriginal education and the western system of education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(2), 144–160.

Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan Law Review, 87*(8), 2411–2441.

Demmert, W., McCardle, P., & Leos, K. (2006). Conclusions and commentary. *Journal of American Indian Education, 45*(2), 77 – 88.

Denzin, N. K. (2007). Grounded theory and the politics of interpretation. In A. Bryant & K.Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 454-471). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

deVilliers, J., et al. (2011). *Collins Canadian English Dictionary and Thesaurus (3rd ed.).* Toronto, Ontario: Harper Collins.

Ermine, W. (1995). Aboriginal epistemology. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 101–112). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Fenwick, F. (2001). Residential school update. *Law Now, 25*(3), 33–36.

Fleras, A. (2012). *Unequal relations: An introduction to race, ethnic, and Aboriginal dynamics In Canada.* Toronto: Pearson.

Foreman, K. (1991). A dramatic approach to Native teacher education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18*(1), 73–80.

Freeman, M. (2007). Autobiographical understanding and narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology,* (pp. 120–145). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Seabury Press.

Freire, P. (1972). *Cultural action for freedom.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Freire, P. (1975). Education: Domestication or liberation? In *Prospects UNESCO 2*(2), 173–181.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civil courage.* New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Friedel, T. (2009). *Urban indigenous youths' perspectives on identity, place and place-based learning and the implications for education.* Doctoral Dissertation University of Alberta.

Friesen, J. W., & Friesen, V. L. (2002). *Aboriginal education in Canada: A plea for integration.* Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises.

Gaikezehongai, S. (2003). Aboriginal literacy: Raising standards, blazing trails. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(1), 41–44.

Gamlin, P. (2003). Transformation and Aboriginal literacy. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(1), 16–22.

Gardner, E. B. (1986). Unique features of a band-controlled school: The seabird island community school. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 13*(1), 15–32.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures.* New-York: Basic Books.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis.* Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions.* Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.

Goulet, L. (2001). Two teachers of Aboriginal students: Effective practice in sociohistorical realities. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(1), 68–82.

Grande, S. (2008a). Red Pedagogy: The un-methodology. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L.T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (pp. 233–254). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Grande, S. (2008b). American Indian geographies of identity and power: At the crossroads of Indigena and Mestizaje. In M. Villegas, S. Neugebauer, & K. Venegas (Eds.), *Indigenous knowledge and education: Sites of struggle, strength, and survivance,* (pp. 211–242). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review.

Graveline, F. J. (1998). *Circle works: Transforming eurocentric consciousness.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Graveline, F. J. (2000). Circle as methodology: Enacting an Aboriginal paradigm. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 13*(4), 361–370.

Greenwood, M. (2006). Children are a gift to us: Aboriginal-specific early childhood programs and services in canada. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 29*(1), 12–28.

Gresko, J. (1986). Creating little dominions within the dominion: Early Catholic Indian schools in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. In J. Barman. Y. Hebert, & D. McCaskill (Eds), *Indian Education in Canada Volume 1: The legacy* (pp. 88–109). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Greymorning, S. (2000). Culture and language: The political realities to keep trickster at bay. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 20*(1), 181–196.

Haig-Brown C., & Archibald, J. (1996). Transforming First Nations research with respect and power. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 9*(3), 245–267.

.Hamme, L. (1996). American Indian cultures and the classroom. *Journal of American Indian Education, 35*(2), 21–36.

Hampton, E. (1993). Toward a redefinition of American Indian/Alaska native education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 20*(2), 261–309.

Hampton, E. (1995). Toward a redefinition of Indian education. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 5–46). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Harris, B. (2006). What can we learn from traditional Aboriginal education? Transforming social work education delivered in First Nations communities. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 29*(1), 117–134.

Henderson, J. Y. (1995). Treaties and Indian education. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 245–261). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hermes, M. (1998). Research methods as a situated response: Toward a First Nations methodology. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 155–168.

Hodgson-Smith, K. L. (2000). Issues of pedagogy in Aboriginal education. In M. B. Castellano, L. Davis, L. Lahache (Eds.), *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise* (pp. 156–169). University of British Columbia: UBC Press.

Hollingsworth, S., & Dybdahl, M. (2007). Talking to learn: The critical role of conversation in narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology,* (pp. 146–176). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hookimaw-Witt, J. (1998). Any changes since residential school? *The Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1), 159–170.

Huberman, M. (1995). 'Working within life-history narratives.' In H. McEwan & K. Egan (Eds.), *Narrative in teaching, learning, and research,* New York: Teachers College Press.

Hudson, P., & Taylor-Henley, S. (2001). Beyond the rhetoric: Implementing a culturally appropriate research project in First Nations communities. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 25*(2), 93–105.

Ignas, J. (2004). Opening doors to the future: Applying local knowledge in curriculum development. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 28*(1-2), 49–60.

Ing, N. R. (1991). The effects of residential schools on Native child-rearing practices. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18*(supplemental), 65–118.

Jaenen, C. J. (1986). Education for francization: The case of new france in the seventeenth century. In J. Barman, Y. Hebert, & D. McCaskill (Eds.), *Indian Education in Canada Volume 1: The legacy* (pp. 45–63).

James, K. (2001). There are doorways in these huts: An empirical study of educational programs, Native Canadian student needs, and institutional effectiveness in British Columbia an Ontario. *Journal of American Indian Education, 40*(3), 24–35.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2000). *Educational research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Jones, C. (2003). Self-management and self-direction in the success of native literacy learners. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(1). 45–54.

Josselson, R. (2007). The ethical attitude in narrative research: Principles and practicalities. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 537-566). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (Eds.). (1995). *Interpreting experience: The narrative study of lives* (Vol. 3). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kanu, Y. (2002). In their own voices: First Nations students identify some cultural mediators of their learning in the formal school system. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 48*(2), 98–121.

Katz, S., & Dack, L. A. (2013). *Intentional Interruption: Breaking down learning barriers to Transform practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Kirkness, V. J. (1992). *First Nations and schools: Triumphs and struggles.* Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Kirkness, V. J. (1998a). The critical state of aboriginal languages in canada. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1), 93–107.

Kirkness, V. J. (1998b). Our peoples' education: Cut the shackles; cut the crap; cut the mustard. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1), 10–15.

Kirkness, V. J. (1999a). Native Indian teachers: A key to progress. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 23*(1), 57–63.

Kirkness, V. J. (1999b). Aboriginal education in Canada: A retrospective and a prospective.*Journal of American Indian Education, 39*(1), 14–30.

Knockwood, I. (1992). *Out of the depths.* Lockeport, NS: Roseway.

Ladson Billings, G., & Donnor, J. (2005). The moral activist role of critical race theory scholarship. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 279–302). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Donnor, J. K. (2008). Waiting for the call: The moral activist role of critical race theory scholarship. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (pp. 61–83). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

LaFrance, J. (2004). Culturally competent evaluation in Indian country. *New Directions For Evaluations,* 102, 39–50.

Lateroute, B. (2007). The ole crab story: Analysis of a personal experience in colonialism and antiracism theory. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 30*, 289–304.

Ledoux, J. (2006). Integrating aboriginal perspectives into curricula: A literature review. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 26*(2), 265–288.

Lomawaima, K. T. (1994). *They called it prairie light: The story of Chilocco Indian school.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Lomawaima, K. T. (2008). Tribal sovereigns: Reframing research in American Indian education. In M. Vilegas, S. Neugebauer, & K. Venegas, (Eds.), *Indigenous Knowledge and education: Sites of struggle, strength, and survivance,* (pp. 183–203). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review.

Lopez, G. R. (1998). Reflections on epistemologies and standpoint theories: A response to a Maori approach to creating knowledge. *Qualitative studies in education, 11*(2), 225–231.

Louis, R. P. (2007). Can you hear us now? Voices from the margin: Using Indigenous methodologies in geographic research. *Geographical research, 45*(2), 130–139.

Lyons, N. (2007). Narrative inquiry: What possible future influence on policy or practice? In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 600–631). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maina, F. (1997). Culturally relevant pedagogy: First Nations education in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 17*(2), 293–314.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Matthew, N. (1991). *British Columbia First Nations school evaluation review: A report prepared for Indian and northern affairs Canada.* B.C. region, and B.C. First Nations School Association.

McCaleb, S. (1994). *Building communities of learners: Collaboration among teachers, students, families, and community.* New–York: St. Martin's Press.

McCaslin, W. D., & Breton, D. C. (2008). Justice as healing: Going outside the colonizers' cage. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *The handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 511-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McLaren, P. (2003). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education (4th ed.).* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

McMahon, B. (2003). Putting the elephant into the refrigerator: Student engagement critical pedagogy, and anti-racist education. *McGill Journal of Education, 38*(2), 257–273.

McNiff, J. (2007). My story is my living educational theory. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology,* (pp. 308-329). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Meadows, L. M., Lagendyk, L. E., Thurston, W. E., & Eisner, A. C. (2003). Balancing culture, ethics, and methods in qualitative health research with Aboriginal peoples. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(4), 1–25.

Menzies, C. R. (2001). Reflections on research with, for and among Indigenous peoples. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(1), 19–36.

Menzies, C. R. (2004). Putting words into action: Negotiating collaborative research in gitxaala. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(1/2), 15–32.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology. 3rd edition.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Meyer, M. A. (2001). A cultural assumptions of empiricism: A Native Hawaiian critique. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 188–198.

Meyer, M. A. (2008). Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemological and triangulation of meaning. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 217–232). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Mishler, E. (1995). Models of narrative analysis: A typology. *Journal of Narrative and Life History, 5*(2), 87–103.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Monture-Angus, P. A. (1995). *Thunder in my soul: A Mohawk woman speaks.* Halifax: Fernwood.

Morgan-Flemming, B. (2007). Narrative inquiry in the professions. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology,* (pp. 355–356). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nadeau, D., & Young, A. (2006). Educating bodies for self-determination: A decolonizing strategy. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 29*(1), 87–101.

National Indian Brotherhood. (1972). *Indian control of Indian education: Policy paper presented to the minister of Indian affairs and northern development.* Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood.

National Indian Brotherhood. (1980). *Indian control of Indian education.* Winnipeg: National Indian Brotherhood.

Niles, M., Byers, L., & Krueger, E. (2007). Best practice and evidence-based research in Indigenous early childhood intervention programs. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 30*(1), 108–125.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2008). Aboriginal perspectives: The teacher's toolkit. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009). Sound foundations for the road ahead: Fall 2009 progress report on the implementation of the ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2012). Continuing the journey: Preliminary report on the implementation of the ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit education policy. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). Second progress report on the implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit education policy framework. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

O'Reilly-Scanlon, K., Crowe, C., & Weenie, A. (2004). Pathways to understanding: wahkohtowin as research methodology. *McGill Journal of Education, 39*(1), 29–44.

Ormiston, A. (2002). "Educating Indians:" Practices of becoming Canadian. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 22*(1), 1–22.

Osborne, A. B. (1996). Practice into theory into practice: Culturally relevant pedagogy for students we have marginalized and normalized. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 27*, 285–314.

Pauls, S. (1984). The case for band controlled schools. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 12*(1), 31–37.

Pepper, F., & Henry, S. (1986). Social and cultural effects on Indian learning style: Classroom implications. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 13*, 54–61.

Perley, D. G. (1993). Aboriginal education in Canada as internal colonialism. *The Canadian Journal of Native Education, 20*(1), 118–128.

Pewewardy, C. (1999). From enemy to mascot: The deculturation of Indian mascots in sports culture. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 23*(2), 176–189.

Pewewardy, C. (2002). Learning styles of American Indian/Alaska native students: A review of the literature and implications for practice. *Journal of American Indian Education, 41*(3), 22–56.

Phoenix, A. (2008). Analysing narrative contexts. In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (pp. 64–77). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pidgeon, M. & Hardy-Cox, D. G. (2002). Researching with Aboriginal peoples: Practices and principles. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(2), 96–107.

Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J.G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. Jean Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3–34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Piquemal, N. (2001). Free and informed consent in research involving Native American communities. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 25*(1), 65–79.

Plank, G. (1994). What silence means for educators of American Indian children. *Journal of American Indian Education, 34*, 3–19.

Polkinghorne, D.E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences.* Albany, NY: State University Press of New York Press.

Powers, K., Potthoff, S. J., Bearinger, L. H., & Resnick, M. D. (2003). Does cultural programming improve educational outcomes for American Indian youth? *Journal of American Indian Education, 42*(2), 17–49.

Pratt, T. K. et al. (2013). *Nelson Gage Canadian Paperback Dictionary.* Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.

Rasmussen, C., Baydala, L., & Sherman, J. (2004). Learning patterns and education of Aboriginal children: A review of the literature. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 24*(2), 317–342.

Redwing-Saunders, S. E., & Hill, S.M. (2007). Native education and in-classroom coalition-building: factors and models in delivering an equitous authentic education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 30*(4), 1015–1045.

Restoule, J. P. (2000). Aboriginal identity: The need for historical and contextual perspectives. *The Canadian Journal of Native Education, 24*(2), 102–112.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Robertson, J.H. (2003). Decolonizing schools. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 552–553.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* Ottawa: Canada Communications Group.

Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2006). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sawyer, D. (1991). Native learning styles: Shorthand for instructional adaptations? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18*, 99–105.

Schissel , B., & Wotherspoon, T. (2003). *The legacy of school for Aboriginal people: Education, oppression, & emancipation.* Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Simmons, G., & Barrineau, P. (1994). Learning style and the Native American. *Journal of Psychological Type, 28*, 3–10.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples.* New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd.

Smith, L. T. (2005). On tricky ground. Researching the Native in the age of uncertainty. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lioncoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research,* (pp. 85–107). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Smith, L. T. (2005b). Building a research agenda for Indigenous epistemologies and education. *Anthropolgy and Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 93–95.

Sparks, S. (2000). Classroom and curriculum accommodations for Native American students. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 35*, 36–43.

Squire, C. (2008). Experience-centered and culturally–oriented. approach to narrative. In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (pp. 41–63). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Squire, C., Andrews, M., & Tamboukou, M. (2008). Introduction: What is narrative research? In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (pp. 1–21). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

St. Denis, V. (2007). Aboriginal education and anti-racist education: Building alliances across cultural and racial identity. *Canadian Journal of Education, 30*(4), 1068–1092.

St. Denis, V. (2010). *A study of Aboriginal teachers' professional knowledge and experience in Canadian schools*. Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Stairs, A. (1995). Learning processes and teaching roles in native education: Cultural base and cultural brokerage. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nation education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 139–153). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Steinhauer, E. (2002). Thoughts on Indigenous research methodology. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(2), 69–81.

Steinhauer, P. (2001). Situating myself in research. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 183–187.

Swisher, K. (1990). Cooperative learning and the education of the American/Alaskan Native students: A review of the literature and suggestions for implementation. *Journal of American Indian Education, 29*, 36–43.

Tierney, W. G. (2002). Get real. Representing reality. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(4), 385–398.

Thies, K. (1987). *Aboriginal viewpoints on education: A survey in the east kimberly region.* Nedlands: National Centre for Research on Rural Education.

Toulouse, P. R. (2008). Integrating Aboriginal teaching and values into the classroom. *What works? Research into practice, Research monograph, 11.* Ontario Ministry of Education: The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

Toulouse, P. R. (2013). Fostering literacy success for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. *What works? Research into practice. Research monograph 45.* Ontario Ministry of Education: Student Achievement Division.

Trevithick, S. (1998). Native residential schooling in Canada: A review of literature. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 18*(1), 49–86.

Van Ingen, C., & Halas, J. (2006). Claiming space: Aboriginal students within school landscapes. *Children's Geographies, 4*(3), 379–398.

Vickers, P. J. (2002). The colonial mind in post-secondary education. *McGill Journal of Education, 37*(2), 241–254.

Virag, K. (2005). A disastrous mistake: A brief history of residential schools. *The ATA Magazine, 86*(2), 18–21.

Weber-Pillwax, C. (1999). Indigenous research methodology: Exploratory discussion of an elusive subject. *Journal of Educational Thought, 33*(1), 31–45.

Weber-Pillwax, C. (2001). What is indigenous research? *Canadian Journal of Native Education 25*(2), 166–174.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching.* New York: Routledge.

West, C. (1993). *Race matters.* Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education. (2000). *The Common curriculum framework for Aboriginal language and culture programs: Kindergarten to grade* 12. Edmonton, AB: Crown in Right of the Governments of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan.

Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 175–179.

Wilson, S. (2007). Guest editorial: What is an Indigenist research paradigm? *Canadian Journal of Native Education 30*(2), 193–195.

Wilson, S. (2003). Progressing toward an Indigenous research paradigm in Canada and Australia. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 27*(2), 161–178.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Wilson, St. (2001). Self-as-relationship in Indigenous research. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 91–92.

Wilson, S. & Wilson, P. (2002). Editorial: First Nations education in mainstream systems. *The Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(2), 67–68.

Wotherspoon, T., & Satzewich, V. (1993). *First Nations: Race, class, and gender relations,* Scarborough: Nelson.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69–91.

Young-Ing, G. (1988). A comparison between administration of First Nations education in Canada and Peru: Divestments, losses, and lacks. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 15*(3), 24–34.

Appendix A: Ethics Documents

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study:

Self-knowledge and Professional Space: Experienced Aboriginal Teachers' Narratives

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by **James Angus,** a PhD student from the Faculty of Education (Lakehead University). Your participation in this Indigenous narrative inquiry study will help me fulfill the research requirements for obtaining the **doctoral dissertation.**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research and seek clarification of the purpose and procedures listed below, please contact James Angus at (807) 345-8701 or e-mail the researcher at: jlangus@lakeheadu.ca. My faculty advisor at Lakehead University is Dr. J. Ross Epp. If you have further questions about this study, feel free to contact her at Lakehead University, 807-343-8891 or by e-mail jepp@lakeheadu.ca. You may also choose to contact Susan Wright, Research Ethics and Administrative Officer, Office of Research Services, 807-343-8283 or by e-mail susan.wright@lakeheadu.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study will be to describe the Aboriginal educators' professional narratives within the publicly funded school system, resulting in a document that will collect the essence of what it means to be an Aboriginal educator in the mainstream schooling system that will include a textural description of what was experienced and a structural description of how it was experienced.

PROCEDURES

If you choose to participate in this study, I ask you to do the following things:

1. Read the consent form, sign it, and return one copy of it. You will keep this information letter as well as one copy of the consent form.

2. Data will be collected from May 2012 through June 2012. This will consist of monthly, 1hour tape-recorded interviews. A focus group drawing the participants together will be scheduled for late June 2012. A feast of appreciation will be scheduled for the end of August 2012. Throughout the study, each participant will maintain a pseudonym and receive reminders not to reveal the true identity of persons that may enter discussions. The researcher will arrange interview times and location, and will cover transportation costs. You will be asked to confirm your interview time via telephone or by e-mail notification.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no known risks involved with this study. The literature suggests that Narrative Inquiry is a viable method to study professional experience and the inner workings of a vocation through participants' stories and the meanings they ascribe to them. Additionally, each participant will be assigned a pseudonym and the maintenance of anonymity and confidentiality will be reviewed and agreement secured prior to the start of the focus group interview. However, if a participant experiences discomfort due to recollection, they will be directed toward appropriate counseling resources (i.e. Anishnawbe Mushkiki).

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR SOCIETY

The benefits of a completed Indigenous narrative inquiry are multiple. It signals the arrival at a new point in the post-modern relationship between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal populations and will provide the means for further study, discourse, and collaboration.

The lack of literature studying the narratives of experienced Aboriginal teachers in the publicly funded school system represents a deep void in our knowledge. The significance of the study is twofold; it will yield valuable insight into the lived professional experience of Aboriginal teachers and will create discussion on improving the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personnel within schools. Sharing the results of this study will re-define the ethical space and strengthen teaching coalitions, which will ultimately benefit the school, community, educational systems, and society. These stories are a means to improve cross-cultural communication and effectually improve the learning atmosphere in schools as we all move forward, together.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No monetary payment will be received for participation in this study. However, a copy of the materials will be provided to each participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. This study will employ the use of pseudonyms for all participants. The interview data, journals, and consent forms, will be kept in a locked file cabinet that will only be accessible to the researcher and his advisor. Upon the conclusion of examining the interview data, field texts, and observational notes, they will remain locked and secured. Electronic copies of the data will be kept in an inter-net isolated computer with password and home security protection. **All data** will be destroyed 5 years after the investigator has defended his doctoral dissertation.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL It is your choice to participate and you may withdraw at anytime, for any reason, without urging or consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions and still remain in the study.

FEEDBACK OF RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

A permanent copy of the completed research report will be made available upon request.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. I, the researcher, James Angus, will maintain your confidentiality.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study titled: **Self-knowledge and professional space: Experienced Aboriginal teachers' narratives** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

___________________________ Name of participant

___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Signature of participant

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Signature of Investigator