Dis-placing Myself: Decolonizing a Settler Outdoor Environmental Educator

Emily Root

Faculty of Education

Lakehead University

August 2015

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies

ABSTRACT

Indigenous communities across Canada are courageously fighting to protect their Lands for future generations. Many settler Canadians are trying to work in solidarity with Indigenous communities to disrupt socio-ecological injustice. Efforts are being made in the fields of outdoor and environmental education to integrate social and ecological perspectives to challenge the dominant and inequitable power structures impacting people and the more-than-human world to improve the health and sustainability of communities.

Despite these efforts, settler colonialism remains entrenched throughout Canadian institutions. Schools are still largely failing to meet the needs of Indigenous students (Dion, 2010; Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2012; Little Bear, 2009). Furthermore, schools are also failing non-Indigenous students by continuing to teach Eurocentric myths and perspectives. One reason for this is that settler Canadian educators have not been taught about resilient Indigenous cultures, shared colonial histories, or their own complicity in contemporary socio-ecological colonialism. I argue that settler environmental educators need to decolonize ourselves and our teaching praxes in order to shift towards ethical relationality (Donald, 2012) or respectful relationality (Korteweg, personal communication) with Indigenous peoples and Lands. To date, however, little research exists that conceptualizes decolonizing for settler Canadians or that seeks to understand how to facilitate these complex and lifelong processes.

Working from an Indigenist–decolonizing theoretical framework (Smith, 1999; 2010; Wilson, 2001; 2007) and guided by auto-ethnographic methodology (Denzin, 2014; 2006; Ellingson & Ellis, 2008; Anderson, 2006), I employ reflexive narrative vignettes

and constructivist grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2003; 2006; Kovach, 2010) to examine the factors and experiences that facilitate and/or prevent settler Canadians' capacity to shift towards respectful relationality with Aboriginal peoples. I aim to provide an in-depth model of "unsettling the settler" (Reagan, 2010) through my own self-study in order to expand the literature on settler decolonizing and to theorize fundamental moves that educators in general and environmental educations in particular need to experience in order to deepen our decolonizing understandings.

Through my own critical self-study, I offer 10 "settler moves to respectful relationality," based on experiences that support decolonizing. They include: Land-based experiences and acknowledgement of Indigenous Land; engagement with resilient Indigeneity and relationships with Indigenous peoples; critically reflexive autobiographical work; and connections to one's own cultural heritage and community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1—CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

In 2004, I found myself in a small exhibit at a museum in Saint John, New

Brunswick. I was accompanying a class of high school students from an alternative

outdoor-based school in Ontario. On this occasion, we had travelled to New Brunswick

to study first-hand some of the environmental controversies occurring in the Bay of

Fundy, and also to hike the Fundy Footpath.

One exhibit at the museum was called "Where are the Children? Healing the

Legacy of Residential Schools." *I wandered alone through the rooms, mesmerized and*

overwhelmed by the black and white photographs of young Aboriginal children who had

been taken from their families and communities and relocated to assimilationist

institutions, forbidden to speak their own language and, worse, often forced to endure

physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

I was shocked by the images I saw, but not mainly because of what they

portrayed. As a teacher of Canadian History, Culture, and Identity, I was already

somewhat familiar with colonial legacies of injustices faced by Aboriginal peoples, so

images of injustice, while very disturbing, did not surprise me. The reason I was shocked

*was because **I had never heard of Indian residential schools before that moment**. How*

is it possible that I, a generally well-informed and social justice-minded educator, was

completely ignorant of this vast atrocity? I scrambled to find the other teachers and

students because I wanted them to see the exhibit too. All were as unaware as I was. I

gathered as much information as I could and vowed to inform myself so that I could teach

about residential schools in future classes.

Fast forward to 2007(three years later): My family and I had gathered at my

grandmother's home to assist her in sorting through her belongings as she moved into a nursing home. One afternoon, we pulled a large stack of family photo albums from the top of the closet and spent a couple of hours reminiscing about the joyful times we had shared. Near the bottom of the pile, I spotted a very old album that I had never seen before. The brown leather covers were worn, and the paper pages inside had become brittle with age.

The first few pages I flipped through held family portraits of my grandmother and her siblings when they were young. Then, I turned another page, and much to my surprise I found myself transported back to the afternoon I had spent at the "Healing the Legacy" *exhibit years before in New Brunswick. In front of me were black and white photos of children in Indian residential school classes. Some showed groups of students. Others showed the children's garden plots. A few photos depicted families living in traditional dwellings, and others identified the home of a local chief. Many photographs were labelled neatly in handwriting with the year (1915) and/or location where they were taken. These included images entitled Walpole Island, Tuscarora, Oneida Reserve Muncey Town, Moraviantown, Wickwimikong, Rama Indians, Scugog Reserve, Deseronto Reserve, Mission Indians Port Arthur, Six Nations Reserve, Cape Croker, Mud Lake School, Saugeen, and Sucker Creek near Little Current.*

My mind was flooded with questions. Who had taken these photographs and why? Why were they part of our family photo album collection? I was about to uncover something I did not know about my own family history. My grandmother explained that it was her father's album, and that he had taken the pictures as part of his work for the Department of Indian Affairs. Who was this man, my great-grandfather? What role did

he play in the residential school project? Why had I never heard about him?

Figure 1. Photograph from family album, 'Mission Indian Pt. Arthur.'

Since that day, I have been able to find out very little about my great-grandfather,

aside from a few fuzzy anecdotes my grandmother has shared. Robert (Roy) Haye

Abraham was British-Canadian and lived in Chatham, Ontario. I have no knowledge

about the actual role he played in residential schools. Very recently I learned from St.

Denis's 2005 book, Tecumseh's Bones*, that he worked as an Agricultural Representative*

for the department of Indian Affairs in Chatham, Ontario, and in this capacity, he

travelled by train throughout Ontario. My grandmother was only a young child when her

father died of mastoid, a jaw infection that he contracted during one such train trip. She

told me that his work was trying to 'help' the 'Indians' [sic]. While my grandmother's

reflections on her father and their life in the early 1920s are no doubt fraught with

Eurocentric-colonial conceptions of the times, they are amongst the only tidbits of

information I have yet been able to gather about Roy Abraham. She recalled that some

'Indians' had a nickname for him, something that meant 'cloud with a silver lining,' referring to the fact that while he worked for the colonial government, he may have also been somewhat respected by Aboriginal peoples for the work he did in the communities. (I found it intriguing that in this anecdote my grandmother seemed to be acknowledging the contentious role of the government in the lives of Indigenous peoples.) She told me that she could remember 'Indians' knocking on the back door of their home, sometimes to sell crafts and sometimes to ask for food. She recalled that her mother would serve them outside, and never inside. She also shared a memory of her father's funeral, recalling that there were many 'Indians' present at his funeral, and that these First Nations peoples had walked a great distance from their homes to attend the event. The only other information I have retrieved is in a brief footnote in which St. Denis (2005) stated that Roy Abraham, with the support of the Moraviantown community, sought funding from Native sources for a Tecumseh monument.

While I have a deep desire to understand more clearly the role that my great-grandfather played in the residential school history of Ontario, these few anecdotes and the photograph album may be the only information I will ever be able to gather about him. But the story (and missing story) has taught me much: The family photo album has become an important symbolic artifact in my own decolonizing journey. First, it illuminates my ignorance about my own family history and culture. Second, it teaches me to redress my ignorance about my family's role in historic and contemporary Eurocentrism and (neo)-colonialism, and the pervasive ignorance in broader Euro-western societies about colonial injustices that Aboriginal peoples have faced and continue to face. Finally, and paradoxically, I consider the photograph album to be a

symbol of hope because it provides a point of reference to illustrate the positive changes that can occur in one person's (my grandmother's) lifetime.

It is likely that my great-grandfather was implicated as an agent of assimilation policies during the early 1900s when Aboriginal families were experiencing trauma and devastation through these policies. But now, in the year 2015, Aboriginal residential school survivors are speaking out for justice. Aboriginal peoples and communities are courageously fighting to protect their cultures, languages, traditional rights, and the Land and a Euro-settler great-granddaughter is contending with her own family's legacies in the deep-set colonialism of this place called Canada.

Introducing Myself

My name is Emily Root. My heritage is German, Swiss, British, and Irish and while I have never felt strongly connected to these cultures, I do recognize their legacy in my life and I am learning more about my cultural roots.

I grew up in a small town in the Ottawa Valley, which is Algonquin territory. As an only child, I spent a great deal of time in the summers travelling the Ottawa River on a sailboat with my parents. Both of my parents were working professionals – my mom a teacher and my dad a probation officer. I am fortunate to be part of a loving family that still gathers regularly for family celebrations. I have always loved learning and my experiences throughout my conventional elementary and secondary schooling were positive.

My identity is also shaped by long-time work in the field of outdoor and environmental education. In my role as educator, I have taught primarily in alternative settings with students of all ages. For many years, my teaching often took place in

outdoor and community-based settings – history lessons at the side of a river during a canoe trip; geography lessons with map in hand on a hiking trail; and critical dialogue during a road trip to study socio-ecological issues.

At this time in 2015, I am living Unamaki, which is Mi'kmaw territory, with my husband and children – Fraser age 4 and Logan age 1. And I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to join the Department of Community Studies at Cape Breton University as a fulltime Assistant Professor.

I am very much aware that this seemingly innocuous introduction, is also evidence of my white, Western, heteronormative, middle class-based, settler privilege and my accumulated socio-cultural and economic capital. And I take seriously my responsibility to spend this privilege in ways that help to create more just and equitable communities in Canadian society.

Purpose of This Study

An increasing number of settler Canadians are beginning to learn about our complicity in ongoing contemporary settler colonialism. Many are taking a more active role in the difficult work of decolonizing our schools and communities. This is encouraging but much change is still needed. The general underlying goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of my own settler identity and decolonizing process, to disrupt settler colonialism (particularly in outdoor and environmental education), and to shift my readers and myself towards a more respectful and relational stance regarding Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Very generally, 'settlers' are those people living in Canada who are not Indigenous to here, or whose ancestors came from elsewhere. This use of the term

underscores the important point that Indigenous peoples have a fundamentally different relationship to the Land[1] than any other person or group of people from elsewhere. However, not all non-Indigenous peoples benefit equally from settler colonialism. While it is true that Indigenous peoples have unique ongoing and existing deep relationships with their Lands, it may be useful at times to differentiate between White Euro-settlers, who claim supremacy, enjoy privilege, and attempt to establish the dominant social order, and other immigrants, who arrive expecting to join existing cultures or who are brought by White settlers to provide the cheap labour required to ensure settlement (Morgenson, 2014; Tuck & Mackenzie, 2015). In this dissertation, I acknowledge these complexities and follow the example of Lee (2015) who employs the term 'settler' for all people who are not Indigenous and who intentionally or unintentionally enact a colonial relationship with Indigenous Land.

Settlers are often complicit in ongoing settler colonialism.   However, I appreciate Memmi's (1974) differentiation between a 'self-accepting colonizer' (a settler who is comfortable with maintaining the status quo of settler colonialism) and a 'self-rejecting colonizer' (a settler who recognizes and is no longer comfortable with their[2] complicity in settler colonialism and who then works to disrupt it.) I encourage readers to contemplate the complexity of these labels.

The increasing awareness, over the past 100 years, of the pitfalls of settler colonialism, allow me to hope that I will be able to ponder the possibilities of respectful

---

[1]   Following the examples of Zinga and Styres (2011), Koreweg & Oakley (2012) and Tuck & MacKenzie (2015), 'Land' is capitalized in this dissertation. This is to recognize the collective community of all animate and inanimate beings, of which humans are a part. Often 'Land' is used in Indigenous discourses to describe the complex, interrelated, natural world, including plants, animals, rocks, lakes, and trees.

[2] I intentionally use 'their' as a singular pronoun to acknowledge diverse gender identities.

and relational knowledge, attitudes, and worldviews that will hopefully be prevalent during my great-grandchildren's lifetime. In this goal, settler educators have a profound responsibility to engage in difficult and uncomfortable reflexive decolonizing work—on our own, with our students, with their families, and with the education system as a whole—to build more respectful relationships with Aboriginal[3] peoples in Canada. This dissertation explores the complexities of my own journey into decolonizing myself. The result of this exploration is the conceptualization of an approach to decolonizing settler educators that I can apply in my own teaching praxis and put forward as an example to other settler Canadians.

Even though my family history is mostly unknown, it persists in influencing me in multiple realms of my educator identity. I am an outdoor environmental educator, a teacher educator, and educational researcher. I regularly find myself positioned simultaneously in multiple interrelated roles, striving to understand my identity, my culture, and my worldview, while, at the same time, attempting to foster a decolonizing shift in education. This happens in multiple layers. Firstly, I am a White settler Canadian working through my own process of decolonizing (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; 2004; Dion, 2007; 2010; Donald, 2009; Graveline, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2012) and becoming a respectful ally (Davies, 2010; Davies & Shpuniarsky, 2010; Margaret, 2010). Secondly, I am simultaneously trying to encourage and facilitate decolonizing for other settler

---

[3] Several related terms describe Indigenous peoples who are living where their ancestors have lived since time immemorial. 'Aboriginal' is the Canadian government's official term for Indigenous peoples in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. 'First Nations' signifies nationhood status of various groups of Indigenous peoples living throughout Canada. Many First Nations people refer to themselves by their distinct tribal or national identity such as Cree, Anishnaabe, Mi'kmaq, etc. The term 'Métis' initially referred to children of mixed heritage born to Aboriginal women and Euro-Canadian fur traders, although the Métis National Council states that 'Métis' means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation. 'Inuit' refers to the Indigenous peoples of Northern Canada.

Canadians (at various stages of their own decolonizing—or not) who are becoming outdoor and environmental educators, and who, in turn, could be facilitating culturally responsive Indigenous education and acting as mentors for their settler Canadian students and co-educators (who themselves may be at various levels of understanding about Indigenous cultures, Indigenous Land, and respectful intercultural and Land-based relationships.)

With these multiple layers of potential impacts in mind, I contemplate if and how I might contribute to positive changes in Indigenous–non-Indigenous relationships through environmental education. To this end, my dissertation employs auto-ethnography (Anderson, 2006; Denzin, 2014, 2006; Ellingson & Ellis, 2008) to explore the central questions: What is the nature of my own settler decolonizing journey? And, how can my decolonizing experiences and reflections help to inform a new conceptualization of settler decolonizing for outdoor and environmental educators? This study will provide a close examination of an ongoing settler decolonizing journey through self-analysis. I will present and analyze key vignettes from my self-study, which I will use to craft a new model for, or grounded theory of, 'unsettling the settler Canadian (environmental) educator.' This model will present 10 moves to respectful relationality as settler allies. I will then extend this model of my own decolonizing life history to directly question what my self-study can contribute to the field of environmental education at this particularly complex and controversial era of settler colonialism and reconciliation.

Outline of the Dissertation

In Chapter Two, I provide a review of relevant literature in order to contextualize my study and provide a rationale for it. I identify the theories that both advocate for

decolonizing Western education and conceptualize decolonization. I discuss what Aboriginal peoples and scholars are communicating to settler Canadian society about Indigenous education and protection of Indigenous Land. I describe some of the complexities of decolonization and decolonizing for non-Indigenous peoples, and I highlight some of the complexities of monolithic binaries. I argue that Eurocentrism remains embedded in Euro-western outdoor and environmental education, and I posit that Land-based pedagogies may be a potential site or catalyst for critical change. I explore possibilities of and for intercultural relationships, learning, and alliances for decolonization. Finally, I explore Indigenous and Indigenist paradigms to identify possibilities for decolonizing (through) research.

In Chapter Three, I provide an explanation of my research design. This section begins with a description of my main methodology, auto-ethnography. I then provide a brief description of the auto-ethnographic stages of the study, followed by a more detailed explanation of the specific auto-ethnographic methods that I used for data collection (reflexive narrative vignettes) and data analysis (constructivist grounded theory). Finally, I discuss relevant ethical considerations.

Chapter Four is a collection of auto-ethnographic narrative vignettes or stories— the results of my auto-ethnographic reflexive process—that sit at the intersection of data and analysis. They serve as the preliminary (narrative) analysis of my raw primary data (journals, tokens, photographs, memories, reflexive writing, past research transcripts, etc.). At the same time, they are in and of themselves another layer of data generated during the auto-ethnographic process, which I subsequently analyze for salient themes and findings in order to generate a new theoretical model of settler decolonialism. Each

'story' incorporates reflection about what that experience means to me—about what I have learned from it and how it has contributed to my decolonizing journey.

In Chapter Five, I present the research outcomes of my constructivist grounded theory analysis towards a new theoretical model, which I have called 'Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality for Decolonization.' This model includes a description of two categories: settler decolonizing learning process and settler decolonizing understandings. It also involves an exploration of the main themes and sub-themes, including six stages of decolonizing learning and 10 decolonizing understandings or 'settler moves to relationality.'

In Chapter 6, I discuss my findings in the context of existing literature in the fields of outdoor and environmental education, settler colonial studies, and decolonizing and Indigenous education. It is my objective to better prepare environmental educators to teach respectfully and relationally on Aboriginal traditional Lands.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW AS RATIONALE

Overview

This chapter helps to situate my study in relation to current literature in the fields of environmental education, decolonization, and Indigenous education. It also serves as a rationale for the study by illuminating a gap in the literature and identifying the relevance and timeliness of this study to several fields in educational studies.

I begin this chapter by identifying the clear need to decolonize Western educational practices and institutions, which largely fail to meet the needs of Indigenous students. Next I describe the context of Indigenous education, including several national policy reports that outline principles of Indigenous education, as well as what Indigenous communities are teaching settler Canadians about respect for Land and people. Third, I review existing literature on decolonizing, from Indigenous and settler perspectives, and as related to Indigenous and settler contexts. I then address some of the complexities of monolithic binaries and the reification of 'difference' over 'relationality.' In the fifth section of the literature review, I describe the Eurocentric foundations of Western outdoor and environmental education and I call attention to Land-based approaches that may prove to be effective decolonizing efforts in environmental education. I then present several models of intercultural learning proposed by Indigenous scholars and discuss the complexities of intercultural alliances. Finally, I explore the tenets of an Indigenist--decolonizing research paradigm that frames my study.

A Need to Decolonize Western Education

On June 11, 2008, an apology by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to Aboriginal peoples of Canada acknowledged the inexcusable and devastating

intergenerational legacy of residential schools (CBC, 2008). The last remaining residential school finally closed in 1996, and the stories of survivors have been documented through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Existing education systems in Canada, however, have continued to largely fail Aboriginals (Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2012; Little Bear, 2009), and schools remain primarily Eurocentric[4] and non-responsive to the needs of Aboriginal students (Battiste, 2005; Dion, 2007, 2010).

Leroy Little Bear (2009) is among many experts who agree that the existing education systems in Canada have largely failed Aboriginal peoples. He points to numerous large-scale studies over the past 40 years, including the Hawthorne Report (1960s) and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1990s), all of which illustrate the now widely-accepted notion that "Aboriginal peoples are not succeeding in the present education systems; Aboriginal students have the highest dropout rates; and Aboriginal students consistently are at the bottom of performance scales" (Little Bear, 2009, p. 1).

Recent Canadian census data confirm this. Although the achievement of Aboriginal peoples in Western schooling across Canada did increase somewhat between 2001 and 2006, data from the 2006 Canadian census show that achievement of Aboriginal peoples in Euro-western schools still falls below the national average, and that the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples has in fact widened

---

[4] 'Eurocentrism' is the unjust belief that the Euro-western worldview is normal and uniquely legitimate. Eurocentrism unfairly privileges Euro-western beliefs and institutions. Marie Battiste (2005) explains that, "whether it is called Anglo-centric, Western, Euro-centric, or hegemonic colonial knowledge … the structure … has common assumptions that support it…. Eurocentrism is not just an opinion or attitude that can be changed by some multicultural or cross-cultural exercise, for Eurocentrism is … the dominant consciousness and order of contemporary life. It is a consciousness in which all of us have been marinated. (p. 123).

in some respects. For example, high school dropout rates for Aboriginal students are at 60% for students on reserve and 43% off reserve. More specifically, 24% of Canadians had a high school diploma as their highest level of education compared with 21% of the Aboriginal population. Finally, 15% of all Canadians had less than a high school education in contrast with 34% of Aboriginal peoples who had not completed high school (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Furthermore, the census report indicates similar discrepancies at other levels of education. The percentage of Aboriginal peoples who had obtained a post-secondary degree increased from 6% in 2001 to 8% in 2006. However, when compared with the national average (which increased from 20% to 23%), Aboriginal post-secondary school graduation rates still lag significantly behind the national average (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Brant-Castellano, Davis, and Lahache (2000) acknowledge the challenges faced by Aboriginal students in mainstream schools, yet they elaborate on this phenomenon, contending that it should not be misinterpreted as Aboriginal people's disinterest in, or lack of appreciation for, education. Rather, they state that:

> Aboriginal peoples have an unquenchable hope in the promise of education: they believe that it will instruct them in ways to live long and well on Mother Earth and that it will instill in them the wisdom and the capacity to carry their responsibilities in the circle of all life. (p. xi)

It is not a disinterest in education by Aboriginal families and students that perpetuate the injustices faced by Aboriginal students in schools, but rather colonial attitudes by non-Indigenous educators, and Eurocentrism embedded in Canadian educational systems,

particularly through curriculum (see Godlewska, Moore & Bednasek, 2010), that are some of the key issues (Battiste, 2010, 2013; Dion, 2007; 2009; Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010; Haldane, Lafond & Krause, 2012).

Since the closure of residential schools, there has been some encouraging implementation of new curriculum frameworks and policies that have attempted to redress inadequate Aboriginal education.[5] One example from Ontario is a document entitled the "First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007), which calls for integrated and holistic strategies for addressing the needs of Aboriginal students. This document acknowledges that low achievement among Aboriginal students is due largely to the following:

> a lack of awareness among teachers of the particular learning styles of Aboriginal students, and a lack of understanding within schools and school boards of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives. (p. 6)

In many cases, these sorts of policy and program initiatives are a response to evidence that Western mainstream education systems still neither adequately nor regularly meet the needs of Aboriginal students (Battiste, 2013; Little Bear, 2009). This has been found to be true in both public school settings (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010; Korteweg, 2010) and in federally run schools for Aboriginal students (Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2013). For example, in 2010, reports from three separate (but related) Urban

---

[5] Other examples of such policy initiatives include Ontario's *Building Bridges to Success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students* (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/), Alberta's 2002 *First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* and 2009 *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Council* (www.education.alberta.ca), and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada's 2009 summit report: *Strengthening Aboriginal Success* (*www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/221/aboriginal_summit_report.pdf*).

Aboriginal Education Pilot Projects (UAEP), were published by researchers in three different Ontario locations. Dion's (2010) two-year long, large-scale UAEPP study at the Toronto District School Board included 244 participants (composed of students, teachers, parents, community members, principals, and other staff and board administrators) and 326 points of contact or data sources (interviews, sharing circles, surveys, etc.). Her extensive report outlines detailed findings and recommendations for decolonizing urban Aboriginal education, but of particular note, she offers the following summary: "our research confirms what Aboriginal parents, educators, and students already knew: Institutions of formal schooling … are failing to provide Aboriginal students with the educational environment and experiences they require to achieve success" (p. v).

In the Northern Ontario site of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project study, Korteweg et al. (2010) engaged in a large-scale qualitative inquiry through interviews, focus groups, and sharing circles with multiple stakeholder groups of the Lakehead Public School Board, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, teachers, and administrators, as well as Aboriginal community members and the Elder Advisory Council. The most significant overall finding of this study indicated that the main problem is *not* the Indigenous student, a lack of parent engagement in school, or the curriculum, but is rather the lack of real engagement or investment by non-Indigenous teachers and administrators in Indigenous education, culture, and decolonizing work.

Similar findings were evident with regards to Canada's federally run education system for First Nations students living on reserves. In 2011, Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and Mr. Shawn A-Un-Chut Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, launched the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and

Secondary Education for Students on Reserve. Over a four-month period, the panel met

with over 100 stakeholders in First Nations Education through one national and eight

regional round-table discussions, 65 stakeholder meetings, and 25 visits to First Nations

schools. In their findings, Haldane, Lafond and Krause (2012) clearly state, "First

Nations students are not failing, rather we are failing students" (p. vi). Furthermore, they

state that:

> Despite the work of governments and educational leaders over decades and the
>
> development of promising initiatives in a number of regions across the country,
>
> there is no First Nation education system that consistently supports and delivers
>
> positive outcomes for First Nation students in Canada. What we have now is a
>
> patchwork of policies and agreements that do not provide an adequate foundation
>
> to support comprehensive improvement or meet the accountability requirements
>
> of ensuring that all partners in the education of First Nation students do better.
>
> (p. vi)

Dion (2009) posits that one of the explanations for the ongoing ignorance, racism,

and Eurocentric pedagogies in Ontario schools is the fact that many non-Aboriginal

peoples position themselves as 'perfect strangers' to Aboriginal peoples. A 'perfect

stranger' occupies a position of unapologetic ignorance in which non-Aboriginal peoples

believe that Aboriginal peoples have nothing to do with them. This is a mistaken belief

since all Canadians live on Indigenous Land in relation to Indigenous peoples and have

been influenced by them and their cultures. The occurrence of settler Canadians failing

to recognize, or choosing to ignore, this positionality is known as the 'perfect stranger

phenomenon.' Those who claim the perfect stranger stance often do so because they are

aware of the pitfalls of reproducing inaccurate stereotypes, yet are fearful of making

cultural mistakes, offending Aboriginal peoples, or challenging the status quo (Higgins,

Costello, & Korteweg, 2014).

All of these reports make it clear that Western approaches to Aboriginal education

simply do not work, and policy-makers and ministry officials need to listen more closely

to, learn from, and respond in policy and curriculum innovations to Indigenous educators,

Elders, community leaders, parents, and students about what constitutes positive,

culturally responsive Aboriginal education. In fact, Indigenous peoples have long been

generously communicating to settler Canadians sound educational practices for learning

and living sustainably on the planet and for understanding what is best for their children

in teaching and learning. In the next section I explore examples of Indigenous approaches

to education.

Indigenous Education

While the atrocities of the residential school era continue to be documented, and

while neo-colonialism in contemporary Western schooling endures as a result of inaction,

ineffective policies, and scarce resources for respectful Indigenous education in public

schools, many Indigenous peoples are also already reclaiming a fundamentally different

approach to education that pays special attention to Land, relationships, traditions, and

Elder knowledge (Battiste, 2010, 2013; Little Bear, 2009; Styres, Haig-Brown, &

Blimkie, 2013; Canadian Council on Learning Elder's report by Vizina, 2008).

Mi'kmaw scholar and educational researcher, Marie Battiste, (2010) describes

Indigenous learning as constituted by experiential activities on the Land, holistic,

intergenerational storytelling, and wisdom traditions, all rooted in community and the

Land:

> Through our families, peers, and communities, we come to learn about ourselves
> through our ecologies, land, and environments. Our Elders and families share
> their knowledge of place in their daily personal and communal adventures on the
> land, in traditional tales, timed with the seasons, and in the context of everyday
> life.
>
> We come to know ourselves in place, and by its depth of beauty, abundance, and
> gifts, we learn to respect and honour that place. All Indigenous peoples have,
> then, a land base and ecology from which they have learned, and it is there that
> they honour the spirit of that land in ceremonies, traditions, prayers, customs, and
> beliefs. These, then, are the core foundations of Indigenous knowledge, learned
> within a language and culture. (p. 14)

While there are often commonalities amongst diverse Indigenous understandings of education, each Indigenous community and/or culture emphasizes and describes different attributes of Indigenous education in their own local contexts

Unlike dominant Euro-western approaches to education, pedagogies common to many Indigenous cultures are often rooted in the concept of relationship, and tend to be holistic, Land-based, community oriented, spiritual, experiential, and intergenerational; they often include learning from dreams and visions, language, the Land, Elder knowledge, ceremony, symbolism, and protocols (Barnhardt, 2008; Barnhardt & Kawagely, 2005; Battiste, 2005; Cajete, 1999; Little Bear, 2009). Settler Canadian educators have much to learn from Indigenous educators and Elders about how to engage with and implement these and other culturally responsive and Indigenous pedagogies.

Indigenous Education Reports and Policy Examples

Several Indigenous education reports and policy documents have been written by notable national organizations and associations, and illustrate how Indigenous education is being conceptualized in contemporary settings across Canada. These include, for example, the Canadian Association of Deans of Education Accord on Indigenous Education, the Canadian Ministers of Education policies, and the Assembly of First Nations' position on education. These reports are outlined below.

Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) accord on Indigenous education.

This report, ratified in 2009, acknowledges the settler colonial context in Canada that has greatly impacted Indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, and languages, and has "contributed significantly to the low levels of educational attainment and high rates of social issues such as suicide, incarceration, unemployment, and family or community separation" (p. 2). In response to this reality, and with this report, the Association of Canadian Deans of Education made a commitment to join and/or support the efforts of Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations to improve Indigenous education through decision-making and policy development.

The authors of the ACDE Accord highlight the rich and complex nature of Aboriginal education, noting that it reflects the geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of Aboriginal groups across Canada (p. 2). They also note the growing positive trend (which accounts for and honours this diversity) within First Nations and Inuit communities to acquire jurisdiction over their own education.

The ACDE accord's stated vision is that "Indigenous identities, cultures, languages, values, ways of knowing, and knowledge systems will flourish in all Canadian learning settings" (p. 4). This statement is significant in the context of settler decolonizing because it implicates *all people who learn* and *all places where learning occurs in Canada*, including settler educators, settler students, and currently Euro-western educational institutions. The accord outlines nine goals, including: creating respectful and inclusive curricula and learning environments for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners; engaging educators to understand and employ culturally responsive pedagogies and assessment; valuing and promoting Indigeneity in education; revitalizing Indigenous languages; supporting Indigenous education leadership efforts; increasing non-Indigenous learners' understanding of Indigeneity, power, and privilege; and promoting culturally respectful Indigenous research (pp. 5-8). Most of these stated goals will require settler Canadian educators to engage more profoundly with Indigenous education.

I argue that to effectively implement these goals for Indigenous education will necessitate a deeper consideration of how to engage settler educators in effective, respectful, and ongoing decolonizing learning. My study and proposed model can assist Deans of Education, teacher educators, and other educational leaders and administrators in understanding the complexities related to facilitating these transformations amongst settler educators and pre-service teachers.

The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) Summit on Aboriginal education 2009.

The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) Summit on Aboriginal

Education was a national dialogue that took place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 2009. It drew together over 200 invited participants (leaders and stakeholders in Aboriginal education) to discuss how best to eliminate the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students' educational achievement (p. 9). The goals of the summit largely focused on strategies for policy change and action, and collaborative relationships building with national and regional Aboriginal organizations and intergovernmental networks.

The documented themes that emerged from the summit are outlined in the report, "Strengthening Aboriginal Success" (2009); the report identifies the need to fortify Aboriginal languages and cultures through curricula, resources, programs, services, and instructional methods (p. 10), including improving non-Aboriginal learners' appreciation for historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the report advocates for the following: equitable education funding for Aboriginal students; innovative programming and support to improve Aboriginal students' access to, and graduation from, post-secondary education programs; and shared accountability and responsibility by all levels of government for Aboriginal education, including data collection and reporting.

The Assembly of First Nations' 2013 position on education.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) holds a vast repository of research reports and updates written over the past 20 years. These documents critically examine and report on Indigenous education in Canada and international contexts, including: Indigenous education funding; educational jurisdiction, governance, and systems;

language and culture; and rights and responsibilities.[6] The Assembly of First Nations annual report (2013) states that:

> With Resolution 18/2011 (Moving Forward on First Nations Control of First Nations Education), First Nation leadership across Canada confirmed the priority of First Nations education and are dedicated to ensuring that every First Nations child will be supported to succeed through culturally and linguistically appropriate education. In advancing this priority, First Nations have set out a broad policy of First Nations control of First Nations education, reflecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights, responsibilities, and an Indigenous world view of lifelong learning. (n.p.)

The Assembly of First Nations prioritizes First Nations control over First Nations education, which includes: securing equitable and sustainable funding for First Nations education within a lifelong-learning context; making changes that reflect regional diversity; recognizing and revitalizing First Nations languages; and promoting education systems, timelines, and priorities that are First Nations driven. Clearly, the Assembly of First Nations is primarily focused on meeting the needs of Aboriginal students and promoting Indigenous control over education.

The goals of the AFN inherently foreground Indigenous educational leadership, and understandably do not indicate any implications or involvement for settler Canadians. In this context, it would be disrespectful or presumptuous for settler Canadians to assume that we have anything to contribute to this vision of First Nations education. However, I would argue that settler educators still have an important role to play in supporting these

---

[6]   See: http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/policy-areas/education/resources-updates/research-reports-on-first-nations-education

goals and initiatives; that is, we can work to educate and inform those (powerful) settlers—politicians, educational leaders, and even voters—about the importance and urgency of the AFN goals regarding First Nations control of First Nations education. In other words, we may be able to help by 'staying out of the way' and helping to shift other settlers 'out of the way' as well.

These examples from larger-scale organizations help to conceptualize Indigenous education and outline Indigenous education priorities. They can help settlers to understand the rich complexities of Indigenous education, and they can indicate where contributions by settler educators might be useful. While parts of these reports outline clear goals for shifting settler Canadian educators towards self-knowledge, understanding of Indigenous cultures, and respectful pedagogical approaches, they do not provide direction for facilitating those shifts amongst settler educators and within Western educational institutions. My study aims to support the implementation of these report findings by articulating how settlers might decolonize ourselves and our praxes (theory-informed action, or enactment of educational theory through teaching practice).

Learning Respect from Indigenous Communities

Indigenous peoples are setting good examples of intercultural respect and protection of Indigenous Land well beyond the classroom walls. Settler Canadians can and should pay attention to and learn from these examples. Aboriginal peoples' leadership in intercultural respect was evident, for example, at Canada's first Walk for Reconciliation, which was held in 2013 in Vancouver. The event drew an estimated 10,000 participants. The walk was organized by Reconciliation Canada. This organization attempts to engage all Canadians in reconciliation processes. It was formed

as a result of collaboration between Indian Residential School Survivors Society and the Tides Canada Initiatives Society (CBC, 2013).

In addition to promoting initiatives for intercultural respect, Indigenous peoples have been actively involved in communicating values of respect for the Land, and protecting the Land through political protests, many of which have garnered media attention in recent years. Examples of Aboriginal communities' commitment to protect the Land for future generations include the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) community in Northern Ontario that fought to protect their traditional territories from mining development (Ariss with Cutfeet, 2012; Peerla, 2012), demonstrations in Elsipogtog in New Brunswick over fracking on Mi'kmaw traditional territory (CBC, 2013), and strong opposition by First Nations communities in Northern British Columbia over the Northern Gateway pipeline development (Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 2013).

These examples of Indigenous-environmental protests should be of particular interest to socio-critical environmental educators. In a case study related to the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug protests (currently under review with the journal Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society), Lisa Korteweg, David Peerla, and I outlined the ways in which we engaged with, witnessed, learned from, and taught about the KI case. We argued that environmental educators have a responsibility to pay attention to Indigenous Land controversies in their teaching and that by engaging with the controversy (as environmental education curriculum), both the challenges and opportunities related to allied intercultural relationality would be revealed and explored and would help settler educators to shift their teaching towards decolonizing and more respectful pedagogies.

Decolonization

Identifying a Gap in Decolonization Literature

More Aboriginal educators are desperately needed within Canadian schools to serve as role models for students and to be leaders in shaping culturally responsive Aboriginal education (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2009; Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010; Korteweg, 2010). While Indigenous education needs to be conceptualized and led by Indigenous peoples, settler Canadian educators have a serious responsibility to disrupt systemic racism and to create spaces and opportunities in our schools for Indigenous education to flourish. Reagan (2011) found that if settler Canadian educators are to engage seriously with processes of respectful relationship building, then we must engage in deep, reflexive decolonizing processes and shift towards a stance of relational and reconciliatory allies.

A paucity of Aboriginal educators is not the only pitfall in Euro-western education in general, and in Euro-western outdoor environmental education specifically. Eurocentrism is also a key difficulty, and educators in outdoor environmental education and other fields have a responsibility to disrupt the persistent Eurocentrism and its related constructs, including ongoing settler colonialism and white normativity. Unfortunately, there is very limited information available to outdoor environmental educators about how to decolonize ourselves and our teaching and research praxes. Likewise, there is a deficiency of resources that encourage decolonizing shifts amongst our non-Indigenous students. To date, little research exists that demonstrates how settler educators can shift away from their perfect stranger stance (Dion, 2009; Higgins, Costello, & Korteweg, 2014) and towards ethical relationality (Donald, 2009) with Indigenous peoples and

Land. My study contributes to filling this serious gap by providing a much deeper and more nuanced conceptualization of settler decolonizing than what currently exists. My model or new theory, generated from my auto-ethnographic narrative process and constructivist grounded theory analysis and presented in Chapter 5 includes 10 "settler shifts towards respectful relationality." This new theory about settler decolonizing offers settler environmental educators much needed direction for pursuing decolonizing learning, both for themselves and with their students.

Indigenous Theories of Decolonizing for Indigenous Peoples

Beginning to understand what settler decolonizing might look like, or what a decolonizing process for settlers might entail, requires an examination of existing decolonization literature. This literature has primarily been written by and for Indigenous peoples. In the introduction of the inaugural issue of the respected journal, *Decolonization Indigeneity Education and Society*, editors Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2014) write that, "Decolonization is indeed oppositional to colonial ways of thinking and acting but demands an Indigenous starting point and an articulation of what decolonization means for Indigenous peoples" (p. ii). Sium et al go on to explain that although decolonization resists codification or rigid definition because of the embedded and contextual nature of Indigenous knowledge, the one sure thing is that "the desired outcomes of decolonization are diverse and located at multiple sites in multiple forms, represented by and reflected in Indigenous sovereignty over land and sea, as well as over ideas and epistemologies." They state that decolonization makes room for "dialogue and dissent, as well as for coming together to each contribute to one another's shared visions and goals" (p. xii) and that those engaged in the process need to humbly ask hard

questions without easy answers.

Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, (1999) who authored the seminal book, *Decolonizing Methodologies,* describes decolonization as embedded in the political, spiritual, social, and psychological, and conceptualizes it as part of a complex and widespread Indigenous social movement that "involves a revitalization and reformulation of culture and tradition, an increased participation in and articulate rejection of Western institutions, a focus on strategic relations and alliances with non-Indigenous groups" (p. 110).

Another Indigenous scholar, Fyre Jean Graveline (1999) writes about transforming Eurocentric consciousness and also describes decolonizing, from an Indigenous perspective:

Our peoples are moving beyond apathy … victimization

Embracing Resistance … Cultural Renaissance … Self-determination

Revitalizing … Reclaiming … the Gifts of our Ancestors.

Our-Story is being told in Circle form

Hear us speak Stories of Survival … Resistance

What fuels our fires?…What keeps us strong? (p. 34)

She elaborates on decolonization, and describes what it might teach Eurocentric educators:

Decolonization requires and allows reclamation of [Indigenous] voice…. We are reclaiming our voices. Through voice we speak/write of our acts of resistance, the healing and empowering values of our Traditions and the role of the European colonizers in the destruction of our communities. Through voice we are gaining

our own sense of conscious reality and providing another lens through which Eurocentric educators may view themselves. Once our voices become heard in the struggle, the ground shifts. (p. 41)

I was introduced to the concept of "decolonizing," and the language of its discourse, during a graduate course at Lakehead University taught by Judy Iseke, who held a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Learning. This experience is significant to me because it was during this course that I learned a language with which to name and talk about my own learning journey already underway. Through this course I was able to understand the ways in which some of my own experiences were related to much larger sociocultural and political contexts. The course syllabus, entitled Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Decolonizing, provided the following conceptualization of what decolonization might mean from an Indigenous perspective:

> [The course focuses] on decolonizing the mind by understanding the politics of colonization, de-universalizing language and language politics, examining politics and traditions and the practice of speaking out, exploring Indigenous approaches to healing, and challenging colonized culture and suppression agencies…. Resources for decolonizing the mind include revitalization of traditional worldviews, honouring Indigenous knowledges, sustaining Indigenous languages, and challenging and reconceptualizing research practices. (p. 1)

This conceptualization of decolonization is similar to Smith and Graveline in that it provides direction mainly to Aboriginal people. As a White settler educator, I may be able to participate in, or learn from, many of the endeavours described in all of these conceptualizations above (such as understanding the politics of colonization, challenging

colonized culture, or respecting Indigenous knowledges); however, other aspects of

Indigenous conceptualizations of decolonizing (such as revitalizing traditional

worldviews or sustaining Indigenous languages) could be at various times difficult,

inappropriate, or impossible for settler educators like myself to participate in directly.

Furthermore, these initiatives are different from what settler educators may experience as

they learn to do anti-colonial work and build respectful relationships with Indigenous

students, families, and colleagues.

Understandably, much of the existing (and most of the seminal) decolonization

literature has been written by and for Indigenous peoples about processes of Indigenous

cultural celebration, traditional knowledge and language revitalization, and Land

repatriation (Graveline, 1998; Smith, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The conceptualizations

of decolonizing articulated by Iseke, Graveline, and Tuhiwai-Smith describe important

processes relevant to cultural revitalization and self-determination by Aboriginal peoples.

Settler educators can learn a great deal from these tenets of decolonization by becoming

aware of and supporting the decolonization initiatives of Indigenous peoples and

communities. However, settler educators still need to do deep decolonizing work of their

own that is very different from the decolonizing work taking place in Indigenous

communities. For settler Canadians—for the colonizers—decolonizing is fundamentally

different, requiring a number of elements including: ongoing disruption of one's own

Eurocentric worldviews; a willingness to make mistakes; the capacity to overcome fear

and anxiety; exposure to Aboriginal culture, strength, and resilience; a commitment to

truthful re-telling of history; a reconsideration of one's relationships with Indigenous

peoples and Land; and a chance to learn about and embrace one's own cultural traditions

(Dion, 2007; Reagan, 2010; Root, 2010). These and other theories of decolonizing for settler Canadians are discussed in the next sections.

Decolonizing for Settler Canadians

Although there is a great need for settler Canadian educators to decolonize ourselves and our pedagogical practices, settler decolonizing processes are deeply difficult, emotional, and lifelong (Reagan, 2010; Root, 2010; Tompkins, 2002). Moreover, they have not been extensively researched. It is the intention of this study to make a significant and much needed contribution to the literature.

It is challenging for settler Canadians who have been "marinated" in a Eurocentric worldview (Battiste, 2005) through schooling and enculturation, and through wider dominant society that emphasizes White normativity and Eurocentric cognitive imperialism, to continuously employ decolonizing shifts in teaching praxes and in relations with Indigenous peoples (Fitznor, Haig-Brown, & Moses 2000; Reagan, 2010; Root, 2010, Tompkins, 2002). For example, in the 2010 Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project study, Dion, Johnston, and Rice found that many non-Aboriginal teachers who had initially been fairly committed to improving education for Aboriginal students withdrew or distanced themselves due to the anxiety and discomfort they experienced as they tried to decolonize themselves and their teaching practice. Reagan (2010) suggests that decolonizing is in part about learning how to "unsettle ourselves to name and then transform the settler—the colonizer who lurks within—not just in words but by our actions, as we confront the history of colonization, violence, racism, and injustice that remains part of the Indian Residential School legacy today" (p. 11). I would add that

decolonizing also requires us to confront the neo-colonialism that is ever-present in our schools and institutions.

Furthermore, we must ask ourselves, how can settler educators take responsibility for decolonizing ourselves by learning with and from Indigenous peoples without imposing on them the responsibility of solving our Eurocentric problems when their time and efforts are needed in their own communities? While the process of decolonizing a Eurocentric school system poses numerous challenges to both Indigenous and settler students and educators, Indigenous peoples may face undue burdens such as being expected to have access to and/or share cultural knowledge in their classes (Dion, 2010), play the role of "Pan-Indian expert," or endure re-victimization from racist and ignorant comments during so-called reconciliatory discussions (personal communication with Aboriginal graduate students and anonymous Aboriginal Education Instructor). There also remains legitimate concern about the potential within the education system for appropriations and misrepresentations of traditional–Indigenous knowledge, ceremonies, or the sacred by non-Indigenous peoples (MacGregor, 2004; Settee, 2000; Simpson, 2004).

Settler thoughts on settler decolonizing.

Joanne Tompkins (2002) offers one of the key early scholarly conceptualizations of the decolonizing process specifically for White settlers in Canada. In her article, "Learning to See What They Can't," Tompkins—who positions herself as a continual learner—describes her decolonizing work with White educators as involving intrapersonal and interpersonal work that validates emotions as part of knowledge. She explains that this creates an atmosphere of trust and openness amongst the group of

White educators with whom she works. She identifies other parts of the decolonizing process: naming power and privilege; hearing voices seldom heard; and building relationships. She also highlights that the process requires taking risks.

Tompkins writes that her work with White educators in rural Nova Scotia involves:

> working with participants to name power and privilege with a view to articulating and critically examining their own biography … and … making spaces for participants to be able to hear the voices and stories of people within Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities in rural Nova Scotia…. At the crux of the work of decolonizing White educators' conceptions of race and inequity is their conception of knowledge. Colonialist conceptions of knowledge equate knowledge with truth. It is 'out there,' it is largely uncontested, and it happens to coincide with the beliefs of the dominant group. Having White education leaders see that the knowledge base and the social relationships in schools are constructed around issues of power and privilege is essentially the task at hand. (p. 410)

Tompkins's work serves as an excellent example of the kind of effort that needs to be made in communities throughout Canada. It focuses on White educators who may not yet recognize their privilege, power, and Eurocentric assumptions, and it also focuses on Tompkins's own experiences as a facilitator helping students to recognize these issues within the context of a relatively short (semester-long) course. I am interested in expanding this conceptualization to consider the settler decolonizing processes that take place throughout a longer life journey, including once someone becomes aware of decolonizing and committed to a decolonizing learning journey.

A number of other non-Indigenous scholars contribute to the discourse that conceptualizes decolonization for settlers in the context of Indigenous–non-Indigenous relations. Rasmussen (2002) suggests that in order to decolonize, Euro-western settlers first need to examine the problems inherent in our own culture:

> As long as Euro-America needs eighty percent of the rest of the world's resources, we [will] go next door and bully people to get it…. If our way of life is causing most of the problems that the rest of the world has to deal with, the best thing we can do is deal with our own way of life. (p. 86)

This passage highlights the interconnection between Euro-America's resource consumption, the unequal power distribution that favours Euro-America, and global social oppression—a good reminder to environmental educators of the need to consider social inequity in conjunction with inquiry into the environmental crisis. Rasmussen provides a contextual example of the need for White settler Canadians to examine our own culture by suggesting that White teachers in the Arctic should drop the illusion that we are there to teach the Inuit and, instead, focus on learning about White behaviour in general and the problems associated with current Eurocentric models of education in particular.

One of the most extensive examinations of settler decolonizing comes from the former Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, Paulette Reagan (2010). In her book entitled *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Reagan examines the difficult work that settlers need to undertake in order to move towards a place where reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada might be possible. She argues that non-Aboriginal people must learn to recognize, grapple with, and disrupt our own

colonial mentality and ignorance about historic and ongoing colonization in Canada. With reference to reconciliation she asks:

> What is our particular role and responsibility? Is it to 'help' Indigenous people recover from the devastating impacts of prescriptive policies and programs?… This seems a dubious goal. Or is it to determine what we who carry the identity of the colonizer and have reaped the benefits and privileges of colonialsm must do to help ourselves recover from its detrimental legacy? How will we do so in ways that speak to truth, repair broken trust, and set us on a transformative decolonizing pathway toward more just and peaceful relations with Indigenous people? (p. 2)

Reagan argues that in order to work authentically and respectfully towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, settler Canadians need to relinquish the myth that we (Canadians) are peacemakers and instead acknowledge the legacies of colonial harm for which we are accountable.

Aside from disrupting Eurocentric culture, another way in which settlers can engage in decolonizing is by working to understand our own location and worldview *in relation* to the Indigenous peoples with whom we live and work. An example of such a collaborative initiative is the work of Haig-Brown (an Anglo-Canadian and faculty member at York University), Laara Fitznor (a Cree woman and faculty member at OISE/University of Toronto), and Lori Moses (a woman from the Delaware Nation and graduate student at York University) who collaborated as guest editors on an issue of the *Canadian Journal of Native Education* in 2000. Their editorial, "(De)colonizing Academe: Knowing our Relations," demonstrates the individual and collective reflexivity of the group that helped them to understand their different histories, their different

relationships to the Mississauga Anishnaabe territory where they were all coming together, and their common goals. Through the process of working together across differences in an intentionally reflexive way, they learned from each other and arrived at a deeper level of respect for how they work together (Fitznor, Haig-Brown, & Moses, 2000). White environmental educators working to decolonize their practice would no doubt learn a great deal by embracing this constant critical reflexivity.

Indigenous thoughts on settler decolonizing.

Some Indigenous scholars have described aims of decolonizing that do need to be taken up by non-Aboriginal people, but since the focus for Indigenous scholars, rightfully so, is on revitalizing and centring Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, their work does not fully describe the long and complex process by which settler Canadian educators might learn how to engage in these tasks. For example, settlers may be able to assist with some of the disruptive work that Battiste (2005) describes:

> In schools we must engage in a critique of the curriculum and examine the connections between and the framework of meanings behind what is being taught, who is being excluded, and who is benefiting from public education. We must centre Indigenous knowledge by removing the distorting lens of Eurocentrism so that we can immerse ourselves in systems of meaning that are different from those that have conditioned us. (p. 125)

Aboriginal scholar Susan Dion (2007) focuses her work directly on the changes that need to occur in the teaching practices of non-Aboriginal educators in Ontario classrooms. She writes:

Teachers, curriculum planners and school librarians are entwined in perpetuating

a perspective that sustains the view of First Nations people as objects. This can

and must change.… Teachers can begin by including First Nations subject matter

in all areas of the curriculum and by expanding the study from the exclusive focus

on the pre-contact periods to look in depth at what happened post-contact and at

the relationship between the First Nations and Canadians. (p. 342)

Dion's work calls attention to the great need for settler Canadian teachers to shift their

teaching practice towards approaches that are more honest and respectful of Aboriginal

peoples. While she provides specific direction for appropriate ways for non-Aboriginal

educators to teach Aboriginal content in their classrooms, her work does not fully

examine the decolonizing experiences and processes that occur as settler educators

grapple with our own identities as colonizers and learn to teach in more respectful ways.

Collectively, settler educators and scholars need to continue to understand and articulate

our own process of disrupting our Eurocentric worldview and decolonizing our teaching

praxes.

In *Circlework: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*, Graveline (1998)

provides a rich and comprehensive analysis of the decolonizing impact of exposing non-

Aboriginal students to Aboriginal worldviews, pedagogical approaches (such as circle

work, the medicine wheel, storytelling), and spiritual practices. She writes extensively

about the importance of building learning communities that support caring, sharing,

honesty, and respect. However, while non-Aboriginal educators may have a great deal to

learn from Graveline's (1998) conceptualization of decolonization, she also cautions

Aboriginal educators who may experience ongoing racism even while they are generously reaching out to teach settler Canadians:

> The difficulties in teaching from First Voice … are primarily context related … as are the following contradictions about introducing forms of Aboriginal philosophy and pedagogy to non-Natives in a non-Aboriginal context. (p. 234)
>
> Talking Circle in a non-Native context
>
> Can become a Negative Hurtful experience …
>
> Some wish our silence.
>
> Project their Fear as our Negativity.
>
> "Facilitating" Circle is complex.
>
> Simplicity is an Illusion.
>
> Caution is wise (p. 235)

Settler Canadians who may find themselves invited to participate in circle work, where they can learn from Indigenous teachers, should heed this warning. They should be aware of how their participation may inadvertently perpetuate Eurocentric harm and strive to learn respectfully and with humility.

While a number of scholars, both Indigenous and settler Canadian, exist who partially address the challenges and themes of settler decolonizing, more research is needed on the process of long-term settler decolonizing. Widespread decolonizing change could be slow, but as studies have found, the need is immediately pressing (Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2012; Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010; and Korteweg, 2010). This need has also been long-documented by Aboriginal scholars such as Battiste (2005, 2013), Little Bear (2009), and Simpson (2002; 2004). In order to foster such

decolonizing change, I argue that we need to develop a much greater and more nuanced understanding about how to facilitate decolonizing processes for non-Indigenous educators and students.

Complexities of Monolithic Binaries

I am aware of the concern about creating and reinforcing monolithic binaries in ways that limit complexity, nuance, and relationship. This is a challenging concept to navigate in a dissertation that examines settler-Indigenous relationality. While my intention is not to reify overly simplified dichotomies, it is important to consider how our worldviews and positionalities influence our relationships with other people and the Land. While Indigenous and Western worldviews are individually heterogeneous, each does have underlying commonalities that are important to recognize as we work to build more respectful understanding and relationality.

Numerous scholars from multiple disciplines have critiqued the concept of "difference," and helped us to think instead about the complexities of "relationship." There is concern about the privileging of the concepts of "difference" over the concepts of "relationship" in Western critical theory discourse (Greenwood [formerly Gruenewald], 2008; Marker, 2006). Greenwood states, "The privileging of the discourse of difference in cultural study reinforces an anthropocentric stance that obscures the relationship between all people and the land, between all cultures and the diverse environments out of which all cultures emerged" (p. 148). While I can agree that an overemphasis on difference could inhibit relationship, to me, movement towards respectful relationship shouldn't ignore or collapse difference; rather, it should seek to

explore the complexity that stems from acknowledging and respecting both *differences* and *commonalities.*

Aboriginal education scholar Michael Marker (2006) posits that Western critical theorists' emphasis on "political transcendence of self and negotiated, individualized identities of ethnicity, hybridity, and difference" (p. 491) has in fact submerged the traditional, collective, and Land-based knowledge of Indigenous peoples. He predicts that collaborative efforts between Aboriginal scholars and critical theorists will work "only if [the critical theorists] foreground the interdependent mythic relationships of plants, animals, and humans in actual settings on the land" (p. 492).

Calliou (1998) and Bishop (2005) both interrogate the First Nations–non-First Nations binary. While Calliou clearly asserts that such terms are necessary in order to describe and discuss historic and neo-colonial events, she also points to the inadequacy of these monolithic binaries since they do not take into account the multiplicities and diversities embedded within each of these collectives. She suggests that "overly large labels are now more recognizable barriers to fuller understanding of complex issues" and that "examination of the binary may assist individuals to re-conceptualize geopolitical and spiritual events and conditions in historical and contemporary terms" (p. 31). Bishop (2005) problematizes the insider–outsider binary as too simplistic to capture complex, multi-faceted, and dynamic researcher identities and researcher-participant relationships. He states that this distinction "assume[s] a homogeneity that is far from the reality of the diversity and complexity that characterizes indigenous peoples' lives and that [it] ignores the impacts that … other variables might have upon the research relationship" (p. 111).

Unexamined binaries might obscure unities and the potential for collaboration that could exist between different individuals and collectives.

By articulating concerns about the privileging of the concept of difference and enduring binaries, however, I do not mean to suggest that cultural differences should be ignored. In fact, notions that 'we are all the same' and 'culture doesn't matter—we're all people' exemplify the Eurocentric 'colourblindness' that often prevents White people from acknowledging and respecting the unique cultural identities of others (Trowsse, 2007) or acknowledging that colonization exists. Rather, I argue that in order to move towards a position of ethical relationality (Donald, 2009) or respectful relationality (Korteweg, personal communication), a greater focus on interconnectedness and relationships is needed in connection to the understandings of cultural differences and what Tuck and Yang (2012) refer to as "incommensurabilities" (2012, p. 1).

In this dissertation, I often rely on the distinction between 'settler' and 'Indigenous' peoples, yet I do so with the preceding caveats in mind. I do not intend to reify a monolithic binary but rather explore the complexities and nuances of these particular components of diverse positionalities. In my work, I strive to maintain a focus on the complexities of relationality and positionality rather than focus strictly on difference. Recent work on the role of intercultural thinking (Barnhardt, 2008; Barnhard & Kawagley, 2005; Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012; 2014; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999) helps Indigenous and settler educators and researchers to move past monolithic binaries and grapple with some of the complexities of collaboration.

Eurocentrism in Outdoor and Environmental Education

As is also true of other realms of education and schooling, elements of Eurocentrism persist in outdoor and environmental education in general (see Lowan, 2009 and Newbery, 2012, both of whom discuss and problematize the prevalence of Eurocentric pedagogies and assumptions embedded in canoe trips either with Indigenous students or on Indigenous Land, or both) and in place-based education in particular (see Friedel, 2012, who discusses how Western outdoor programming fails to resonate with Indigenous youth, and Tuck, McCoy, & MacKenzie, 2014 and Calderon, 2014, who problematize the ways in which Western notions of 'place' erase Indigenous conceptualizations of Land). These scholarly examples that problematize aspects of outdoor and environmental education and place-based education are provided below.

Newbery (2012) illuminates some of the ways that settler colonialism is perpetuated through Euro-Canadian wilderness canoe tripping, a sub-culture that emphasizes romantic notions of escape to so-called "pristine wilderness" (without acknowledgement of the colonial histories of the Land), celebrations of selective (colonial) histories such as voyageur culture and exploration, and a settler national identity formation that ignores relationality with Indigenous peoples. She explores the "problem of curricular absence: an absence of a critical pedagogy of colonialism in [her] own practice and in the teaching [she has] witnessed at outdoor centres, Outward Bound, and universities" (p. 31). She writes:

> I question the ethics of invoking voyageur lore as a means to inspire and captivate students without also exploring our own connections to the wider context of colonialism and capitalism of which the voyageurs were also a part. Similarly, a

curriculum of pioneer life demands that we ask on whose land these pioneers

were living and how they came to live there. (p. 33)

Korteweg and Oakley (2012) examine similar themes to Newbery but in the context of

dominant mass media such as Hollywood movies. Specifically, they look at dominant

culture's fascination with eco-heroes in 'pristine' wilderness and how those

representations pervade mainstream discourses and reemphasize both Eurocentric ideals

of the outdoors and a romanticized Eurocentric image of 'connecting with nature.'

Lowan (2009) and Friedel (2012) both explored the experiences of Aboriginal

youth who participated in Euro-western outdoor programming. Friedel examined the

plausible assumption that informal experiential outdoor- and environmental-themed

summer learning programs may help Aboriginal youth to connect with ancestral

territories. Her case study of one such program found that discourses of primitivism and

(in)authenticity were common to Western outdoor environmental and place-based

education discourses but did not resonate with urban Native youth.

Similarly, Lowan (2009) found that Euro-western outdoor programming was not

always culturally responsive for Aboriginal youth. He explored the experiences of staff

and students who participated in Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwyn program, which

is designed for Aboriginal youth. He found that programs for Aboriginal youth were not

always as culturally responsive as they strove to be or as they were purported to be. He

recommended that Indigenous education programs should be grounded "in the teachings

and traditions of respective Indigenous cultures in order to support decolonization and

cultural revitalization" (p. 51). In response to his findings, he suggested increasing Elder

involvement, locating courses on traditional territories of the participants, improving the

cultural responsiveness of curriculum, increasing support for Aboriginal instructors, and increasing cultural awareness training for instructors.

Land-based Environmental Education: Potential for Critical Decolonization

On account of the increasing recognition of Eurocentrism in these fields, some outdoor and environmental education discourse is starting to reconsider the emphasis on Western place-based education in favour of shifting towards 'Land-based' or 'Land' education and a focus on decolonizing and Indigenizing environmental education.[7]. These Land-based approaches are often resonant with values and pedagogical approaches in Indigenous education and directly address the ongoing settler colonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2012) that impacts Indigenous peoples and the Land. Tuck, McCoy, and McKenzie explain that one intention of Land-education is to "call into question educational practices and theories that justify settler occupation of stolen land, or encourage the replacement of Indigenous peoples and relations with settlers and relations to property" (p. 15, 2014).

Calderon (2014) builds on Greenwood's (2003) place-based education work and his language of 'decolonization' and 'reinhabitation.' Calderon states that "Land education takes up what place-based education fails to consider: the ways in which place is foundational to settler colonialism" (p. 10). By contrast, she posits that Land-education would conceptualize sustainability as seeking to make settler informed understandings of place extinct. She argues that Land education must be based on the assumption that all Land was once, and still is, Indigenous Land and that Land education must examine the relationship between Indigenous Land and settler colonialism.

---

[7] (See special issue journals by Korteweg and Russel, Eds., 2012, *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*; and Tuck, McCoy, & Mackenzie, Eds., 2014, *Environmental Education Research.*) Land-based approaches (Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimke, 2013; Tuck, MacCoy, & MacKenzie, 2014)

I argue that Western environmental education researchers need to pay more attention to, and be better at engaging with, discourses of Land education. Indigenous Land education provides a potential arena for shifting positions within environmental education and fertile opportunities to impact more decolonizing changes in environmental and place-based education and in our communities. On account of several points of resonance between many Indigenous cultures and the micro-cultures of outdoor environmental educators, the latter may in fact be 'ripe' for decolonizing and well-positioned for leading change amongst other settler educators (MacKeon, 2012; Root, 2010). For example, "it is common for environmental educators to understand their interconnectedness as humans to the rest of nature, their dependence on the Earth for life sustenance, and their ecological impact as a human being living in contemporary North American society in the 21st century" (Root, 2009). McKeon (2012) also explores potential points of resonance in her article, *Two-Eyed Seeing into Environmental Education: Revealing its 'Natural' Readiness to Indigenize*, which draws on Albert Marshall's work on integrating Indigenous and Western thinking. She writes:

> Already representing a place and opportunity of greater closeness between
> Western and Indigenous traditions in epistemology and methodology,
> environmental education as a discipline is a natural place to extend the model of
> coming together represented by Two-Eyed Seeing. An Indigenous perspective
> will challenge, enrich, strengthen, and unite … leading ideas in environmental
> education. (p. 135).

Furthermore, there is often a strong commitment from outdoor and environmental educators to deep interpersonal and intrapersonal awareness, which Reagan (2010),

Tompkins (2002), and Graveline (1998) all identify as central to decolonizing

processes. (Outdoor education work often involves a focus on group dynamics and

leadership, including themes such as respectful conflict resolution, positive

communication, consensus and other decision-making styles, communal or collective

living, self-awareness, and goal-setting.)

To be clear, my comparison is not meant to indicate that outdoor and

environmental educators hold Aboriginal worldviews, nor am I suggesting that they are

exempt from accountability to respond to the colonial legacy. Additionally, I am not

suggesting that all Indigenous peoples live an ecologically harmonious lifestyle. Rather,

I posit that outdoor and environmental educators' respect and reverence for the natural

world, their understandings of humans as "inseparable from the land," and their

willingness to embrace socio-critical and innovative research could create a point of

resonance between the micro-culture of outdoor environmental educators and the Land-

based and relational worldviews of many Aboriginal cultures. Like McKeon (2012), I

believe this may position outdoor and environmental educators to be particularly

receptive to engaging in decolonizing processes.

Despite these points of resonance, outdoor and environmental educators are often

not aware of, have not been taught about, or choose to ignore, historic and contemporary

social politics and settler colonialism that impact the traditional people of the Land and,

by extension, the Land itself (Newbery, 2012). Outdoor education also carries a colonial

legacy of cultural misrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples where historicized and/or

romanticized imagery of the "noble Indian" often features in summer camp lore and

tradition (Wall, 2009). A deep need for continued shifts towards decolonizing praxis and

Indigenous understandings, endures in environmental education. Settler Canadian

educators have much work to do to comprehend our own role in the colonial legacy and

to understand how to disrupt Eurocentrism in our practices and worldviews. We have

this responsibility not only to our colleagues and our students, but also to ourselves. To

this end, a much deeper and more nuanced understanding of decolonizing processes for

settler educators and Land-based approaches to education is urgently needed.

<div align="center">

Intercultural Relationships for Decolonization:

A Shared Endeavour

</div>

Indigenous Directions for Intercultural Learning

Decolonizing processes and experiences no doubt differ between Indigenous and

settler Canadians. These journeys are complex, emotionally charged, and can be fraught

with tensions, due in part to settler ignorance and ongoing, deeply engrained colonial

myths. As such, I concur with Graveline (1998) who suggests that, in order to overcome

challenges related to decolonizing, Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups may need to

work separately at times and collaboratively at other times. However, regardless of our

direct or indirect engagement with each other at various times, our decolonizing work

needs to take place 'in relation' to each other by exploring both differences and points of

resonance in our diverse worldviews, as well as by examining our perspectives on our

shared histories. Several scholars provide direction for intercultural learning (Barnhardt,

2008; Barnhard & Kawagley, 2005; Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; Lowan-

Trudeau, 2012; 2014; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999).

The learning and transformative process that I describe as 'decolonizing' may be

understood in other terms. Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall does not specifically

describe such processes of change as 'decolonizing;' rather, he advocates for working together interculturally in a 'co-learning journey' (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012). Marshall proposes the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing to assist us in these co-learning journeys. This approach values multiple perspectives and refers to "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all" (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012, p. 5). Bartlett et al. explain that Two-Eyed Seeing allows Indigenous knowledge systems to remain distinct, intact, and alongside intact Western knowledge systems. Two-Eyed Seeing encourages people to learn to shift back and forth between knowledges, depending on which one offers the most strength in a particular context.

Similar to Marshall's concept of a co-learning journey, Dwayne Donald (2009) argues that decolonization needs to be a joint effort between Indigenous peoples and settler Canadians. He writes:

> If colonialism is indeed a shared condition, then decolonization needs to be a shared endeavour. I am convinced that decolonization in the Canadian context can only occur when Aboriginal peoples and Canadians face each other across historic divides, deconstruct their shared past, and engage critically with the realization that their present and future is similarly tied together. (p. 5)

Donald is concerned with the ethical problems that are posed by the increasingly mandated curricular expectations, and that are faced by non-Aboriginal Canadian teachers who are often ill prepared teach about Aboriginal culture, knowledge, and history. In particular he critiques the ways in which curriculum assumes and perpetuates

myths of monolithic division between Aboriginal peoples and settler Canadians. He examines how curriculum might facilitate decolonizing and contribute to "rereading, reframing, and reimagining the relationships connecting Aboriginal peoples and Canadians" (p. 5) through an Indigenous métissage sensibility.

Donald explains that Indigenous métissage juxtaposes dominant historic myths with Aboriginal perspectives in order to both illuminate for readers how their own assumptions might be limited and to encourage broader and deeper intercultural understandings. The goal is to encourage "ethical relationality [which] is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other" (p. 6). Donald states that as a pedagogical praxis, métissage relies on the weaving together of multiple cultural perspectives (sometimes texts), through collaboration and/or shared authorship, to show the transcultural and shared nature of experience and memory.

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network, developed by Ray Barnhardt and Oscar Kawagley, seeks to find commonalities between Western scientific knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) note that while Western and Indigenous knowledge systems are indeed divergent, in reality these systems often co-exist, in one person, one organization, or one community. They further observe that, for many Aboriginal people, this duality leads them to feel as though they are living in two worlds. They argue that, "non-Native people, too, need to recognize the coexistence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems, and find ways to understand and relate to the world in its multiple dimensions and varied perspectives" (p. 9). Some of the

common ground they find at the confluence of the two broad knowledge systems includes values such as perseverance, inquisitiveness, honesty, and open-mindedness; it also comprises skills such as empirical observation, pattern recognition, and inference or prediction. Barnhardt and Kawagley have since developed an extensive curriculum for all Alaskan students that interweaves both knowledge streams.

Greg Lowan-Trudeau (2012) undertook to explore cultural border crossing in environmental education. He drew on work by Donald (2009) as well as his own research and experiences as a Metis educator, to develop the concept of ecological métissage, which he describes as follows:

> The blending of two or more ecological worldviews on a personal and/or cultural level as represented in identity, philosophies, and practice through consideration of … ecological identity… and an understanding of 'métissage' as a mixing or blending often associated with culture or ethnicity.

In his study, Lowan-Trudeau explores the existing complexities and uncertainties inherent in educators' experiences when they are working with, in, and between multiple cultural spaces. Some environmental educator participants in this study advocated for a blended or transcultural approach that would create a new way of knowing. Others were more concerned about the potential risk of diluting, appropriating, or misrepresenting Indigenous knowledge and suggested a more cautious intercultural or bricolage approach that would honour distinct Indigenous knowledge and its origins. Lowan-Trudeau (2014) suggests that when working to join Western and Indigenous knowledges in environmental education, it might be appropriate to begin with a more integrated bricolage approach, which might eventually expand to include "respectful, locally

grounded, transcultural instances of métissage" (p. 11). In an intercultural or bricolage approach, distinct cultural knowledges would remain intact, whereas a transcultural approach would blend knowledges from different cultures to form new knowledge.

Finally, Kapyrka and Dockstator advocate for a "two-worlds" pedagogical approach where "Western environmentalism and Indigenous environmentalism can work together and utilize ideologies from both systems of thought … [to] protect and conserve the land for activities that espouse (Indigenous) respectful, reciprocal engagement in relationship with it" (p. 103). They explain that a two-worlds approach helps students and educators improve settler–Indigenous relationships and deepen their understandings of how Indigenous and Western knowledges intersect. Kapryka and Dockstader state that this approach acknowledges and maintains differences in knowledge systems; it neither attempts to merge Indigenous and Western ways of knowing nor simply inserts discrete Indigenous knowledge into Western curricula. Crucial stated elements of their two-worlds pedagogy are: equitable inclusion of Indigenous and Western epistemologies; holistic approaches to teaching that allow for holistic engagement with topics; critical analysis of past and present Indigenous–settler relationships on educational practices; and storytelling, personal narrative, and self-location (p. 104). They identify several complexities of implementing a two-worlds pedagogy. For example, there is real risk of shallow implementation of Indigenous perspectives by non-Indigenous teachers, as well as cultural misrepresentation, appropriation, and/or stereotyping. They suggest the need for more Aboriginal academics and other educators, increased ethical space in academia in which to do this work, and a greater curricular focus on interrelatedness of cultures.

These examples of intercultural thinking, which comprises Two-Eyed Seeing,

Métissage, Ecological Métissage, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, and Two-Worlds approach, encourage and offer direction to settler educators as to how we might learn from and integrate Indigenous knowledge in our own learning and teaching praxes. Moreover, they offer Indigenous and settler educators nuanced explorations of some of the complexities and possibilities for our shared responsibility of decolonizing education. As settlers, it is vitally important for us to turn our attention to these Indigenous examples of integrated thinking in order to learn how to engage respectfully with Indigenous knowledges, without perpetuating the pitfalls of Eurocentric and neo-colonial education. At the same time, lots of critical settler decolonization work needs to occur if educators are to respectfully engage with Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies.

Complexities of Intercultural Alliances

Our identities as settlers are neither static nor monolithic. I concur with Reagan (2010) who states that we do not have to be stuck in a static colonizer identity— we can and should choose to learn and act from truth on a daily basis. We must examine the ways in which we benefit from ongoing settler colonialism and choose to shift from the position of colonizer towards an ethical allied stance in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. To work between the tensions of the two identities of colonizer and ally requires embracing uncertainty and vulnerability.

In addition to choosing to 'live in right relations' (Reagan, 2010) and to become a respectful ally, settler decolonizing requires a commitment to exploring and working through the complexities and tensions of collaborative intercultural work. Questions such as *what will respect look like, how will we work together,* and *how will we bridge intercultural (epistemological) differences,* require ongoing consideration. This work

takes significant time and effort and raises two additional questions, which are, *who benefits from allied collaboration, and how do they benefit*?

There is no doubt a need for settlers to work with Indigenous peoples in order to disrupt settler colonialism, learn from Indigenous peoples and their Land-based knowledges, cultures, and relationships, and decolonize themselves and their praxes to support the goal of Indigenous Land repatriation. For example, Maori scholar Graham Smith (2009) calls for collaboration among all contributors whose work is respectful of Aboriginal knowledges, and Russell Bishop (2005), also Maori, argues that an alternative to thinking of insiders and outsiders would be to address the concerns of Indigenous peoples by involving all those whose work operationalizes self-determination for Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, Leanne Simpson (2010) states that alliances, partnerships, and solidarities have long been (and will continue to be) a tool of Indigenous movements for justice.

However, intercultural collaboration that attempts to navigate and understand the interconnected perspectives of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples is no doubt fraught with tensions and poses significant ethical dilemmas for researchers. Significant questions and complexities related to how non-Indigenous peoples might contribute collaboratively, ethically, and effectively remain. As a White Euro-Canadian researcher who is committed to improving educational experiences for Aboriginal students, I am concerned about the paradox I may create when I focus my research and writing on the experiences of settlers who are attempting to unlearn racist and Eurocentric behaviour. I agree with Rasmussen (2002) who states that White people first need to learn to stop doing harm, and furthermore, that White people need to share their experiences and

critical self-reflections with each other as part of this process (Root, 2010). Yet, I am also concerned that critical Whiteness discourse, while it attempts to problematize and publicize White privilege, also risks perpetuating the re-centring of 'Whiteness' (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). My concerns resonate with those of Celia Haig-Brown (in Fitznor, Haig-Brown, & Moses, 2000) who describes the challenge she faces as a White researcher:

> As a white woman I continually question the possibility of working respectfully…. Ever conscious of the risk of merely 'colonizing better,' I ponder the possibilities of decolonizing: the interstices of appropriation and learning, of reciprocity and exploitation. (p. 76)

> Similarly, Alison Jones, in a publication with Kuni Jenkins (2008), ponders whether her White–settler enthusiasm for collaboration might be "an unwitting imperialist demand—and thereby in danger of strengthening the very impulses it seeks to combat" (p. 471). Rather than rejecting collaboration, however, she calls for a critical rethinking of Indigenous–non-Indigenous collaboration, suggesting a more "unsettled relationship that is based on learning (about difference) from the Other, rather than learning about the other" (p. 471).

Such complexities may be part of the reason why Simpson (2010) argues that it is important to consider the nature of these relationships, various roles, and responsibilities, so as to be able to avoid tensions and misunderstandings. Of notable concern, however, is that while non-Indigenous peoples are implicated (through action or inaction) in perpetuating systemic colonial structures in education, there exists only limited research about the nature and complexities of respectful allied collaboration and settler solidarity

with Indigenous peoples. Lynne Davis (2010) points out that there are many discourses and different languages that could be used to think about allied relationships.

A seminal book about the nature of alliances is Anne Bishop's *Becoming an Ally* (2002). Bishop defines ally as "a member of an oppressor group that works to end that form of oppression which gives him or her privilege" (p. 12). She argues that potential allies need to understand both the systemic and personal nature of oppression. She states that the process of becoming an ally involves becoming conscious of the interrelatedness of all oppressions. It also requires healing from personal experiences of oppression and the feelings of guilt associated with inherited legacies of oppression.

A number of scholars are expanding discourses specifically about Indigenous–non-Indigenous alliances. Examples include: Jen Margaret (2010), who examined the experiences of North American non-Indigenous people working as allies; Margaret Kovach (2010), who explored the integration of Indigenous knowledge-friendly pedagogies by non-Aboriginal educators; and Lynne Davies (2010), whose book *Alliances* provides an extensive collection of articles by Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors that attempts to re-envision Indigenous–non-Indigenous relationships.

Jen Margaret (2010) offers one of the more comprehensive studies of Indigenous–non-Indigenous alliances. She examines the experiences of 18 North American individuals who were "working as allies supporting the struggles of Indigenous peoples and/or undertaking anti-racism work" (p. 4). Her participants worked in a variety of contexts including university Indigenous Studies programs, as well as church, community, and human rights organizations. Margaret found that the process of building alliances is complex and posits that, "Being an ally is a practice and a process—not an

identity. It is an ongoing practice that is learned and developed through experience" (p. 12). She states that alliances are relationship-based and contextual. A key finding of her study is that non-Indigenous allies need to recognize and understand the dominant White colonial mindset. This is congruent with my own finding (Root, 2010) that learning to recognize increasingly more subtle examples of Eurocentrism is a significant component of decolonizing journeys.

Margaret's work also resonates with Dion (personal communication) and Root (2010) when she suggests that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples need to work through decolonizing processes both together and separately. It can be challenging to figure out when to work together and when to work separately. Graveline (1998) distinguishes the different purposes of working at times together and at other times separately: "While homogeneity may encourage self-disclosure, heterogeneity in the group allows the experience of difference necessary to challenge hegemony" (p. 90). These findings seem to indicate that critical self-awareness and reflexivity are important traits of potential allies.

Kovach (2010), a respected Indigenous scholar, studied non-Indigenous faculty who are working as allies in a university setting by integrating "Indigenous knowledge friendly pedagogy" into their classes. Her participants were 11 non-Indigenous faculty members from the University of Saskatchewan. She examined their motivations for including Indigenous knowledges in their courses as well as the personal and systemic challenges they faced. She explored the ways that these faculty members were able to help both Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing and what, if any, assistance or support they felt they might need in

order to do this. Kovach found that mentorship by Elders or cultural advisors was an important avenue of learning for the non-Indigenous participants. She also discovered that relational, co-teaching experiences with Aboriginal faculty were crucial. Her participants indicated that their processes of adopting Indigenous Knowledge-friendly pedagogy involved learning about Aboriginal issues, accepting the responsibility to learn about Aboriginal cultural traditions, gathering resources, and actively engaging with Aboriginal peoples.

The studies of Margaret and Kovach help to conceptualize what it means to be a non-Indigenous ally to Indigenous peoples and to identify challenges and pitfalls of this endeavour. For the most part, individuals in their studies seemed to be working in respectful intercultural partnerships that had been fostered over a long time. Yet, having an intention of becoming an ally does not necessarily ensure respect (Gorski, 2008). Attempts at alliances can also sometimes unintentionally perpetuate colonial relationships since coalitions or alliances exist within a wider society that is dominated by Eurocentrism and ongoing colonialism. Those from the dominant culture who strive to be allies may be unaware of ways in which they disregard Indigenous values, traditions, and social norms when they interact with their Indigenous colleagues (Davies & Shpuniarsky, 2010). Davies (2010) found that relationship building requires extended time in which respect and trust are fostered. She writes that respect needs to be exemplified through daily interactions including:

> Following opening protocols when entering a community; participating in
> opening ceremonies and prayers at the beginning of a meeting; thanking and
> recognizing the Nation in whose territory the meeting takes place; remembering to

provide an honorarium to an Elder who has been asked to participate in a meeting;

and observing local protocols of interaction. (p. 337)

Furthermore, Davies and Shpuniarsky found that as well as collaboration, allied

relationship building also involves respecting difference, understanding privilege, learning

about historic Aboriginal–non-Aboriginal relationships, and acknowledging colonial

legacies.

Decolonizing (Through) Research

A Sordid Legacy

To design a study that explores the complexities of settler colonialism and settler

decolonizing with an aim to achieving respectful relationality with Indigenous peoples on

Indigenous Land requires drawing on theories of Indigenist and Indigenous research

paradigms. This also requires an awareness of the problematic legacy of Euro-western

research for Indigenous peoples and communities. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) quote

Smith's (1999) seminal work in their introduction to the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative*

Research Third Edition. Denzin and Lincoln state:

'the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and

colonialism…. The word itself is probably one of the dirtiest words in the

indigenous world's vocabulary…. It is implicated in the worst excesses of

colonialism' with the ways in which 'knowledge about indigenous peoples was

collected, classified, and then represented back to the west.' This word stirs up

anger, silence, distrust…. 'It is one of colonialism's most sordid legacies.' (p. 1)

As a result of this colonial research legacy, Indigenous researchers have worked to

conceptualize, implement, and foreground their own research methodologies that are both

congruent with their distinct cultural values and traditional ways of knowing and that aim to disrupt dominant Eurocentric approaches to research that may actively or inadvertently marginalize Aboriginal voices.

Indigenous and Indigenist Research

Indigenous methodologies honour Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. They acknowledge the interconnectedness of all beings and recognize the social, political, and historical experiences that have shaped, and continue to shape, the lives of Aboriginal peoples (Steinhauer, 2002). Wilson (2001) indicates that, it is not only 'ways of knowing,' that is an integral part of an Indigenous methodology but also axiology (morals and ethics). He explains that knowledge is both relational and shared with all of creation—or, 'all our relations'—and that researchers need to focus first and foremost on their accountability to all of their relations (e.g., living, non-living, spiritual, and universal) when conducting research. Indigenous research decolonizes by privileging the voices, experiences, and lives of Aboriginal peoples that have been silenced through colonial oppression (Smith, 1999). It is important in Indigenous research for the researcher to tell their own story and to identify the location from which they are writing.

Closely related to Indigenous research, Indigen*ist* research might assist non-Indigenous scholars to understand their roles in decolonizing research. Indigenous scholar Leanne Simpson (2004) uses the term Indigenist (2004) to describe this stance as one that could be occupied or enacted by non-Aboriginal researchers. She further writes:

Academics who are to be true allies to Indigenous Peoples in the protection of our knowledge must be willing to step outside of their privileged position and challenge research that conforms to the guidelines outlined by the colonial power

structure and root their work in the politics of de-colonization and anti-colonialism. (p. 381)

Another scholar who draws on the concept of Indigenist research is Wilson (2007), who was asked by the *Canadian Journal of Native Education* to write an editorial outlining a framework for Indigenous research. His response to this request advocated for and described an Indigenist paradigm that could be used by anyone who wishes to follow its tenets. He argued that just as one need not be female to engage with a feminist paradigm, or White to use a Western paradigm, researchers do not have to be Indigenous in order to use an Indigenist paradigm. He states that Indigenist researchers work from a relational context and describe and build upon our "relationships with our environment, families, ancestors, ideas and the cosmos around us [that] shape who we are and how we will conduct our research" (p. 194).

Some of the tenets of Wilson's Indigenist research are: relevancy and benefit to Indigenous communities, respect for all forms of life, kindness, honesty, and compassion. Furthermore, Indigenist research, which is inherently process oriented, participatory, and transformative for all involved, should always have the support of Indigenous Elders and community members. Each Indigenist researcher should recognize their role as just one member of the research process and should often work as part of a team of Indigenous scholars and other thinkers under the guidance of Elders or knowledge keepers. They should be aware of their responsibility for the implications of the research on the community (p. 195).

Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008), in *The Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies,* describe several traits of Indigenous or Indigenist research that seem to

integrate ideas that are similar to those articulated by Smith (1999), Steinhauer (2002), Simpson, (2004), and Wilson (2007). Indigenous research must be "ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing, and participatory. It must be committed to dialogue, community, self-determination, and cultural autonomy … and it must be dedicated to the goals of justice and equity" (p. 2). Furthermore, they state that, "Critical Indigenous inquiry begins with the concerns of Indigenous peoples [and] … is assessed in terms of the benefits it creates for them" (p.2).

My inquiry begins with, and directly supports, two concerns of Indigenous peoples (which should also be concerns of settler Canadians): dismantling settler colonialism, and respect for Indigenous peoples, Lands, cultures, and knowledges. As a settler Canadian researcher working towards developing a deeper and more nuanced understanding of decolonizing for settler Canadians, I am not directly interviewing Indigenous participants or seeking to document traditional Indigenous knowledge. However, I recognize a need for congruency between the research process that I enact and my goal of decolonizing education. I have a responsibility as a researcher to disrupt the 'sordid colonial research legacy' in my own work. Just as I advocate for paying attention to Indigenous Elders and educators and learning from Indigenous education models, I know I have much to learn about respectful research and knowledge conservation/generation, from Indigenous scholars and researchers who collectively have vast amounts of experience disrupting harmful, Eurocentric, colonial research (Smith, 2005). As such, my dissertation work will be informed by Indigenous (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Lavallee, 2009; Smith 1999; Steinhauer, 2002; Wilson, 2001), decolonizing (Smith, 1999), and Indigenist theoretical paradigms (Simpson, 2004;

Wilson, 2007). It is both respectful and congruent for me to implement these approaches

and paradigms not only because are they central to the research question of this study, but

also because they are the theoretical foundation and key decolonizing experiences that I

intend to reflect upon through my own narrative data.

CHAPTER 3—RESEARCH DESIGN

Several observations and events shaped the design of my doctoral dissertation study: the literature review, my critical research questions (see below), and my desire to better understand the "natural readiness" (McKeon, 2012) or "ripeness" (Root, 2010) of settler environmental educators for beginning to learn how to become respectful allies to Indigenous peoples. All of these pointed to the need for further conceptualization of the processes of decolonizing for settler Canadians.

Blending evocative and analytic traditions, I employ a 'middle way' auto-ethnographic methodology (Stanely, 2014) in this study to push the inquiry into deeper settler decolonization. I gather artifacts and employ reflexive narrative vignettes as a method to reveal colonizing and decolonizing experiences, or 'touchstone' and 'confrontation' stories (see Strong-Wilson, 2008). I then proceed through a narrative analysis of this preliminary data to generate deeper personal stories.

After saturation (or not having stories reveal themselves to me), I subsequently analyze the story-vignettes using a modified Constructivist Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Kovach, 2011) to generate a new theory or model of decolonization for settler Canadian environmental educators. The methodological approach for this study is explained in full detail in this chapter.

Research Questions

What is the nature of my own settler decolonizing journey? And, how can my decolonizing experiences and reflections help to inform a new conceptualization of settler decolonizing for outdoor and environmental educators?

This study will provide a close examination and in-depth model of 'becoming a respectful settler educator' based on my own set of settler environmental educator stories and pivotal moments of decolonial learning. It will also offer a critical discussion about what this model may give to, or imply for, other educators (particularly in the field of environmental education) at this complex and controversial socio-cultural-historical period of truth and reconciliation, as Land-based controversies heighten and escalate.

Methodology: Starting With the Personal Through Auto-ethnography

One of the ways my dissertation reflects Indigenous or Indigenist approaches to research is through storytelling, or auto-ethnographic narrative. Steinhauer (2002) explains that storytelling conveys knowledge derived from experience and is a primary component of Indigenous research. Furthermore, Nash (2004) emphasizes that scholarly personal narrative can assist us in creating and recreating our identities through the telling and retelling of stories. Put another way, by Indigenous scholar and writer Thomas King (2003), "the truth about stories is that that's all we really are" (p. 2). My auto-ethnographic 'storying' of decolonizing is an attempt to Indigenize my methodology into a relational approach.

My study is an auto-ethnography that explores my identity as a settler Canadian ally, outdoor environmental educator, and teacher–educator. Carolyn Ellis (2004) describes auto-ethnography as self-reflection that links autobiography to wider socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts. Ellingson and Ellis (2008) explain that the intent of auto-ethnography is to blur the rigid binaries that exist between researcher and subject. These concepts are significant to this research study since I am both researcher and personally engaged in the processes of decolonizing and transforming myself and

other educators towards a stance as ally—a process that I also study, teach, and attempt to foster amongst non-Aboriginal teacher candidates in my work. Focusing on my own story makes sense since my experience influences my ongoing research processes, which in turn influence changes and phenomena in me that are the very ones that I am studying. They are inextricably linked.

Furthermore, some of my ongoing decolonizing work (such as striving to implement culturally responsive curricula and pedagogies, learning to see and respect cultural difference, increasing my self-cultural knowledge, and fostering respectful intercultural relationships) is similar to that noted by Chang (2008) as possible outcomes of an auto-ethnographic approach:

> When manifested in increased self-reflection, adoption of the culturally relevant pedagogy, desire to learn about 'others of difference,' development of an inclusive community, or self-healing, the self-transformative potential of auto-ethnography is universally beneficial to those who work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through the increased awareness of self and others, they will be able to help themselves and each other correct cultural misunderstandings, develop cross-cultural sensitivity, and respond to the needs of cultural others effectively. (p. 54)

I chose auto-ethnography because it is a methodology that supports personal transformation, such as my ongoing shifting of my settler colonial identity into a stance of advocate-ally as I develop my own self-awareness and cross-cultural sensitivity.

Auto-ethnography is a broad methodological field of study, and as such it is helpful to situate my study in terms of its auto-ethnographic form and purpose in

decolonizing and indigenizing environmental educators. Reed-Danahay (1997) describes auto-ethnographic methodologies as a combination of post-modern ethnography (which calls into question the objective observer position of standard ethnography) and post-modern autobiography (which calls into question the notion of a coherent individual self). As such, she suggests that an auto-ethnography may lean towards ethnography of one's own group, or, as is the case with this study, towards autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest.

Métissage of Evocative and Analytic Approaches

Two distinct discourses often compete within the field of auto-ethnography: evocative auto-ethnography and analytic auto-ethnography. Scholars such as Denzin (2006; 2014) and Ellis and Bochner (2000; 2006) advocate for a postmodern or post-structural evocative auto-ethnography. In other words, they call for stories and aesthetic representations that speak for themselves and resist generalization. Evocative auto-ethnography comprises narrative and/or other artistic presentations that open up conversations and evoke emotional responses. Proponents of evocative auto-ethnography argue that analysis occurs and differs with each individual reading of the aesthetic auto-ethnographic representation, and that these representations do not require additional analysis in order to convey meaning.

On the other hand, scholars such as Anderson (2006) and Atkinson (2006) advocate for an approach called analytic auto-ethnography. This approach aims to provide theoretical explanations of broad social phenomena. Proponents of analytic auto-ethnography believe that researchers can inquire into additional or deeper meanings by applying an analytic lens, such as grounded theory or other forms of thematic analysis

methods, to auto-ethnographic data and material. Anderson suggests that analytic auto-ethnography can both *render* the social world and *transcend* it through broader generalizations or theoretical implications.

My study draws on both evocative and analytic approaches in the manner in which I blend personal reflexive narrative with constructivist grounded theory analysis. The narrative vignettes presented in Chapter Four are affective–evocative emotional renderings and reflexive documentation of my own lived experiences. These constitute data for this study. Not only do these narratives evoke emotion, reflection, and meanings as data for the study, but they also prompt thinking for reflexive examination or emotional elicitations on the part of the readers. I would argue that the reflexivity cycles contained within and through the writing and reading of these narrative vignettes can provoke a continuous learning and analysis cycle as readers themselves interpret, analyze, and render meanings through these stories. Each layer of analysis in reading and interpreting these stories changes my own decolonizing understandings and hence catalyzes another decolonizing experience.

However, this evocative writing does not preclude a subsequent thematic analysis of the same events through systematic coding methods. (For this systematic analysis stage, I chose to use constructivist grounded theory [Charmaz, 2006; Kovach, 2011], which I explain below.) I have found that the systematic grounded theory analysis of my auto-ethnographic narrative vignettes has manifested itself like another meta-vignette, like another decolonizing phase of the most recent stage of my settler (unsettling or displacing) journey. With this in mind, I find it difficult to separate as distinctly as Denzin (2006; 2014) or Anderson (2006) do the two approaches of evocative versus

analytic auto-ethnography. I prefer to follow the example of Stanley (2014) who

suggests that a 'middle way' approach to auto-ethnography, one that combines the

strengths of both evocation and analysis, is not only possible but also richer. The middle

way auto-ethnography is "an evocative, creative, testimonio of lived experience that is

critically analyzed with the aim of grounding theory in the data to produce broader

understandings that may inform people in conceptually comparable, but distinct,

situations" (Stanley, 2014). This methodological approach to auto-ethnography is the

most applicable to my study because, through the evocative stories, I aim to illustrate and

gain a deeper understanding of the nature of my own decolonizing journey. Moreover, I

aim to transform myself, and my readers, through interactive reading and writing that

may actively shape our decolonizing understandings. Furthermore, through constructivist

grounded theory analysis, I aim to explore themes that may be related to the broader

social phenomenon of decolonizing settler Canadian educators and to generate a new

model or theory of settler decolonialism.

The Qualities and Challenges of Auto-ethnography

Chang (2008) offers some caveats about using auto-ethnography as a

methodology. She warns that relying exclusively on memory and self-reporting skills to

generate data sources is limiting, and that at times auto-ethnography can place an

excessive focus on self, in isolation from others. I have mitigated these limitations of

personal memory by maintaining a reflexive research journal in which, rather than isolate

and primarily emphasize the events themselves, I continuously interrogate my potentially

limited memory as well as contemplate the significance of my current interpretations and

ongoing reporting of these memories. I then weave these reflections into the narrative

vignettes, where relevant, as multiple layers of interpretation or a multiplicity of data sources.

To address the 'excessive focus on self' criticism, I strive to maintain a focus on 'self-in-relation' to other people, other beings, and the Land, rather than focusing strictly on 'my voice.' I also strive to integrate complexity and uncertainty into my reflexivity rather than attempt to rigidly and definitively interpret the data as singular isolated or disconnected events.

One powerful way that I achieved rich complexity was through multi-vocal reflexivity (Mizzi, 2010). Through this, I was able to both represent and interrogate layers of multiplicity. In multi-vocality approaches to qualitative data generation, the researcher reflects on and responds to a particular event from various viewpoints within their identity. Reflections on a particular event or set of experiences helped me explore how I may have interpreted the event from a range of identity perspectives at the time and at various moments later in my life. For example, my colonizer-self a decade ago may have believed it was acceptable to limit an Aboriginal student's access to tobacco while on a canoe trip, since smoking was against the rules and the student had previously been caught smoking. On the other hand, my aspiring settler ally self can now interrogate my previously Eurocentric settler colonial attitude, and recognize that the student should have been afforded the autonomy to make offerings of the sacred medicine at his will for spiritual-cultural purposes (to reconnect with the Land) and identity construction (humility through offerings, thanks, and appreciation).

With this multi-vocal approach, I hope to illuminate both the contradictory and complementary beliefs that may otherwise appear as seamlessly integrated within my

current identity. I am drawn to this multi-vocal auto-ethnographic approach because it explicitly acknowledges and allows for tensions and potentially conflicting viewpoints that a person-subject may grapple with either simultaneously or throughout their life at different points in time. It promotes and embraces multiple complex, uncertain, and 'messy' readings of a subject's reality, and this is particularly potent for underdeveloped topics such as settler colonialism in education—particularly, environmental education.

Since there has been criticism about the potential for auto-ethnographies to focus heavily and even narcissistically on the self, I contemplate how to ensure that my work is socially relevant and useful, and how it might be assessed and evaluated by others in the fields of environmental education, settler (de)colonial studies, and Indigenous education. Ellis (2004) notes the resonance between Richardson's (2000) and Bochner's (2000) sets of criteria for evaluating auto-ethnographic research. Richardson's criteria include: a) substantive contribution (does the study contribute to an understanding of social life?), b) aesthetic merit (is it artistic, complex, interesting?), c) reflexivity (is subjectivity the producer and product of the text?), d) impactful-ness (does it affect the reader emotionally or intellectually, does it generate new questions or compel action?), and e) expression of a reality (does it convincingly convey lived reality?).

Similarly, Bochner's (2000) assessment criteria demand ethical self-consciousness, structurally complex narratives, an attempt to dig deeper for vulnerability and honesty, moving stories, and concrete details of lived experiences. Furthermore, Ellis explains that for auto-ethnographers, "resonance" with readers is more important than generalizability, and that auto-ethnographic stories should be judged on their usefulness (believability, effect) rather than their accuracy.

Denzin (2000) suggests that good auto-ethnography should move beyond reflection to action—that it should ask readers to consider things or do things differently and motivate cultural criticism, social action, and theoretical reflection. In my study, I balance personal reflexivity (for the purpose of furthering my own decolonial learning through narrative writing and remembering) with an invitation to others to engage in critical transformative readings of the evocative renderings for the purposes of social change.

Stages of My Settler decolonizing Auto-ethnography

Overview

In the first stage, data collection, I assembled a wide variety of artifacts (primary data) that represent significant learning moments, or moments of new awareness, in my own decolonizing journey. These included photographs, travel souvenirs, creative works, event brochures, research transcripts, published articles, conference papers, class assignments, emails, research field notes, and personal and professional journals. The artifacts helped activate memories and elicit the stories that came to represent these learning moments.

In my second stage of auto-ethnography (which served as preliminary analysis *and* generated a new layer of narrative data), I engaged in generative remembering through artifacts as embodied memory awakenings and narrative writing (Archibald's [2007] storywork) as memoir in order to recall, revisit, and re-immerse myself in learning from the life events represented by my primary data artifacts. I wrote narrative vignettes that reported the stories, and then wrote more to explain the memories and meanings associated with these 'touchstone' moments (see Strong-Wilson, 2007). I wrote either

until I could not remember any more pivotal events, or my self-storywork of settler colonialism disruption could not manifest any more new stories. My remembering became saturated with repeated elements and themes rather than the emergence of more 'new' stories.

After the self-storywork, I moved into a third stage of auto-ethnography, with a shift towards analysis of my stories. Following Kovach's (2011) suggestion that constructivist grounded theory methods can be congruent with Indigenous methodologies, I employed constructivist grounded theory coding methods—initial, focused, and axial—to discover salient themes and meta-themes embedded in my primary data and personal narratives. Once these codes and themes were substantiated, stable, and saturated, I shifted towards the fourth stage of auto-ethnographic study, in which I interpreted the codes and themes in order to answer my two research questions. These answers served as findings and helped me to articulate my new theoretical model of settler decolonialism.

Stage One: Creative Remembering Through Artifacts

As noted above, the first stage of my auto-ethnographic work was to simultaneously brainstorm past experiences and collect artifacts from throughout my life that could serve as prompts to assist me in recalling and remembering (through visual and embodied sensory memories, such as the smell of a tobacco pouch or the smooth feel of a clay pipe) details, nuances, and meanings associated with past events. These included, for example, objects, printed photographs, digital media (such as old family videos), old personal journals, academic documents, and writing. I found that the main benefit of seeking out the artifacts (rather than simply relying on memories of the events) was that

they helped 'take me back' to the moments I wanted to reflect on and assisted my capacity to write as closely as possible from the identity perspective I had at the time.

Stage Two: Storywork to Generate Reflexive Narratives

A number of scholars describe the connection between auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry. Marechal (2010) points out that both approaches deal with experience and story as meaning making. Bochner and Ellis (2006) explain that auto-ethnography can be storytelling that shows people in struggle and in the process of figuring out how to live with, reconcile themselves to, and make meaning from their disorienting experiences. In this study, I share stories about grappling with the disorienting experiences of working to decolonize myself and my praxis of critically reflexive settler colonialism.

In the narrative stage of auto-ethnographic inquiry, I engaged storywork (Archibald, 2007) or critical memory work, remembering 'touchstone' moments and writing reflexive narrative vignettes with elements of 'confrontation stories' (See Strong-Wilson, 2007). Through her decolonizing writing work with White teachers, Strong-Wilson found that touchstone moments should be recognized as formative, and can then be "counterpoised with stories that challenge them with an alternative perspective" (p. 122). She continues by explaining that, "Within a decolonizing education for white teachers … a 'story of confrontation' represents a teacher's decolonizing of his or her storied history" (p. 122).

The narrative vignettes in my study represent quintessential stories from my life that both illuminate and explore particularly salient decolonizing shifts as they relate to my identity as an environmental educator. This active reiterative process of writing the reflexive narratives furthers my own decolonizing processes and understandings. While

the rewriting of touchstone life events as narratives did generate a new layer of data that was subsequently analyzed for themes, I also viewed the narrative writing as a form of preliminary analysis since it required constant reflection on, and decisions about, what events would be most representative of my decolonizing journey, the meanings of those events, and how to describe them so as to best represent those meanings.

As I noted earlier, one of the criticisms of auto-ethnography is the potential for inaccurate memories by the researcher; however, I would argue that even an inaccurate perception of a past event shapes who I am and how I interact with the world. By employing multi-vocal analysis (Mizzi, 2010) in the interpretation of my memories of certain events, I shifted the emphasis from the 'specific details of the event' to the 'spirit of the event,' noting how my current memory of the event shapes who I am and how it influences and is influenced by various aspects of my identities. In some ways, this is not unlike the difference between 'the details of the written treaty' and 'the spirit of the treaty signings,' the latter of which is usually given much more weight and legitimacy by Aboriginal communities and Indigenous Land activists.

As I interpreted these identity-forming touchstone moments (as a colonial-settler educator in transition), I viewed these incidents in the dominant identity mode that I was occupying at the time (for example, an incident during a canoe trip when I was a teacher, ensconced in my settler views, may be understood by my current researcher-self in a fundamentally different way than when the event happened). I am also aware that my reporting or storytelling of each event to different audiences and at different times has given each event a new story shape and set of meanings that continue to breathe and flux and change with each new telling.

While the narrative vignettes represent a preliminary analysis of primary data and introduce points of reflexivity and interrogation, they also provide contextual examples for literature-based theoretical discussions and interpretations.

Stage Three: Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) as Generative Analysis Method

Compatibility of CGT with Indigenous research paradigms.

Kovach (2011) explains that constructivist grounded theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 2006), a modified and updated genre of grounded theory, can be a 'helpful neighbour' to Indigenous methodology. Kovach argues that modified constructivist grounded theory can be used strictly as a method of data analysis while still allowing Indigenous methodology to guide the overall research process.

In Indigenous methodology, the intent is to describe *how*, not *what*. Kovach identifies seven attributes of a modified constructivist grounded theory, arguing that these are what make it more compatible with Indigenous research:

- allows for Indigenous theory to guide interpretations

- honours oral knowledge through participant stories

- allows for integrationist and inductive approaches

- offers techniques such as memos and coding that can serve a holistic sensibility and supports the importance of researchers' knowledge in the subject area

- can be pragmatic

- allows for interpretations that are compatible with Indigenous sensibilities (n.p.)

Kovach (2010) and Lavellee (2009) have each authored studies that were situated in Indigenous research paradigms and successfully employed constructivist grounded theory

as their primary method of analysis. Indeed Charmaz (2006) states that, "Grounded theory methods can complement other approaches to qualitative data analysis rather than stand in opposition to them" (p. 9).

Overview of constructivist grounded theory.

Constructivist grounded theory is an approach to data analysis that aims to generate new theory by examining themes and patterns that arise from the data itself, rather than interpreting findings through the lens of existing theory. In constructivist grounded theory, analysis typically begins at the outset of data collection and generation, when the researcher takes note of emerging themes and writes memos to record any observations or reflections about those emergent themes. A constructivist grounded theorist researcher engages in several phases of coding data (including memos), combining codes into broader themes and re-coding the data, looking for how various data themes may relate to one another (Charmaz, 2006; Morse et al., 2009).

Constructivist grounded theory was conceptualized by Charmaz (2006) as a systematic yet flexible alternative to the more positivist assumptions and rigid methods associated with classic grounded theory, such as the premise that there are no other competing or informing theories through which the researcher views the data. Constructivist grounded theory encompasses classic grounded theory priorities such as 'examining processes' and 'creating abstract interpretive understandings of the data,' but it also considers more recent theoretical and methodological developments that have occurred in qualitative research over the past four decades (p. 9).

In their book, *Developing Grounded Theory: The second generation*, Morse et al. (2009) explain that, foundationally, constructivist grounded theory assumes multiple

realities and mutual construction of data through interaction. Furthermore, they posit that constructivist grounded theory acknowledges the complexity of data representation and views data as relativistic, situational, and partial. In data analysis then, the researcher would acknowledge subjectivities, recognize that co-construction of data shapes analysis, and engage in reflexivity (p. 114). These tenets of constructivist grounded theory resonate with my beliefs about knowledge, data, and the research process, and also with the central themes of auto-ethnography (the subjective, personal, and contextual nature of knowledge) and the Indigenist research paradigms outlined in the work of Kovach (2011), above.

The role of sensitizing concepts in CGT.

Constructivist grounded theory depends largely on constant inductive analysis, allowing themes and theory to emerge from the data itself. This is also true of grounded theorists' work. One of the ways that CGT differentiates itself from its more positivist GT roots is with the assumption that data analysis is also informed by sensitizing concepts. Charmaz explains that sensitizing concepts are "those background ideas that inform the overall research problem," and that they "offer ways of seeing, organizing, and understanding experience; they are embedded in our disciplinary emphases and perspectival proclivities" (p. 259). These may come from, for example, a researcher's past personal or professional experiences, existing theoretical understandings, a literature review, or prior research.

I entered into this auto-ethnographic study with a variety of sensitizing concepts, particularly because decolonizing of settler colonialism is a topic I studied as a both a student and teacher, through previous literature reviews and research, and through my

own ongoing self-reflexivity about my personal and professional decolonizing journey.

These sensitizing concepts both shaped and are woven throughout this dissertation's

literature review, the choice of methodology and methods, the generation of the story-

vignettes, the organization and rendering of the stories into codes, themes and memos, the

realization of new meanings and theories emerging from these interpretive analytical

lenses, interpretations of these new findings, and the crystallizations of my remembering

of touchstone stories. They generate new models of settler de-colonialism and return to

the disciplinary emphases of environmental education.

Grounded theory coding methods and phases.

Following Charmaz (2006), I engaged in three phases of coding: initial, focused,

and axial. During initial coding, my goal was to "remain open to all possible theoretical

directions indicated by my reading of the data" (p. 46). Initial coding relies on speed and

spontaneity to provoke salient insight. Initial coding is a process of uncovering potential

codes that will eventually be applied throughout the data during focused coding. In

focused coding, I shifted towards a process of theoretical integration as I worked to

identify and conceptualize the most salient themes. I sought the most prevalent and/or

fitting initial codes (or possibly combinations of initial codes) and chose which ones to

apply throughout the data. In axial coding, I examined the relationships between and

amongst salient themes and organized the themes into meta-themes, or categories, to

inform my theory generation of a model of setter decolonialism.

Charmaz (2006) identifies the way in which the researcher and their worldviews

are integrated in data analysis: Coding is a way of attempting to know the empirical

world through language. Yet, language is not neutral; it "confers … meaning on

observed realities … [and] reflects views and values" (p. 47). As such, she calls for care and attention at the coding stage of analysis:

> Qualitative coding guides our learning. Through it, we begin to make sense of our data. How we make sense of it shapes the ensuing analysis. Careful attention to coding furthers our attempts to understand acts and accounts, scenes and sentiments, stories and silences from our research participants' view. (p. 46)

In my data analysis, I worked to heed this call for care and attention to coding. One of the specific strategies I used to account for this complexity was that during focused coding, rather than limit my codes to a finite list of discrete themes, I allowed myself to use more precise language to qualify codes so that the codes were more contextually relevant for each particular narrative (illustrated in Table 1 in the appendix).

Stages Four and Five: Theory Generation and Interpretation of the Findings

In the interpretation phase of analysis, qualitative researchers usually make sense of the themes that emerged through earlier phases of analysis (such as narrative writing and/or constructivist grounded theory coding). Interpretation involves expanding concrete themes into broader analytic, conceptual, or theoretical frameworks (Kawulich, 2004). In my fourth stage of auto-ethnographic study (following Charmaz, 2006), I analyzed the codes from my data into themes. These became sub-themes of either meta-themes or analytic categories (or both), which I used to answer my research questions and to articulate my new theoretical model of settler decolonialism. Then, to develop a theoretical model, I looked for relationships between and amongst my themes and analytic categories.

Next, I situated and discussed my new theoretical model in the context of relevant and current discourses and praxes in the fields of environmental education, settler colonialism, Indigenous education, and Indigenous-settler relations in order to discuss the implications of my findings for other settler educators.

Ethical Considerations

In any study, the researcher faces the serious responsibility of making research design decisions that inevitably influence both the ethical nature and the results of the study. Framing the research problem, selecting techniques for data collection, interpreting the experiences and testimonies of participants, and choosing how to represent the stories shared by the participants are all complex choices for the researcher to consider (Hertz, 1997).

I recognize that I undertook this research with a passion for, emotional engagement in, and commitment to decolonizing journeys and settler decolonialism: the unsettling and displacing of White normativity, settler colonialism entitlement, and ignorance as active un-knowing through teaching and curriculum that erase Indigenous presence. As a researcher, I encountered feelings of tension, discomfort, fear, and uncertainty from both the topics of my study and the methodological approach; however, my auto-ethnographic process required me to find ways to acknowledge and contend with or resolve these responses.

As an auto-ethnographic researcher writing about my own experiences, I encountered the dilemma of how to respectfully describe an experience that involved people who are not participants in the research. My concern was that I might unwittingly identify someone who may not wish to be identified in my work. To address this

potential pitfall, I did occasionally omit particular details about people and events, such as location or context.

I also wrote with the intention of identifying and critically examining ways in which my own privilege, Eurocentric assumptions, and/or feelings of entitlement may have caused harm to Indigenous friends, colleagues, students, or community members. I am aware that I may not always be able to 'see' the harm (or the extent of damage) I have caused in past instances or that I may be causing through my writing. This seemingly inescapable ignorance that I continuously work to overcome meant that Indigenous ethics were of utmost importance for me to work with and consider throughout my research. These ethics are called the four R's of respectful research: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkeness & Barnhardt, 2001). Similar to the 4 R's presented by Kirkeness and Barnhardt (2001), are the four directions related to relationships that Kaaren Dannenmann describes (see Root & Dannenman, 2009). These are: *respect* (for the Land and for each other); *rights* (as members of a community to receive gifts from the Land for a healthy life); *responsibilities* (to each other and to the Land); and *reciprocity* (or a balanced give-and-take relationship with the Land). Throughout my storywork, constructivist grounded theory, and interpretation, I sought to foreground these relational ethics in my choice of words and how I curated my stories, in my reflections, in the way I discussed my research with others throughout the process, and through my inclusion of Indigenous scholarship.

I am grateful that the decision to pursue an auto-ethnographic study provided space for me to explore, share, and even role model the decolonizing process through the multiple layers of my own story. My goal is to refine my own understanding of my

positionality–relationality. I will use this understanding to consider how my positionality–relationality influences my research and educational praxis, and how it affects the ways I listen to, interpret, and relate to the stories of others. We must begin with ourselves, by reflecting on our own actions, and we must think about how we can take responsibility in our own lives and work with the gifts we were given to make positive contributions for all.

CHAPTER 4—REFLEXIVE NARRATIVE VIGNETTES

What to Expect in This Chapter

The chapter is composed of a collection of reflexive narrative vignettes about touchstone moments in my life that represent, and help me think further about, my decolonizing learning and my settler decolonialism. Most of these stories were written in response to primary data artifacts (the photographs, objects, mementos, and prior writing collected as memory prompts) and interweave personal memory with past and ongoing reflections in the context of my lifelong decolonizing journey. The reflexive components of the vignettes are preliminary and exploratory, rather than substantive, and introduce themes that I explore further through my grounded theory analysis and subsequent interpretation. Where possible, I contemplate how these events–touchstone moments shaped, and were shaped by, my various identity perspectives.

The narratives are at once evocative, analytic, and generative. They are evocative in so far as they evoke or provoke affective responses from the reader that may give rise to reflexivity and new decolonizing awarenesses of their own life experiences. They are analytic because I wrote with a critical awareness about the choices that I had to make regarding what events to narrate and how to narrate them based on my current understandings and uncertainties about settler colonialism and theories of decolonizing. Following Richardson (2001), I wrote because *I wanted to find out* … how to be differently—I wrote with attention to reflexivity and ongoing meaning making through writing. The vignettes are generative because they created a new layer of data that illustrated my decolonizing understandings of past events, which I subsequently analyzed through constructivist grounded theory.

In evocative auto-ethnography, the researcher accepts that the stories speak for themselves and that analysis occurs at the point at which the individual reader makes their own meanings from, and associations with, the text. While I do subsequently provide my own grounded theory analysis, I also invite readers to immerse themselves in my stories and to develop their own interpretation of the texts. I encourage readers to contemplate how the narratives resonate or dissonate with their own personal experiences and think about what they might learn from me about respectful Indigenous-settler relationality.

While there is some degree of chronology and thematic organization to the order in which the stories are presented here, their presentation matches the order in which these stories revealed themselves to me. In other words, while I began my remembering and my narrative writing somewhat chronologically, my reflexive memories and writing sometimes prompted me to jump to a later, related story before returning to the chronology. I have maintained this order here with the hope that it may give the reader a glimpse into another nuanced aspect of my ongoing and interrelated layers of analyses. In most cases I have written about an experience (or experiences) from two or more temporal perspectives. For instance, I may describe a past event, then share a reflection on that event that occurred several years later as my decolonizing understandings increased. Then, I finally offer my most current decolonial reflexivity about the overall learnings that stemmed from those initial events and ongoing reflections. The goal of this approach was to illustrate how my ongoing decolonial learning continues a shift in my perspective and relational understandings.

Each story has two main titles: The first conveys the spirit of the initial event or memory of the experience, and the second captures the main (most salient, most evident) updated decolonial understanding or theme that emerged through the reflexive narrative writing process. The stories often weave back and forth between several temporal moments and include my recollections of past events (written in the present tense and italicized to convey how I recall experiencing the event in the moment), subsequent reflections on those events (these also occurred in the past, and I write about them in that tense), and current or most updated reflections to illustrate my understandings at the time of writing this dissertation.

The Stories

Meeting a 'Real Indian' … and an Algonquin Educator

(…or, Interrupting Colonial Stereotypes)

I can feel the warmth of the green vinyl seats beneath me. The school bus rolls along the highway, and I am surrounded by the chatter of my classmates and those in the other grade three classes who are excited to be away from our public school on a class trip for the day. Our destination is a nearby Indian Reservation and I am excited to see what 'their' life is like. Our teacher, Mrs. Jane, is well liked and known for her progressive approach to teaching, such as small group seating arrangements and 'centres' where students can roam freely and choose their own work. We pull onto the property, and the bus parks. We have arrived at the reserve. I eagerly await our chance to see—to meet—an 'Indian.' A friendly woman dressed in jeans and a t-shirt introduces herself and takes us on a tour—mostly of buildings and offices. I am surprised that our tour of the site isn't more colourful, more interesting; I guess I had been expecting

something more exotic than administrative buildings and an open field. Later, 80 or so grade three students sit in a large circle on the sunny grass, eating our packed lunches as we strain to hear our tour guide talk ... I think she is speaking about her traditions ... although I soon forget the details. Back at school the next day, the classroom is filled with the nutty smell of hot oil. We take turns cooking pieces of 'Indian Fry Bread' (bannock) in an electric frying pan set out on the low table ... the dough is warm and soft and tastes delicious. While it cooks, we open the encyclopedias and work to complete our Bristol board projects, displaying the historic lives of Indian tribes around Ontario.

While my memory of the details of this field trip has faded over time, at the very least I can recall that it made me aware that 'Indians' still existed and lived near me. (Having said this, I wasn't aware at the time of any Aboriginal people at my school or in other areas of the community that I was involved with.) The significance of this field trip, I believe, is that it served as a point of reference early in my life to offset the romanticized and historicized images of Aboriginal peoples that I encountered subsequently in popular media and textbooks. As an eight-year-old, I already had an 'Indian' costume in my dress-up drawer and a Playmobile toy set with a headdress and tipi depicting a generic, stereotypical Plains Indian motif (with egregious and obviously inaccurate fabricated symbols such as dragon-like creatures).

Figure 2. 1980s toy 'tipi.'

Now, as an educator, I can reflect on how significant this early experience may have been for me in shaping the lens through which I perceived Aboriginal peoples and culture. When I subsequently encountered lessons about First Nations people during my elementary school years, I was perhaps in some small way able to contemplate a contemporary Aboriginal life. While I eventually forgot the specific knowledge and information that was shared with us during the field trip to the First Nations community, the significance of the trip was that it disrupted, somewhat, the stereotypes that were already taking hold in my young mind. It took many more years to become aware of colonial history, but this early experience at the very least taught me that First Nations people do not live like Pocahontas.

Moreover, I am aware that in 1985, this attempt to foster consciousness of relationality between students and local a First Nation community would likely not have

been common in most classrooms—and it still isn't today. I am left wondering what inspired my grade three teacher to plan the trip. What relationships did she have with the community? What were her intended outcomes for the day? Was she consciously disrupting stereotypes, or did she too think it was an opportunity for an exotic experience? Were there any partnerships or agreements between the school board and the First Nation community? Were educational visits to First Nations communities encouraged, or was this a single occurrence?

In a 'coming full circle' moment a couple of years ago, I recalled this same elementary school visit to this First Nations community. I had been invited to join my supervisor to co-deliver a keynote talk to a group of educators attending a professional development seminar in Ottawa. The audience was composed of mainly non-Aboriginal teachers, and our talk focused on culturally responsive teaching—what non-Aboriginal teachers could do to connect with and learn about Aboriginal culture, and how they could respectfully teach Aboriginal content and work with Aboriginal students, colleagues, and family members. Other sessions during the day were led by Aboriginal educators. These focused on their vision for education, the broad needs of Aboriginal students, and cross-cultural sharing.

One session leader at the professional development seminar introduced herself as an educator from the Algonquin First Nation of Pikwakanagan, (which was her home community and which happens to be the same First Nations community I travelled to by bus as an eight-year-old.) She described the culturally vibrant school community where she taught and offered her thoughts on the strengths and needs of her Aboriginal students. She shared her pedagogical approach, which stemmed from Indigenous ways of knowing.

The themes and images that she presented resonated with those I had encountered in other Aboriginal education settings, but something unique struck me as she spoke. All of a sudden it became apparent to me that this was the first time I had ever listened to a person from the First Nation closest to the town where I grew up explain her understanding of, and vision for, education for their own students. How could this be? I had been a certified teacher for almost nine years at this point, a graduate student of education, *and* I was interested in Aboriginal education. Yet, it had never occurred to me to seek out this particular perspective. I can see that while my childhood visit to this First Nation community may have prevented some stereotyping in my later years, it had not propelled me towards developing a more extensive or long-term relationship with the community or towards continuing to learn about this particular community's local Indigenous pedagogy or other aspects of their culture and (our shared) histories.

Reflecting on and remembering relationality. This story reminds me that it can be so easy to ignore our relationality with Aboriginal peoples, and to assume that there is nothing relevant to learn and no reason to connect. However, we do live in relation whether we recognize it or not, and being unengaged either consciously or unconsciously *is* a relational stance. To live in relationality requires intention, commitment, and constant effort to learn, witness, serve, and engage. It is not the responsibility of Aboriginal peoples to reach out to settler Canadians to teach us to overcome our ignorance—although frequently and generously, many do. I am grateful for the Aboriginal students, peers, colleagues, and Elders who have taught me a great deal about Indigenous ways of knowing and about disrupting colonial attitudes and behaviours.

However, I recognize that it is my responsibility to ask questions when I am unsure, to participate in cultural events when invited to do so, to serve when I am asked for help, and to learn as much as I can about lesser-known histories of settler Indigenous relations and Indigenous Lands. This is not always easy to do, as it can feel uncomfortable when you 'know you don't know' the cultural protocol in a new situation and you don't want to make mistakes, especially for someone like me who has always experienced a slight shyness in new social situations. And, it can at times feel like a fine line between being interested in learning and imposing one's own agenda.

As a teacher educator, I contemplate how I can help my students navigate this cultural divide that can pose a barrier to respectful relationality. I ask how I can facilitate meaningful cross-cultural learning experiences that feel both welcoming and respectful. A current challenge for me as a new Assistant Professor is to employ Indigenous Knowledge Friendly (Kovach, 2010) pedagogies that are locally relevant, in classes that include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, and to do so while I am myself trying to navigate and learn about, from, and with a new community and new Aboriginal culture in the place where I have recently moved.

Pipes and Pictographs

(…or, Becoming Curious About the Histories of a Place)

The cool breeze blows against my cheek and I shiver, the cold water numbs my toes as I wade back and forth along the shoreline in front of a large brick farmhouse. My eyes scan the sandy bottom a few feet below the surface of the water. I search for a glimpse of unnatural white, poking ever so slightly through the sand. Aha! I spot it! I plunge my hand into the cold water and risk getting my t-shirt wet as I reach for the white

speck. My fingers brush the sand away, and I feel the familiar long, smooth shape of a

white clay voyageur pipe, buried there for the last hundred years. I pull it to the surface

and check for markings—manufacturer, adornments, smoke residue. This one appears to

be the most special find yet: a complete pipe from tip to broken bowl.

Figure 3. White clay voyageur pipe found at Fort William.

I stumble over a small piling of rocks beneath my feet. I know that these are the footings

of an old pier. I've heard stories about the fur trade here ... how the men trading for

tobacco were given a free pipe and, preferring old, worn-in pipes, would toss the new one

into the water (possibly for good luck?). I scan the horizon, taking note of the hills and

rocky shore. I am keenly aware that the last person to hold this pipe would have gazed at

the same landscape—from this spot—the geographical features largely unchanged since

that time. I wonder what it would have been like to paddle the shoreline before the

military base and Atomic Energy were built ... before the buzz of Sea-Doos and

motorboats punctuated the soundscape. Behind me, just a short distance from the

water's edge, is a small stone structure, about 8x8 or 10x10, which now appears to be a

back room to a large orange brick house. Most passersby might not even take note of

what seems to be a simple back entrance to a farmhouse. This is the original trading

post—the most southerly trading post once owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. As far as I know, nothing at all marks its history.

Just a hundred metres or so further up the beach is a local watering hole, a big white wooden hotel known for its bar, summer parties, and local Quebecois music … sometimes fiddle nights. There is a little restaurant on one side and a long covered porch stretching the full length of the front of the building. The view of the sunset will be magnificent from there later this evening. After I carefully towel dry my pipe, wrap it in a cloth, and place it in a container, I wander over to this hotel for a strawberry ice cream cone. I pass the small runabout motorboats lined up along the shore, music blaring, and smile at the kids splashing in the water. I order my ice cream and peruse the photographs on the wall while the waitress scoops my cone.

I love these fascinating photographs from earlier eras—mainly the logging era—depicting giant log booms and log rafts pulled up to the beach on their way down river. I can remember as a younger child seeing some log booms being pulled down the river by tugboat —brown logs floating in vast expanses, almost as wide as the whole river. While I am generally concerned about large-scale logging initiatives, I am for some reason rather delighted to have these first-hand memories, linking me to a former—and I perceive a somewhat simpler—era. I head outside, where an old pointer boat deteriorates in the warm sand. Now all but forgotten, this specialized, red-painted, flat-bottomed boat used for poling up shallow rivers during the log drive was once common in the area. I lament the fact that log drives no longer take place on this stretch of the Ottawa.

Between the hotel and the stone fur trade shed is a fenced-off area marked with a cross. I always knew this to be an 'Indian' burial site. I recall a childhood friend telling me that information, reverently ... respectfully. She instructed me that we should not play or wander there, and this made sense to me. While as a child I didn't question the sacredness of the space, I also failed to question the circumstances of the burial site. As I sit here now, I wonder how these people died. How had their lives been altered by the fur trade? What was their relationship to this place? And, where were their families now? I find myself lost in a daydream, trying to imagine what life would have been like back then ... and wondering who might be standing here a hundred years from now.

Looking for voyageur pipes in front of the 'other' Fort William, the most southerly Hudson's Bay trading post located on the Ottawa River, became a family tradition each spring. As a child, I wasn't thinking yet about the colonialism of the fur trade when I was out collecting pipes. Quite the opposite, I was 'dazzled' by the romanticism of a simpler life, presumably lived in closer relationship with the Land. Similarly, I was captivated by memories of the logging era, where the river once again played an integral part of families' livelihoods.

However, memories of the log drive and my family tradition of looking for pipes set the stage for an important lesson I re-encountered as a university student. It fostered a sense that the river has stories to tell, and that people have always lived and worked here. These experiences provided an understanding that prepared me to eventually question and disrupt the Western myth I later came to espouse through canoe tripping and outdoor education culture—the myth of pristine wilderness. This annual treasure hunt for pipes

delighted me because it provided a concrete link to the past and helped me to recognize my life as a moment in a much longer and more complex history.

Later, when I learned about the Anishnaabe philosophy of seven generations thinking, the concept made sense to me in relation to my own life. This is not because I had seven generations of ancestral connection to this place, but is instead because I experienced the way in which histories live on, and I came to know the interconnections of generations. I could 'see' and 'touch' some of the (colonial) history that enabled my family and me to live near and enjoy the Ottawa River. These experiences make it easier for me to be accountable to history and to recognize how my actions can and will directly impact future generations.

Oiseau Rock

(…or, The Land as Teacher)

The sails flap loudly as we come about. I lie flat on my back on the front deck of Tigh Na Mara as we tack down river. I can feel the silky sails pass over my body and then the familiar heel of the boat switch sides as the sails fill with wind and propel us onward. We are now sailing straight towards the magnificent 500-foot cliff of Oiseau Rock, the first evidence of the Canadian Shield rising up from the earth as one travels northwest up the river. I had heard a legend that the large statue of rocks growing out of the trees was once considered, by Aboriginal people, to be a magical or spiritual Oiseau, or bird. The cliff is as awe-inspiring as ever, and I look forward to spending some days on a nearby beach and hiking to the cliff-top for a swim in the spring-fed lake.

We sail past the spit of Land that juts out from the bottom of the cliff and shelters a sandy beach on the other side. My dad lets down the sails, and I stuff them through the

hatch into the V-berth below. We motor over to the beach and anchor our boat on the

shore with the others. Now, out of the wind, I start to feel the heat of the day and am

looking forward to a swim. I know my friend is waiting for me on the beach with her

family, and that soon we will start the hike to the top of the cliff.

Figure 4. Pinesie Asin, Kichi Sibi/Oiseau Rock, Ottawa River.

With the boat secure, we hop off and greet our friends. We put on our hiking shoes and

find the start of the path, just past the outhouse. I nibble some sweet blueberries from a

low bush while I wait for the others. We follow a path up the hill, heading towards a

lookout at the top of the cliffs. My breath becomes heavy and all of the walkers grow

quiet as we focus on making it up the hill. As I walk, looking down at the path beneath

my feet, I think about the feet that may have stepped this trail in eras before me. Who

were they? Where did they live? How did they get their food? Where did they sleep? I

wonder whether or not Aboriginal people lived here historically—whether they had

walked the same path years before me. I try to imagine what their lives had been like

before my people arrived.

> *We eventually reach the top and spend a few moments catching our breath while we stare out over the rolling hills of the Ottawa Valley and the river below. We are up very high ... as high as the birds in fact ... and we watch as the turkey vultures soar on the wind in front of us. We wander a few more feet to the round spring-fed lake. Here I pause for a moment on the rocky shore before plunging into the cold water, where I am instantly refreshed. I think about the evening ahead. Later, families will gather to cook a shore dinner: baked beans in a cast iron pot buried under the sand, a chicken roasted under a metal pail, and* six-paille*, a six-layered vegetable and meat pie with a biscuit crust. I love our summer traditions and the people we share them with.*

My time on the Ottawa River as a child no doubt had a significant impact on my identity, values, awareness, connection to the outdoors, and my love of nature. As a child, I spent much of each summer living on a 26-foot sailboat, travelling up and down the 40-mile stretch of river between Pembroke and Mattawa. We often camped at beaches and coves along the way, joined by other families who also used their boats as mobile cottages. There were places where the stories of previous eras were marked in various ways, which for me was a gateway to learning as much as I could about the history of the Ottawa River.

As a child, I did not know (or question) whether or not the so-called legend of Oiseau Rock was authentic. I didn't learn until I was into my late-twenties that under the graffiti at the base of the cliffs are a dozen or so red ochre pictographs, still visible if you know where to look. And while I may have contemplated a historicized or romanticized

image of Aboriginal people living in this place, I did not really know anything about the Algonquin people to whom this place was—and is—sacred. However, I can recall that from an early age I did feel a deep sense that this place was special, meaningful, and important, not just as a family tradition, but also as something bigger. I did not grow up with religion, and my family did not attend church or worship a god. However, in retrospect I think I could describe my feeling of connection to this river and these cliffs as somewhat spiritual in an ecologically interconnected sense.

As a settler now grappling to understand the role of the Land as teacher in Aboriginal cultures and pedagogies, I cannot help but wonder, was the Land teaching me? And was I learning about 'sacredness' from the Land? Perhaps I was simply learning that I could listen to the Land … a teaching I strive to return to and understand in a new way now that I have come to recognize the deep interconnection of Indigenous people and their Lands. I grapple with questions about how I, as a settler, can learn about respect for, and relationality with, the Land and its people, both in the place where I grew up and also in the places I now visit.

(Dis)placing Myself Through Dialogue
(…or, Grieving the Loss of My Own Indigenous Land Relationship)

I also frequently wonder also about the Land I have never known … the Land where my ancestors lived … the Land where my ancestors may have been considered Indigenous, at one time. Would I feel an intimate connection to my ancestral Lands if I were able to locate them?

Figure 5. Hike to Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, Scotland.

I recall nervously divulging to an Aboriginal friend an envy that I felt when she talked about her peoples' traditional Lands and her relationship with that place. I was worried that it was inappropriate for me, the White girl who was supposed to learn to recognize and acknowledge *my* privilege, to disclose that I was envious of what I perceived at the time to be a privilege that she had, and that I could never have: that is, knowing exactly where her ancestors had always lived, and having a relationship with those Lands. I may know the name of a few European countries that my family came from, but my family has lost all knowledge of any specific lake, forest, hill, or valley that sustained our family and cultural traditions, and that nurtured our bodies and genes.

I recall divulging this secret very slowly and with considerable preamble after spending many hours in respectful and reflective conversation with this friend. I was careful because I was aware that she and her family had experienced much injustice first-hand because they are Aboriginal, and I was so worried about negating that experience by suggesting that in this way she had more privilege than me.

At the time, I conceptualized her Land-relationship as a 'privilege' because of the value and respect I hold for Indigenous knowledge, self-cultural knowledge, intergenerational knowing, and inter-relationships with the more-than-human world. However, now that I have begun to understand and accept my identity as a settler, I am beginning to see that perhaps the sentiment I was experiencing was not really about privilege but rather about my feeling displaced and disconnected from an unknown ancestral homeland. I could describe my emotional reaction as a longing, or a grieving, for something deeply important that is seemingly lost forever. And, I contemplate if this sense of loss can help me to empathize in some small way with Aboriginal peoples and communities who have much more recently, and often through colonial violence, been displaced from their traditional territories and/or forced to endure exploitation of their sacred Lands.

What was my friend's reaction as I shared my thoughts with her? A smile broke out across her face as she explained that she had thought about this too, that perhaps Aboriginal people were better off than the settlers because in many instances they still had strong connections to their Lands. She too had felt self-conscious about sharing that idea with others, concerned that others might think it laughable that that Land-relationship was something of value, and was perhaps more valuable than the power held by those in the mainstream.

What can my newly identified feelings of displacement, grief, and longing teach me about decolonizing and my role as environmental educator and teacher? For me, the angst and anguish of 'displacement' signals a lack of knowledge about who I am, where I come from, and what my story is. The grief is for a loss of culture that is congruent with

the Land, and a disconnection from generations of my ancestors and Land-based

ancestral knowledge. The longing is to know who I am and where I am from. While it is

true that I will likely never be able to know the specific location of the land that

nourished my ancestors, recognizing these feelings of grief and longing as feelings of

displacement actually helps me to expand my understanding of my identity and inspires

me to contemplate the story of how I came to be living 'here' now.

This type of autobiographical work helps me more accurately conceptualize my

relationship to this Land as a settler and to contemplate the motivations of my ancestors

to migrate here and my own motivations to stay. I see that as a decolonizing

environmental educator who regularly takes settler students outdoors and onto the Land, I

may be uniquely positioned to raise discussions of Land-culture connections and the

sentiment of longing to belong to some 'place.' I posit that engaging in autobiographical

work with my students may help them to unearth questions and emotions related to their

own displacement, which I am beginning to realize might be a key component to

accepting a relational settler identity.

Playing 'Indian'

(…or, Naming Eurocentrism and Cultural Misrepresentation)

I first encountered the concept of cultural appropriation during a fourth-year

university class in Experiential Education. We were informally discussing the topics we

had each chosen for our independent areas of inquiry. One student raised her hand and

explained that she was interested in examining Aboriginal cultural appropriation in

outdoor education. I had never heard the term 'appropriation' before, but as she gave a

brief overview of the concept and her concern with it, my consciousness was ignited. It

was an eye-opening moment, and I realized that inappropriate uses of Aboriginal cultural

traditions and symbols are offensive. I think I intuitively agreed with the concerns she

raised—it almost immediately made sense—although I don't recall having a strong

emotional reaction to it. Instead, I simply remember a sense of increased awareness. For

many years I had forgotten about this seemingly simple moment, until a memory of it

surfaced during my auto-ethnographic process. I have since recognized the significance

of the moment. I believe it may have been the first time that I became consciously aware

of colonialism and of the fact that disrespectful stereotypes of Aboriginal people abound.

Camp. I sit quietly in the circle around the campfire, not sure how to respond to

the activity that is taking place. I don't feel comfortable being there, and I dread the

moment when my turn comes to participate. We are at a ritual fall weekend trip from an

alternative elementary school where I work part-time. A parent has joined the trip to

help out and is now leading a campfire program for the students. As far as I can tell, the

parent, a White male in his mid-40s, has a very 'new age' vibe: yoga, meditation,

alternative 'healthful' food. He has apparently participated in so-called 'vision quests'

and is sharing what he has learned. He invites the students to make talking sticks, with

various ornamentations to represent various meanings about themselves. Next, the man

pulls out a dish and a dried plant ... maybe sweet grass or sage ... and lights the bundle

until it begins to smoulder. A smudge. He carries the smudge around the circle and

instructs each student to ceremoniously waft the smoke towards themselves. The tone is

reverent, and I'm surprised that the students respond seriously and respectfully. I still

feel uncomfortable because this ritual seems contrived. Is this an appropriation, a

misrepresentation, of Aboriginal culture? It feels as though we are 'playing Indian.'

Eventually, the circle ends and it is time for the next activity. The students take their

talking sticks to their bunks—souvenirs—and dash off to the sports field.

This episode was probably not the first time I experienced Aboriginal

stereotyping and cultural appropriation and misrepresentation; however, it may have been

the first occasion that I recognized it as such. I don't recall that there was any

acknowledgement during this camp activity of the traditional territory where we were or

who the cultural teachers had been. In the moment, I didn't voice my concerns,

Figure 6. Campfire pit.

but I did talk to the school principal and teachers later on. As the other teachers were

also well aware of socio-cultural issues, they acknowledged that it felt 'off,' and this

component wasn't included in future trips to camp. However, I do not recall if anyone

actually followed up with the father to discuss his motivations, experience, and the

inappropriateness of the activity. I know that I did not, nor did we spend any time debriefing with the students about the experience.

Later, in an unrelated incident that took place at the same camp, a counsellor taught a campfire song that mocked African tribes from Nairobi. I did not immediately recognize the problem with what seemed to be a silly campfire song to inspire laughter and camaraderie. Another counsellor who had travelled in Africa and spent a great deal of time reflecting on White privilege was the first to point out the problem with the song.

Recalling our previous incident with the so-called smudging ritual, the camp director quickly noted her concern and asked me to speak to the counsellor about it and to educate her about its inappropriateness. I felt nervous talking to the counsellor, as I knew she had no idea that there was a problem. While many of the counsellors at the camp came from a large city and had lots of experience with cultural diversity, this counsellor came from a smaller, less culturally diverse, town and had likely not had as much opportunity to experience and think about herself in relation to cultural difference. The counsellor, who had the best of intentions, was receptive to my conversation with her and embarrassed by her mistake. She seemed to understand the problems related to the song lyrics, and she felt sad that she may have offended anyone or shown a lack of respect.

A Generous Understanding

(…or, What is Respectful?)

Many years later, as a student in a small graduate seminar on decolonizing education, I told the story of the smudging ritual that I had experienced at camp, and which I had felt was an act of appropriation and misrepresentation. The Indigenous professor's subsequent comment surprised me, especially since she had been encouraging

us to recognize and disrupt Eurocentrism and colonialism. She noted that without asking the man about his background and experiences, it is hard to know if what he was doing came from a place of respect or not. She asked whether or not it was possible that he had learned from an Indigenous community about some of these traditions, but had not mastered how to share them appropriately. The professor pointed out that perhaps the father was making a positive effort to engage (rather than exploit), despite the mistakes he made in doing so.

I really do not know what this father's knowledge or intentions were, but my professor's comment got me thinking about the challenges I face in trying to learn about, employ, and teach Indigenous traditions or knowledge that has been shared with me. What mistakes have I made and will I continue to make? How are my efforts perceived by others, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous? What correct and incorrect messages do I send? When taught a tradition or knowledge by one Aboriginal person and encouraged to share, how might my sharing it be perceived by other Aboriginal people? And, if I do not share knowledge as requested, how is that honouring and respecting those who are generous enough to teach me? What message might I erroneously or unintentionally convey to other settlers?

These questions and uncertainties re-emphasize a key point made by an Aboriginal friend and mentor about how important it is to acknowledge one's teacher (with respect to cultural traditions) and the source of the knowledge, and how crucial it is to consider what permission we are given (or not) to share. As a White teacher, I am not the keeper of Indigenous knowledge, but I can be open to learning as much as possible, and I can create spaces in my classrooms, school, and community for Indigenous peoples

and Elders to share knowledge as they wish, and to shift Indigenous ways of knowing towards the forefront of mainstream curricula and pedagogies.

This reflection also helps me to realize that the responsibility of recognizing and disrupting Eurocentrism is complex. Yes, we should confront racism. We should challenge actions and words that feel disrespectful. We should protest against exploitative and colonial laws and policies. Yet, as with cultural norms and traditions, concepts of respect are multiple, varied, and dynamic. To disrupt Eurocentrism in our teaching praxes, I believe we have a responsibility to ask questions of our Aboriginal students and colleagues about what respect looks like for them and to carefully listen to their responses. There won't be a list of right and wrong approaches to decolonizing that we can learn or that we can teach our education students. It requires time, experience, reflection, and relational dialogue to paint an increasingly complex and nuanced understanding of respectful relationality with others.

Living History and Anishnaabe Games

(…or, A Responsibility to Learn and Teach)

During my final Bachelor of Education placement, a friend and I spent three weeks at a living history museum. There, we shadowed different employees to learn about the programming, tourism, and history of the area and era depicted at the museum. We assisted with behind the scenes preparations for school visits to the site (such as packaging beads for crafts, sorting time-period costumes that the children would wear, and preparing bread in the cabin kitchen). We facilitated some field games as well as some group dances on the days that the schools visited. We also travelled to some schools to deliver educational programming, and we followed our mentor's lead in this.

Especially while at the schools, we were often tasked with presenting information about Anishnaabe culture. The basic information we conveyed served as an introduction for elementary school students. Often, this instruction came in the form of traditional Anishnaabe games that we would teach and then help the students play.

At this time, I hadn't yet begun to explore decolonizing themes in my teaching, nor had I really had much exposure to Anishnaabe traditions or ways of knowing. I was curious, interested, and eager to learn. I thoroughly enjoyed learning from our mentor, the museum's educational director, and from other Aboriginal staff about their culture and what they contributed to the programs at the museum. I do recall feeling uncertain about whether or not it was appropriate for me to be teaching these games as a non-Aboriginal person. I wondered how they would be received, and how I would be perceived. I asked our mentor about that. Her response was that I should absolutely share these games and their meanings with others—that if someone had given me the knowledge with the intent that I would teach it to others, then it was my responsibility to disseminate that knowledge. She did, as other Aboriginal teachers have since noted as well, indicate that she always tries to acknowledge both her teachers and the specific culture that the knowledge comes from when she shares what she has learned.

I suppose the first chance I had to share these games on my own after my placement at the living history museum was the following year, while I was working with elementary school students. Many of the Anishnaabe games had underlying aims to develop lung capacity, hand-eye coordination, and other physical capacities, so I included them in my physical education program. The situational context is interesting to note in this case. The setting where I worked with these students was a school program at a large

Ontario summer camp. As is typical of many Ontario summer camp traditions, this camp

was infused with so-called 'Indian' traditions. I valued and appreciated the camp staff's

dedication to their educational work, the school's small class size, the beautiful outdoor

setting, commitment to outdoor learning, and sense of community amongst the students'

families.

Nevertheless, some physical symbols, spaces, and traditions disturbed me deeply,

not just because of their presence, but also because of the reverence for these 'traditions'

and 'artifacts' that long-time staff, students, and campers felt. There was the wooden

totem pole near the main office, and there was a 'council ring'—a circular gathering area

cordoned off by tall logs and placed upright, side-by-side. While I never witnessed this

in-use during the school year, students who also attended camp in the summers would

explain its significance to me: It was the site of a camp tradition that they perceived to be

a very serious and emotionally powerful 'native ritual.'

As I prepared to teach the Anishnaabe games as I had been coached to do by my

mentor at the living history museum, I had a sense that I wanted to differentiate these

from the other so-called 'native' tokens that were represented around the property. I

questioned whether or not my intentions were really any different than the intentions of

the camp leadership team, who felt assured that they were honouring Indigenous peoples

through their 'native lore' programming.

My approach was to simply explain the games to the students and describe where

I had learned them. Some of the games required me to teach a couple of

Anishnaabemowin words for day and night, which were symbolized by the black and

white stripes on the feather. The students responded well. Mostly, they just had fun trying the games.

Interestingly, two of the boys in my classes were Mohawk. I had never heard them speak about their culture, nor had I initiated any conversations with them about it. I remember being nervous about teaching the games to the classes with those two boys. What would they think? What would they feel if others in the class ridiculed the games? How would I handle it? In the end, no issues arose, but I do wonder what I could have done with this activity to create an atmosphere that would have been more conducive to their sharing something about their culture if they wished to do so. I do not recall whether or not I acknowledged their Indigenous culture at the time.

In retrospect, I believe that my attempt to teach the Anishnaabe games was a positive early step that was necessary for helping me move beyond my comfort zone and try to incorporate a small aspect of Aboriginal culture into my program. However, I can see now that at that point in my journey I was just enough aware about the complexity of Indigenous-settler relationships to know that my knowledge was very limited. This growing awareness of my ignorance greatly decreased my confidence and left me feeling uncomfortable, vulnerable, and uncertain. I recognize now that as a way to deal with this discomfort, I tried to contain and simplify the activity; I attempted to present the games as an isolated activity rather than as a conduit for discussing issues of cultural difference or relationality on a deeper level. I actively tried to avoid complexity because I did not feel knowledgeable or skilled enough to facilitate potentially difficult dialogue that may have given rise to offensive or ignorant comments from the students.

Reflecting on this experience now, as a teacher educator, helps me to realize that while it is important to assist new teachers in learning and integrating Aboriginal content, it is perhaps equally or more important to invite them into a journey of self-reflection and gradual decolonizing. By engaging them in challenging and complex dialogue and self-reflection about Indigenous-settler relationships and colonizing and decolonizing processes, we might model for them how they could teach about deeper issues of respect and intercultural relationships with their own students. But beyond that, we need to assist our students and new teachers in becoming more comfortable with, and more accepting of, the discomfort and the uncertainty they will no doubt experience through decolonizing processes.

Amongst outdoor educators, the Learning Zone Model (Senninger, 2000) is commonly employed to help optimize the learning experience of their students. In this model, three concentric circles include a comfort zone, a learning zone, and a panic zone. When undertaking activities that fall within their comfort zone, participants learn very little. In contrast, if a student is pushed too far outside of their comfort zone into the panic zone, they also do not learn well because they are overly focused on their fear. Consequently, their learning becomes paralyzed. Between the comfort zone and the panic zone is the 'learning zone,' which exposes participants to novel, yet manageable, experiences where learning can flourish. In the case of decolonizing education, fear of making mistakes can inhibit learning and lead educators to feel paralyzed or stuck (Root, 2010). As an auto-ethnographic researcher and teacher educator, I now contemplate the phenomenon of pushing educators to shift too far, too quickly, possibly leading them to the panic zone where learning cannot occur.

How can teacher educators who are settler allies effectively assess our students and provide them with appropriate challenges for moving towards decolonizing understandings? As our own minds open to increasingly nuanced understandings of Eurocentrism, settler colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and intercultural relationality, we may experience the pitfall of wanting to 'enlighten' everyone we meet. We may lose patience with those who do not yet recognize the injustice and ignorance that we ourselves are (slowly) coming to recognize. But, if we can understand decolonizing as a gradual progression of learning—perhaps through reflection on our own slow and circuitous journeys—then perhaps we can be more effective at supporting others as they identify their own area between comfort zone and panic zone. We can support them as they develop the awareness, confidence, and commitment to learning that will inspire them to continue learning and shifting.

My Student the Teacher

(…or, Making Mistakes)

"That's not appropriate," she said.

The woman who uttered this statement was our very engaged Aboriginal student, aware of colonialism and Indigenous culture through her own experiences as an Indigenous woman and also through the somewhat academic decolonizing lens of a relative who is a scholar. We were humbled. It was late in the evening, and we were staying in a cabin with our class as part of a winter cross-country ski trip. My teaching partner had just finished teaching the class a so-called 'native' campfire closing.

Although I did cringe as I watched the activity unfold, I brushed it off as an issue for my teaching partner to deal with since I was otherwise engaged with two students

needing to resolve a conflict and also with planning for tomorrow's lessons. I also did not want to criticize and step on her toes, probably because I didn't feel as though I had the energy to work through any potential discomfort or conflict doing so might ignite. I think I may also have felt some relief that I had not been the one to make such a mistake. I was attempting to distance myself from the event.

Our confident and kind young student, on the other hand, spoke up after class in a very respectful way, seemingly with the intent to educate. After the class had dispersed, she took the teacher aside and asked who had taught her this ritual and what tribe the knowledge belonged to, likely knowing full well that it was fabricated during some Euro-western camp tradition. The other teacher immediately felt awful and apologized to the young woman. The next day she also apologized to the class and explained why what she had done was inappropriate. Interestingly, this teacher has continued down an intentional path of decolonizing. She now works regularly with Indigenous peoples and has frequently played the role of educator since that event, disrupting Eurocentric mistakes of White colleagues.

This story compels me to ask what my role was and should have been in this scenario. Why didn't I step in and interrupt the activity as soon as I realized it was inappropriate? What harm did my inaction cause the Aboriginal student? What should have been my responsibility? How can I foster relationships with colleagues that create openness to learning so that these disruptive conversations feel welcomed by others rather than laborious? How can I prepare teacher candidates to be open to feedback about their cultural knowledge, practices, and/or ignorance? In one class, or one year, teacher candidates will not have the chance to learn as much as they need to know about

Canada's colonial history and respectful Indigenous-settler relationships, but might it be possible to help them be open to feedback, learning, and making mistakes? Once again, I contemplate the possible steppingstones. How can I facilitate a progression of learning?

This story also helps me realize that decolonizing requires constant engagement and commitment, and it takes energy and effort. In the instance described here, I watched my colleague make a mistake, and then I made an equally egregious mistake by not saying anything because I was busy and because I wanted to avoid potential discomfort. Being able to recognize colonialism and Eurocentrism isn't enough.

Decolonizing and making a commitment to respectful relationships is an omnipresent choice. I need to take responsibility for the fact that in each and every situation—despite anxiety, lack of energy, or fear of conflict—my engagement or lack thereof is a choice, and I can make choices that illustrate my capacity for respect. How might I support and encourage new teachers, who are often overwhelmed and exhausted by the requirements of their jobs, to make the choice to engage in a process that will no doubt require mental and emotional energy? Perhaps another question is, how can schools, staff groups, and curricula be re-conceptualized so as to allow teachers the time and energy to engage in necessary decolonizing work as they move towards respectful teaching?

Eurocentric Power and Ignorance

(…or, Myself as Colonizer)

At the private school where I worked, one class of students and several staff members lived on site for four – eight months. Students earned high school credits and participated in community building, wilderness travel experiences, service learning, self-

discovery, and cooperative learning. Learning was personal, experiential, and interdisciplinary.

While culturally responsive and Indigenous or decolonizing learning was not an explicit focus, staff were generally aware of the importance of teaching about Aboriginal history and introducing students to Aboriginal culture by, for example, visiting local First Nations or reading stories by Aboriginal authors. At various times, we talked about our discomfort or uncertainty as White teachers delivering Aboriginal content to our students. Anyway, the particular incident I am going to detail below has to do with a difficult decision and experience we had enforcing a discipline policy, and how it affected one of our Aboriginal students.

Our philosophy had long been to bend rules against smoking, drinking, and drugs, replacing regulations with individualized plans for working with and supporting students who may be accustomed to using those substances. In theory, our policy was 'three strikes and you're out' (expulsion from the program) for any of these offences, but we were often more lenient around smoking, hoping that a positive approach to working with students who had smoking addictions would help them work towards quitting. We were always loosely aware that students would sneak off to engage in the illicit activities, but we did our best to encourage healthy choices.

In the instance I am about to describe, the student was part of a year when students engaged in quite a few sneaky illicit activities—something we only later realized. On the penultimate night of the first semester, many of the students made the very poor choice to have a party with alcohol in the residence while the residential staff slept. The next day we called a community meeting and went with students one by one to

their rooms to look for alcohol and drugs, among other potential hazards. We confiscated a few liquor bottles, a jar of mushrooms, pot-smoking paraphernalia, and cigarettes. There was little for us to do at that point, as most of the students would be leaving for home the next day anyway. For most students, it was their first offence, and we didn't want to go so far as to jeopardize their graduation by denying their credits over one incident. There was, however, one student who had previously been given at least three 'chances' in the past and who, unlike the other students, was supposed to be returning to our school the following semester. He happened to be Aboriginal.

Some of the staff felt it was necessary to deny him the right to return to our school the following semester, based on the recognition that as a school we needed to stamp out our growing reputation for leniency toward illegal substance use on campus. Others felt more torn about making that firm decision, especially since we had been somewhat lenient up to that point. Was it fair to single this student out at this point in time? The student had excelled in many ways at our school, and he was being recognized in his First Nations community for his efforts to embrace an opportunity for education. We had developed really positive relationships with him, and he sincerely wanted to return. The First Nations community was in fact testing out our school and hoping that more collaboration with our program might be suitable for more of their students. Nevertheless, the decision was made to refuse his return, and we let his parents know.

I recall answering a phone call from his father related to his return, which his parents were strongly advocating for. His father asked me if I understood how hard it is for kids growing up on reserves, how few opportunities they have there. The father clearly communicated the negative influences his son would be immersed in, and would

struggle to face, should he be forced to return to school in his home community. He begged for us to reconsider, citing all the positive influences of our program. It was a difficult position for me to be in; I had been told it was my responsibility to uphold the decision that had been made. While I wished desperately that we could come up with an alternative solution for that student, I could fully understand the need for us to firm up our policy and 'clean up' the inappropriate behavioural culture at the school.

One thing I am aware of is my lack of knowledge at the time. I did have a sense that life on reserve posed challenges, and that his educational opportunities there may have been limited. But I was otherwise ignorant about Aboriginal education initiatives and the barriers and challenges that Aboriginal students face systemically, such as unequal funding and lack of culturally appropriate curriculum.

In the end the student did not return, and we created a new 'zero tolerance' policy towards drugs and alcohol that did largely work to shift the culture of the school. I am still occasionally in touch with the student through social media. I know that he did eventually go to college, that he celebrates his culture, and that he participates in political activism for his community. When he sends me Facebook invitations to various protests or awareness building events, I learn from him, and I'm grateful for his reaching out to me in these ways. Back then, I was a new teacher, still finding my place and my voice in the school's organization. If I were in the same position now, I suspect I would speak up much more firmly and strongly for the student to stay with us.

Dreams. Other moments prime for reflection and learning occurred in my class during that period. One of the things that happened reasonably frequently was that on of our Aboriginal students would contribute to class discussions by sharing a dream he had

had. Often, it took him a relatively long time to tell the story of his dream to the class. I knew at the time that his sharing in this way was traditional or cultural; however, as a teacher trying to keep the other 15 students engaged, I often became anxious as he spoke because his descriptions seemed long, slow, and circuitous. It wasn't always clear to me or the other students what the point of the dream was. Consequently, the other students' attention would wane quickly, and I was often frustrated that his sharing threw off the timing of my lesson plan for the day.

In retrospect, this could have been a moment of deep intercultural learning for all of us; it could have been an opportunity to understand that dreams are important ways of knowing in many Aboriginal cultures. How could I have *embraced* this way of knowing that the student was teaching us by example rather than dreading it? How could I have adjusted my lesson planning? How could I have encouraged other students to learn from this type of narrative and spiritual reflection? And, now as a teacher educator, I wonder how I might prepare new teachers to slow down, to honour and value processes of cultural sharing in the face of rigorous expectations for curriculum content outcomes imposed by governments and school boards. What advice can I give them when I know they will face enormous, and at times overwhelming, pressure to teach to timelines and standardized measures?

Tobacco. Another cultural conflict that occurred with one Aboriginal student was about the incongruence of our 'rules' with his traditions and spiritual practices. Because of the school's anti-smoking regulation, this student was (unjustly) not allowed to carry his pouch of tobacco with him during canoe or hiking trips. Part of his spiritual practice was to give offerings at various places on the Land as we travelled. The compromise that

we came up with was that the staff person would carry the tobacco for him in their pack, but that he could ask for it any time he wanted to use it for a spiritual offering.

I can recall one time when he asked me for the tobacco that was really inconvenient; it was raining, the tobacco was sealed in my dry barrel, and the group was antsy to move on. I remember being somewhat annoyed by his request, and I asked him if he could wait until another time that was more convenient. He responded positively and patiently, but in retrospect I see that both our rule and my response at that moment were highly unethical.

Figure 7. Typical blue canoe-tripping dry barrel.

These occurrences with Aboriginal students illuminate the Eurocentrism that is often embedded in rigid school policies and in classroom and pedagogical norms. The dilemma that these situations represent for teacher educators is: How can we prepare new teachers to recognize this oppressive cultural norm? And furthermore, how can we prepare new teachers to face the complex dilemma of trying to teach respectfully within

institutions and educational systems that are oppressively imbued with rigid Eurocentrism?

I have found, when teaching courses in Bachelor of Education teacher certification programs, that I am simultaneously preparing teachers to successfully work within an existing system of education (so that they can get jobs, meet ministry requirements, deliver approved curriculum, and navigate school structures), and preparing them to question, disrupt, and change those parts of the system that exclude and/or (re)colonize Aboriginal students and reinforce Eurocentrism as the mainstream cultural norm. When I think about it, this seems like an impossible task, as it encourages teachers to colonize and decolonize at the same time. As a teacher educator, this realization leaves me feeling uncertain. What is my job? Can I ethically teach in a teacher certification program that is stringently assessed and approved by larger governmental departments? And if not there, where?

Student Resistance

(…or, Learning Responsibility)

While leading a professional development course at a wilderness school, I worked with young adults wishing to gain certification and practical experience for leading wilderness trips. To achieve this, they registered for our 30-day course. After a few days on the trail with some of these young adults, I found myself struggling to connect with one student who I will call Jason.

This young man was very physically capable and had a decade of experience canoe tripping with a long-established Ontario summer camp, so in some ways he took on a leadership role in the group due to his comfort level with camp-craft, portaging,

stamina, and paddling long distances, among other feats in the outdoors. Despite his physical and practical prowess, he had yet to master the art of facilitation and leadership of group dynamics, which often led to friction and subtle conflict with other group members.

Summer camp culture was obviously deeply engrained in Jason's psyche. This included a reverence for 'playing Indian' pageantry. I felt adamant that these fabricated rituals were racist, inappropriate, historicized, misrepresented, and inaccurate stereotypes. Yet, I had a very hard time figuring out how to communicate with Jason about this. In informal discussion, he indicated that he absolutely could not see anything wrong with them. The rituals had taken on meaning for him and other campers that were probably related to settler myths of connection to nature, preservation of so-called 'ancient wisdom,' and a sense of spirituality often missing in the lives of White adolescents. He felt that these activities were meant to honour Aboriginal people and that their inauthenticity didn't matter because the rituals that had been created were now part of his culture. His argument was that they were meaningful to camp participants, so campers and staff shouldn't be made to give them up. I soon realized that my efforts to shift his perspective were futile, and that it was perhaps more appropriate to steer clear of these conversations rather than subject the rest of the group to his racist rants.

When I reflect on my experience of trying to convince this young man of my concerns, it's not the conversations I had with him or his responses that stand out. I've encountered those mindsets both before and since, and I continue to grapple with how to initiate change in those circumstances. What does stand out is the mistake I made upon our return to base camp. I asked a fellow instructor, who is Aborginal, if he would speak

to this fellow about what was wrong with these fabricated 'native ceremonies.' I thought that if Jason could hear the arguments and hear about the impact of this type of racism from an Aboriginal person, that he might more readily respect the criticism. My biggest focus was 'getting Jason to understand.'

This instructor's response surprised me at the time, although it doesn't surprise me at all now. He did not seem interested in helping out with the situation or talking to Jason, and he let me know that he was pretty busy with other tasks. I do not remember pushing hard for him to do it, but somehow through our conversation he did end up agreeing to chat with Jason for a few minutes. I do think Jason learned something; he seemed open-minded about what the Aboriginal instructor had to say, although he was not ready to entirely let go of his own beliefs either. But I wonder now, at what expense did this learning come? I inadvertently subjected my fellow instructor to racism—why should he have had to listen to Jason's racist beliefs and arguments? I know now that it is an egregious mistake to burden Aboriginal friends, colleagues, and peers with the task of helping White people sort out their/our colonial problems. I should not have asked that instructor to do something that he might not be comfortable with and wouldn't have time for. Additionally, it wasn't his responsibility.

Beyond the awareness of my responsibility and the mistake I made in this situation, what this reflection compels me to consider is where I should focus my efforts so that I can be most effective in creating positive decolonizing change in our schools? To argue with someone who is unwilling to try to 'see' the world differently is infuriatingly frustrating, and I don't know if any change can occur until a person chooses to open up to learning.

In the situation with Jason and the young outdoor professionals, perhaps I 'missed the boat.' By focusing so intently on changing Jason's mind, I missed the opportunity for dialogue about intercultural respect that could have occurred with the seven other participants, who may have been more open-minded. While of course it is my responsibility to call out racism when I see it, perhaps naming and confronting Eurocentrism and racism is more about modeling for others how to address it than it is about changing stone-set attitudes on the spot. In appreciative inquiry, researchers focus their attention on what is working—on what is going well—in any given situation. What if I were to apply that thinking to my choice about where, when, and how to act for decolonizing change?

In an earlier story I described working at an elementary school with engrained misrepresentative 'Indian' pageantry. In the end, I left that school because of the incongruence between its values and my own. It did not feel possible for me to create change there, so I moved on. These reflections help me realize that I am currently most comfortable and interested in working with new teachers (and students) who are, at a minimum, open to learning—in collaborating with those who may be willing to engage in critical reflection about themselves and educational norms. The question I still grapple with is, is this enough, or am I shirking responsibility by avoiding situations where I perceive change to be impossible?

Co-learning and Intercultural Dialogue

(…or, A Fine Line between Decolonizing and Re-colonizing)

On a few occasions one spring, during a training trip for new instructors at the wilderness school where I worked, I facilitated dialogue about what it meant for non-Aboriginal instructors and students to be travelling with or without Aboriginal co-instructors and participants on Aboriginal territory. Our dialogues had flourished with good questions, uncertainty, open-mindedness, and respectful reflections. We contemplated how to have such discussions with students who may be less open-minded. The conversations were enriched by the presence of several participants, who were knowledgeable about Aboriginal cultures, the significance of cultural identity, and about the impacts of historic and contemporary colonization.

One day, we encountered a sign on a portage that welcomed visitors to the territory belonging to Wolf Lake First Nation. I knew nothing about this First Nation, but the visual reminder of where we were piqued our interest, adding food for thought.

Figure 8. Portage trail sign, Dumoine River, Wolf Lake First Nation.

One of our group members, Bill, was from a Northern Ontario First Nation. He expressed his appreciation to the group in general for embracing the themes of Indigenous Land and intercultural respect through dialogue, and to me and my co-instructor for intentionally creating the space for the dialogues and encouraging such reflection. The dialogues weren't particularly intense or controversial; they tended to be exploratory spaces into which we introduced themes of intercultural respect and learning.

Bill made tobacco offerings at various points along the trip. I came to know him as someone who deeply embraces his culture and spiritual traditions. At the end of the trip, he approached me to say thank you for the role I played in leading the group. At this time, he gave me a gift—a pouch of tobacco that had been given to him by an Elder he knew. I was very moved by the gift because I understood this to be a gesture of appreciation and respect.

I took the opportunity to learn in this moment. I asked Bill what his thoughts were about how I might engage with this tobacco in the future. Would he find it appropriate for me to make an offering with it? Would that be appropriation or an example of respectfully learning from his culture? Would it be appropriate for me to use it as a teaching tool and share the custom with other students? In the end, he said he thought it would be appropriate for me to take it on other canoe trips both to make offerings and to share the practice with other students, to raise awareness. For example, if other students wished to make an offering, they could also do so.

Through our dialogue, we also determined that explaining to students how I came to be carrying the tobacco and using it to make an offering would be an important part of teaching students respect, of showing them that I was not 'pretending to be Indian' but

rather explaining where the gift had come from, what it was meant for, who my teacher had been, how they had encouraged me to share this knowledge, and how their opinion might not be the same as that of other Aboriginal people. In other words, the tobacco pouch could be an object that inspired dialogue and learning, and the story of how I came to have it could point to the complexity and uncertainty inherent in intercultural learning. I assured Bill that I would do my best to honour his request.

Figure 9. Tobacco pouch.

Fast forward to later in the summer. On this next occasion I was co-leading a 30-day wilderness leadership development course for teens. We had travelled by train to a bridge in Northwestern Ontario. The train stopped, and we disembarked in what appeared to be 'the middle of nowhere,' at the headwaters of a river. We unloaded canoes and packs, and when the train pulled away, we launched our canoes for a 'floating lunch' before paddling to our first campsite.

I had spent a lot of time reflecting on how I could set a tone for the course that would encourage dialogue about whose traditional territory we were visiting and how we could respectfully travel there. I hoped to encourage our group to reflect on our relationality with the Indigenous peoples of this place (even though I suspected we were unlikely to meet anyone on the river). I thought about honouring the promise I had made to Bill about encouraging dialogue for intercultural learning and respect. In the busy days preceding the trip, I had chatted with my co-instructor, Glen, about many detailed aspects of the trip: logistical, philosophical, programmatic, curricular, etc. But, in our hectic preparations, we hadn't touched base about this particular moment of 'starting the trip.'

I had been playing through the scene in my mind, thinking carefully about how to explain my intentions and how to make a tobacco offering respectfully, acknowledging the territory where we were and also acknowledging Bill as someone who taught me about this cultural tradition. Just before I was about to talk over my ideas with Glen, he approached me and coincidentally asked if I minded if *he* made a tobacco offering to start the trip. I was stunned! I'm not sure why I felt this way, but my initial interpretation was that his intentions seemed a bit flippant. I had been agonizing over if and how I could do this respectfully, knowing that I really wanted to get it 'right' and thinking about the fine line between decolonizing and merely colonizing better (Fitznor, Haig-Brown, & Moses, 2000). Now all sorts of thoughts were going through my head. What were Glen's intentions? Who had he learned from? Was this a similar intention to mine, or was this more akin to cultural appropriation or 'playing Indian,' like settler colonizers have done at summer camps for decades?

I briefly explained why I was suddenly overwhelmed. He explained that he had begun to incorporate this practice into his own spirituality, and that he had been introduced to the tradition by one of our White female friends. I wondered to myself about his approach; his intentions seemed to be respectful, but were his motivations re-colonizing or decolonizing? Or, was the whole idea more about a new age custom? These thoughts led me to reflect on my own intentions. Was what I wanted to do and talk about appropriate? How was what I wanted to do really outwardly any different than what he wanted to do? (The students probably wouldn't have perceived it much differently, but I felt our motivations and understandings were different.) Who was I to think that my intentions were any more 'appropriate' or noble?

Glen did not seem to understand why I was putting so much reflection into my plan. He didn't think it was a big deal to make a tobacco offering out of respect, and he did not think it needed as much frontloading or as much explaining as I wanted to do. Now I questioned myself. Was I making too big a deal out of something that was not really that significant? In the end, because he wasn't strongly attached to the outcome, he agreed that I could take the lead. I did not end up saying much. I just explained the tradition and purpose of laying tobacco as Bill had explained it to me. I explained who Bill was, the themes of the conversations we had had that had led him to give me the tobacco, and what he had hoped I would do with it. I also acknowledged the traditional territory we were on and then offered students the opportunity to make an offering into the water if they so wished. Many did, but not all.

This entire situation makes me think about reflexivity and critical academic thought. I have learned through my academic experience to be deeply critical, reflexive,

and scrutinizing of my own worldview on colonial and Eurocentric thinking. But what is the effect of this critical thinking in everyday life? And how is it understood or perceived by others? Thinking about Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities is helpful and necessary at times, but at other times, these rigid binaries are not effective for cultivating respect. For example, another friend once talked about being in the arctic with Inuit friends. He described how incongruent it would be for him to talk in the language of decolonizing with some of his Inuit friends there. He said they would look at him quizzically and say something akin to, 'Get on the snowmobile. It's time to fish.'

The point, I think, is that perhaps cultural difference doesn't always need deconstructing in order for learning to occur. As a teacher educator who is accustomed to the Western academic tradition of rigorous critical thought, I need to be conscious of other ways of relating to and learning with others. I encountered many of these alternative approaches in the class that I describe in the next vignette.

Can I Participate?

(…or, Learning a Language of Decolonizing …or, Experiencing Indigenous Pedagogies)

A very strong influence in my awareness of decolonizing as a movement and as an academic discipline was a course I took during my master's degree in education. This class was a turning point as it helped me learn to recognize Eurocentrism and the injustice faced historically and presently by Aboriginal peoples. I remember that I was looking for an elective to take in the first year of my master's degree. I was drawn to this course because I thought it would be an opportunity to gain more exposure to Aboriginal perspectives and culture. Nevertheless, I was tremendously hesitant to register for it. I

wasn't sure if I, a non-Aboriginal person, would be welcome. When I asked an Aboriginal friend who had taken it the year before what I should do, he let me know that I might find it challenging or confronting, and that some of the White students in his cohort had struggled to be there. I decided to write to the professor and ask her if it would be appropriate for me to take the course. She indicated that the course was open to all, and I took this as an invitation to join. As I noted above, it proved to be a significant turning point in my learning journey.

The most noteworthy aspect of this influential course was the struggle it began in me regarding whether or not there was a role for me to play in decolonizing, as a Euro-Canadian White person. I grappled with this question right up until the last day of the course. On that last day, at a potluck lunch at my house, I told the professor how uncertain I had been—and still was. She said pointedly something to the effect of, *yes, there is a role for you, and you'll continue to explore what that is, but yes there is a role for you to be involved.* I remember this moment because it confirmed what I was coming to know: that learning respectful relationality would be a lifelong commitment.

A number of Indigenous pedagogical approaches in that class impacted me immensely. The class always began with singing and smudging. I quickly came to appreciate these rituals and the space they created to respectfully pause. No matter what sort of hectic or frustrating week I was having, and despite the difficult subject matter of the class, I always entered the space and quickly felt a sense of calm, ease, and peace once we had smudged and began our circle work. No matter how difficult the subject matter was emotionally—and much of it was very difficult both because of the personal process of decolonizing reflection and because of the horrific injustice we sometimes

discussed—I would leave feeling renewed and refreshed. This had not occurred for me in any other class prior to this one. The spiritual components of the class and the non-competitive, non-judgmental, supportive sharing that took place in the circle certainly helped to create this.

Circle work was another cultural construct that simultaneously taught and disrupted Euro-western pedagogical norms. Speaking in turn and learning to listen deeply to others rather than focusing on what I was going to say when it was my turn taught me much about respect and equity. I was taught to listen first rather than rehearse what I was going to say. I came to trust that the words would come to me, and that I would say what I needed to say when it was my turn. I had to intentionally practice this in this class, as I have continued to have to do in many circles since.

I found that this form of sharing took away a sense of franticness and anxiety that can accompany Western-style classroom debates or heated discussions, where each person has to try to jump in to add their perspective and often needs to justify why their idea is the most relevant, or right. In circle work, there is a genuine sense that the goal is to understand ourselves, and each other, and that just because another person holds a different perspective from you doesn't mean that your sharing is any less valid or important. Moreover, it is certainly no *more* valid or important than that of others.

Other experiences in that class that had a strong impact included the readings about the realities of injustice faced by Aboriginal peoples, such as residential schools, status laws, and treaties. It was powerful to hear first-hand experiences from Aboriginal students in the class, some who faced injustice and some who were struggling to revive their cultural roots. It was equally significant to hear other White friends grapple with

some of the same uncertainties as I was. As well, generally learning to recognize that there was a whole other way of seeing the world, a whole other culture of people who didn't see or experience the world the same way as I always had was impactful.

Another reason why I consider this class to be a turning point in my journey is that it was here I first learned the word 'decolonizing.' It was the first place I was encouraged to actively self-reflect on the issue of Aboriginal–non-Aboriginal relationships and to consider the differences and points of resonance between Indigenous and Western cultures. This was the point at which I began my conscious or intentional decolonizing journey. Of course, I had encountered significant learning moments previously, but it was at this point that I felt I had enough awareness to name and actively pursue decolonizing learning. I could see just how much I still needed to learn.

This class is what eventually inspired me to write a master's thesis that was quite different from what I initially intended when I had applied to the program. I had always planned to work in the realm of outdoor, experiential, environmental education. As I took this class, it became abundantly apparent to me that any efforts in environmental education towards a socio-ecologically sustainable planet could not be effective without engaging fundamentally with the issue of colonization of Land and people.

This realization was both inspiring and disorienting for me. Models of education, such as Western, place-based education, that had long-held great inspiration for me as creative and innovative ways to engage students in nature and community now seemed lacklustre, and they egregiously failed to address a gap. Why was it so difficult for me to find examples of Western environmental educators engaging with Indigenous and decolonizing education? With this 'aha' moment and my somewhat naïve passion, I

furiously crafted my first SSHRC proposal for my master's. Environmental education, I argued, must pay greater attention to Aboriginal traditional territories, Aboriginal ways of knowing, and Indigenous and decolonizing pedagogies.

I was somewhat shaken to find my argument was ill-received by some well-established scholars. Their response may have been because perhaps I appeared offensive in my fervour. Perhaps they felt I was naïve about how to engage in generous scholarship—about how to recognize the value of contributions from a variety of perspectives. I was surprised because the critique I was proposing was largely meant to be of myself—of a culture that I was a part of. I was not trying to blame, but rather take responsibility and make a call to action for all those who engage in environmental work from a similar worldview as my own. Through this experience, however, I did learn an important lesson: One must make gradual steps towards positive change through each area of socially and environmentally engaged scholarship. These are areas of research to which a vast number of committed educators and researchers had already contributed.

Serendipitously, a professor whom I had only recently met as the teacher of my core research methods course offered to read my SSHRC proposal. When she returned her comments to me, she also offered to be my supervisor, if I was still in search of one. Up to that point I had not been aware of the resonance of her work with my critique of environmental education. Our meeting was another major turning point in my academic journey, as she became my Master of Education supervisor and subsequently my doctoral supervisor. Over the years, we have shared many conversations and learning experiences that have influenced me gradually and profoundly. Most of these were subtle and would be difficult for me to describe in narrative form here. However, what is of note is that I

was lucky enough on my journey to find a mentor—another non-Indigenous educator, teacher educator, and academic scholar and researcher—who helped me to navigate through and make sense of my decolonizing efforts and experiences. What I believe may be missing for many new teachers are role models and mentors who can continue to assist them in their decolonizing learning for years beyond their undergraduate education classes, as they gain experience in schools and in their communities.

An Unsettling Surprise: Still Learning to See What I Can't

(…or, Discovering the Depths of My Own Eurocentrism)

A self-reflective story I have often told is one about an unsettling or discomforting epiphany I experienced towards the end of the first year of my master's degree. I was attending a conference presentation of another student, a friend who is Métis. This friend began his presentation by introducing himself in Cree. As he spoke, tears began to stream down my face. I was overcome with emotion because all of a sudden I recognized a deeply rooted Eurocentric judgment of my own that I had previously not noticed. On occasions when he had brought bannock to potluck dinners my internal reaction had been … *what's this all about? He may be Métis, but he grew up just like me, so why is he 'putting on' an Aboriginal culture? Why is he 'pretending' to be Aboriginal?*

With this judgment I failed to recognize and acknowledge that settler colonialism had impacted his family and traditions, and that he may be working towards reclaiming, remembering, re-establishing those traditions for himself and for his family. Hearing him speak his language helped me realize that, regardless of our positive friendship and some similar work in the area of decolonizing education, and regardless of the many long

conversations we had had about identity and culture and respect, I had not fully recognized or honoured his Indigeneity up to that point. I was suddenly able to recognize the awful prejudicial judgment I had unconsciously been making, which re-centred White normativity despite my active efforts to decolonize my thinking. That judgment was that it was more acceptable for him to just 'act White.'

This experience really scared me. While I thought that I had learned a lot and was becoming aware of and disrupting my own Eurocentrism, I just did not 'see' my deeply embedded attitude. To me, this was a very real example of how hard it is to 'learn to see what we can't' (Tompkins, 2002), or what we do not know, or cannot immediately grasp. It taught me how I must not assume I have everything figured out, that there would always be Eurocentrism I cannot see, and that I must work very hard to recognize it and overcome it. My Western worldview will always be one of the lenses through which I see the world.

It also speaks once again to the multiplicity of identity. Indigeneity is diverse, and it is not up to me to define or determine 'what counts' as Aboriginal or what 'Aboriginal' should look like. And so, I continue to grapple with my task of educating new teachers about Aboriginal pedagogies and ways of knowing. How can I as a settler convey the richness and diversity of Aboriginal cultures, which I am only just learning about myself? How do I teach 'Aboriginal education' or 'Indigenous pedagogies' in a way that honours the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and experience?

Apologizing

(…or Feeling Embarrassed)

I am standing in front of a packed room, my palms sweating. The florescent lights seem particularly bright. All eyes are on me, and I know that nobody is anticipating the announcement I am about to make. I feel really nervous, but I know what I need to do.

I had been part of an organizing committee for an outdoor educators' conference that was taking place at an outdoor centre in Central Ontario. The goal of the conference had been to invite the predominantly Euro-western organization of outdoor educators to pay more attention to Indigenous ways of knowing and to think about how to build more respectful Indigenous–non-Indigenous intercultural relationships in their own schools and communities. The planning for the weekend conference had come together in bits and pieces, with those of us who were the organizers working at a distance and frequently delegating responsibilities to various other volunteers. One conference participant ended up inviting an Elder to the conference. Since I wasn't aware of the invitation in advance, I did not take the initiative to think ahead about proper protocol and respect for hosting this Elder.

Early in the day, a man approached me. At this point I was still unaware that he was an Elder, although he quickly introduced himself as such. He was very upset. He had just learned that there was to be an evening social event. It was not going to be a raging party, but it was an event where people would have the choice to bring alcohol. He was upset that nobody had told him in advance that this would be taking place. During his communication with another organization member prior to the conference, he had indicated some of the ways he would like to participate in and contribute to the

conference, including bring a sacred drum that should not have been at an event with alcohol. He had hoped to offer a teaching to conference participants using the sacred drum, but could not do so if participants themselves had recently consumed alcohol. He spoke to me in an angry tone, admonishing me for not having thought about the kind of protocols that would be necessary to make this intercultural conference respectful.

I was embarrassed at my lack of foresight and preparation. I was also frustrated with the settler conference participant who had not communicated with us in advance about the Elder's presence. I kept wondering what I could have done differently. I did not know he was coming or that he was bringing a drum, or what the respectful Elder and drum protocols were in this instance.

In the end, it didn't make sense to debrief the somewhat disorganized conference planning that had led to this oversight and mistake. I did not know the settler participant very well (and in the end I did not find a time to talk to him about what had happened). Instead of trying to make any excuses, I apologized immediately to the Elder and suggested that we announce a change to the social plans that evening, making it an alcohol-free event. He seemed to grow calmer with this suggestion, and interested in making a plan together. He suggested that he would feel comfortable proceeding with his drum teaching that evening if we set it up in separate, secluded area away from the social event, and if participants who wanted to join the drum teaching would refrain from drinking alcohol before the gathering. I was very grateful that he chose to reach out and share his knowledge with us despite the mistakes made by the organizing committee. I knew that this was a teachable moment for all of us, and I wanted to set an example for

the other educators at the conference about the opportunity we have to learn from Eurocentric mistakes.

So there I stand in front of the quiet room. And I apologize. I explain the Elder's concern, my (our—the conference organizers) mistake(s), the alternate arrangements for drum teaching, and the necessary conditions of respect. I acknowledge that those of us who are settlers will no doubt make many mistakes as we learn to overcome our own Eurocentrism. And, I remind conference participants that it is more important to take responsibility and learn from mistakes than to avoid engaging at all.

The biggest aspect of learning for me in this instance was to anticipate that I may not always know or be told directly what respect looks like. It is up to me to take the initiative to ask and to be constantly aware of the potential for me to offend someone through my Eurocentric ignorance.

Later in the weekend, the Elder attended one of my presentations, during which he reached out and indicated to me that he thought I had handled the difficult situation well. I am glad we had been able to work through our misunderstandings towards a more respectful relationality, and I now can appreciate having had the experience of making a very public mistake and apologizing for it. This helps me to be less afraid of being vulnerable and making and learning from mistakes in the future.

A Mi'kmaw Totem Pole?

(…or, Complexities of Decolonizing Teaching and Intercultural Learning)

What should be my role when teaching classes that include Aboriginal students who may or may not be grappling with their own identity? Once, in a university class that I was teaching, a Mi'kmaw student approached me to discuss several ideas she had

for framing her final project symbolically. During one of our previous classes, she lamented openly that although she had grown up on a First Nation reserve, she had not been proud of her culture and had not taken the time to learn much about it. She knew she wanted to change that and was beginning to explore her identity as a Mi'kmaw woman. She proceeded to describe her idea for a final self-reflective project; she wanted to create a totem pole to help describe her learning as a way of honouring her Aboriginal roots. I was caught off-guard. As far as I knew, totem poles are a tradition of west coast First-peoples and, while my exposure to Mi'kmaw culture was still very limited, I was fairly sure that totem poles were not traditionally Mi'kmaw. I was also aware of scholars who have critiqued the common phenomenon of White teachers 'infusing' Aboriginal themes into their classes by flippantly building token totem poles. But who was I to tell her, the Mi'kmaw woman, what she should and shouldn't use to represent herself?

My dialogue with this student was through an email exchange, and so I had some time to think about my response. In the end, I communicated that she had a number of interesting possibilities for her project, any of which would be acceptable for our class. I simply stated that I was only just beginning to learn about Mi'kmaw culture, and that I wasn't aware that totem poles were a symbol for the Mi'kmaq. And, since I often encourage student collaboration, I asked her if she had had a chance to talk through any of her ideas with some of the other Mi'kmaw students in the class, some of whom were from her home community and some of whom I knew were quite connected with their cultures.

My goal in this approach was not to dissuade her from choosing a totem pole symbol, but rather to emphasize that questions of identity and self-learning often require

conscientious reflection. I was not going to judge her choice as being authentic or not (representative enough of Mi'kmaw culture or not), but I was going to encourage her depth of reflection, just as I would have with all of my students' autobiographical work.

In the end, she did not make a totem pole. I did not have a chance to debrief with her about her project and its symbolism, but she seemed passionate and excited about the Mi'kmaw knowledge she was able to incorporate into her final project. What seemed positive to me was her evidently new interest in exploring her Indigenous identity in the context of our class, and the level of comfort she felt to do so.

On this occasion, I think I succeeded in establishing a culturally respectful classroom, curricula, and program even though Indigenous education or decolonizing education did not comprise the main course content. Some of my approaches in the class had been to: acknowledge the traditional territory where the class took place; locate myself using the term 'settler' to describe my identity and point of view; assign articles by Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous authors during discussions about various topics; employ circle work as a format for dialogue; invite an Elder to speak; incorporate case studies that showcased successful Aboriginal community efforts; and encourage Aboriginal students in the class to share their own contextual examples, which were often of great interest to other students. These are all themes and approaches that I shall continue to employ as I gain experience in teacher education and other disciplines in higher education.

Meet Your Neighbours

(…or, Loving the Land, Ignoring the People)

A number of friends and acquaintances from the outdoor industry had become interested in so-called 'primitive living skills:' tracking, tanning hides, bow-drill fires, boiling water in a birchbark basket, etc. These were the kinds of skills and experiences that came from the Tom Brown school of thought. These abilities intrigued me too, mainly because it was interesting to master new self-sufficiency skills while in nature—just as it would be interesting to learn new art or physical skills. They also held appeal for developing greater knowledge of and connection to the natural world.

Figure 10. Boiling water in a birchbark basket.

Despite my general interest in these Land-based skills, I was not entirely comfortable with some of the beliefs and teachings by *some* members of the group, particularly those who seemed to romanticize 'pan-Indianism.' In lots of ways, it seemed like a contemporary hippy movement, comprising people who shunned modern technology and 'dropped out' of society in anticipation of some sort of apocalypse. In other ways it

seemed wise in its simplicity—an opportunity to relearn how to live from the Land rather than rely on unsustainable global systems for meeting our basic needs.

I was, at the time, working on my master's degree, and thinking deeply about decolonizing White outdoor educators. Most of the people I encountered in the primitive skills groups were White alternative educators who loved being in nature. Many of them had probably grown up in middle- or upper-middle-class, educated families. My concerns with the practices of these people had to do not so much with the skills they were practicing, but with what was omitted or ignored through their practice. They claimed to be 'honouring ancient ways' and respecting Indigenous–traditional knowledge, but to me it seemed to be in ways that were historicized, romanticized, a-political, and pan-Indigenous. I wasn't aware of any attempt by these individuals, at the time, to acknowledge local traditional territories and peoples, or to integrate knowledge of the historic or contemporary politics of Indigenous-settler relations in their local areas.

One telling occasion occurred after I took a weeklong course held in an Ontario Provincial Park. The week had been chock full of interesting information about the natural world and hands-on time to practice shelter building, pit-cooking, fire-making, edible plant gathering, and hide tanning. The instructors were all very knowledgeable, and they were certainly living in line with their values and skills. For example, one person, rather than carrying a mass-produced canvas knapsack, used a beautifully handcrafted birchbark basket. Others prepared meals with wild harvested roots and meat. These seemed (and still seem) like admirable and harmless skills, and ones I might aspire to learn. But, being early in my decolonizing journey and grappling with the meaning of

appropriation, historicization, misrepresentation, and romanticization, I had a hard time pinpointing what felt 'not right.' However, something simply seemed 'off.'

I tried to engage in conversation with some of the others about it, yet they repeatedly told me they felt that they had every right to learn from the Land and from spending time on the Land. Some agreed that connecting with local Indigenous peoples would be wonderful, but that they didn't know where to find, or how to connect with, local Elders and knowledge holders. I also suspected that their interest in making those connections would have been in hopes of being granted access to traditional ecological knowledge and in hopes of being mentored and welcomed by Indigenous Elders. This is called a settler move to innocence. I felt their interest wasn't in confronting and disrupting their own settler identities.

I didn't attempt to raise these concerns or criticisms with all of the instructors of the course—especially with those who seemed deeply resistant to thinking about decolonizing and respectful relationality with Indigenous peoples, and deeply entrenched in the value of the courses they were offering. I felt that it was most important at the time to engage, observe, and reflect, but I suspect they were aware of my concern; one of them in a debrief made a disparaging comment about academics who are disconnected from the world and how it's not possible to make a difference in the world by writing, or working inside a building. They went further to suggest that the better path to change was to immerse oneself in nature and learn from the Land. It was somewhat frustrating to hear myself stereotyped as a useless academic, but I felt confident enough in my own values and contributions to shrug it off and once again simply note his opinion as an observation.

Anyway … the thoughts I had been grappling with crystallized on the day I left the course to drive home. I stopped for gas at a small store, about 500 metres (maybe two kilometres at most) from the lodge where the course had taken place. A local Algonquin woman was working in the store. On the walls of the store were beautifully handcrafted moccasins and mukluks. I asked her if they were crafted locally, and she told me that she had made them. I asked where the hide was from and she told me proudly that she tans the hides herself. I chatted with her for a few minutes before heading home.

During the workshop earlier in the week, one of the instructors had obtained a deer that had been killed by a car collision not far from the site. They were grateful to have obtained this animal hide so that they could enrich the course they were offering by having participants work with the hide. But what right did they have to it really? What about this woman who bases some of her livelihood on crafting with hides? Should it have rightfully been hers, or someone else's from her community?

As I pulled back onto the highway, my mysterious discomfort with the wilderness skills workshop and collective finally became clear. Our workshop group had spent a week less than a few kilometres away from this woman, whose family had lived in the area since time immemorial, and who had learned (and still practices) the traditional skills of tanning and moccasin making according to her cultural traditions. Yet the organizers of the workshop seemed adamant that connections with local First Nations had eluded them, and that often Aboriginal people had lost their traditions anyway, which seemed to convey a 'why bother' attitude. Why were they, and why were we, so disconnected—such perfect strangers—when this Algonquin woman lived so nearby? How do we get to know and build respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and

communities when there is often an egregious misconception of 'the vanishing Indian?'

How can we learn to overcome a perfect stranger stance in our own communities?

Living in a Fishbowl

(…or, Fostering Self-Cultural Knowledge)

During my doctoral studies, I had the opportunity to collaborate with a team of other graduate students and faculty on the Urban Aboriginal Education Project (UAEP). This project sought to understand how various stakeholders within one Northern Ontario school board engaged with Aboriginal knowledge and Aboriginal education. Interviews, focus groups and/or sharing circles were conducted with groups including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, parents, Elders, school staff and administration, and other community members. My main areas of focus during the project were to facilitate focus groups and sharing circles with the non-Aboriginal teacher and student groups and to help analyze this data in consultation with the rest of the team.

For me, the most memorable contribution to the UAEP by a non-Aboriginal student was by a young girl—probably about 10 years old—who stated that she loved participating in those activities where the class had an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture … *and that she wished she had a culture to celebrate*. This was very telling to me. Euro-Canadian students often don't recognize their own culture and the significance of cultural identity because they are immersed in it, like a fish in water. I think part of a decolonizing approach to teaching needs to be to support all students— including White students—in their journey to understand the concept of culture and to engage with and explore their own cultural traditions in relation to those of others.

Autobiographical work that helps students understand the stories of how their families came to be living 'here' can help generate cultural engagement.

This statement in the UAEP reminded me of my experience teaching a class on Canadian History Culture and Identity to predominantly White students, and being faced with great resistance to the concept of identity. Students couldn't shake the influence of Western individualism, couldn't reject the notion that "I'm my own person. I'm not defined by a culture. Everyone's a person and should be treated as such…" (This is basically equivalent of 'everyone should be treated as though they are White.')

I grapple with how to help students acknowledge culture. It can be hard for White students to know how to name and speak about cultural groups without offending others. I also witnessed this in a B.Ed. class where White students made sweeping generalizations about 'them'—both stereotyping and 'othering' First Nations Metis and Inuit (FNMI) peoples—while Aboriginal students, their peers, sat in class and had to witness this ongoing neo-colonialism. While the statements ranged from grossly inaccurate stereotypes to open-minded curiosity, the dynamic that I noticed is that students spoke in a disconnected way rather than in a relational dialogue. Non-Indigenous Canadians often seem to 'make statements about the other' rather than 'converse with' their diverse peers, and this keeps reproducing entitlement where (White) non-Indigenous Canadians believe they have superiority. And, even when statements or questions are more respectfully framed, a tone remains that still communicates divisiveness rather than relationality.

An Elder's Invitation

(…or Respecting Indigenous Knowledge in Spite of Institutional Eurocentrism)

During one of the university courses that I have taught, I decided to invite an Elder to join our class to help us learn about Indigenous and intercultural approaches to thinking about environmental issues and the natural world. Through a friend, I was introduced to a well-known and well-respected Elder who could assist us in this discussion. I had frequently heard repeated that 'Aboriginal education' was a priority area for the institution where I worked, and the strategic plan documents and presentations indicated that the president and other administrative leaders wanted the university to become a national leader in Aboriginal education.

Given this commitment, I had not imagined or prepared for any institutional issue arising for the Elder's visit. I had been informed that the local protocol or appropriate amount for an Elder honorarium was 200 dollars. I corresponded with the appropriate person in the university, who was also an individual that I felt was generally supportive of my commitment to include Aboriginal and decolonizing perspectives in my teaching, to find out how I might obtain money to pay the Elder honorarium. That person apparently did not have access to funds for that purpose; however, they forwarded my request to someone with higher budgetary authority. In the end my request was declined, and I was told that the best that could be offered was a speaker gift with a value of 25 dollars.

Although I was disappointed with this response, I was not entirely surprised. There was an obvious and somewhat expected disconnect between the institution's purported commitment to Aboriginal education and the level of understanding of the

respectful cultural protocols that would be necessary to fulfill before fostering any meaningful local relationships that should underlie respectful Aboriginal education. This was a prime example of engrained, institutionalized Eurocentrism at work. It might very well be the case that there was no room in the budget at that point, although 200 dollars appears a small cost compared to funds lost through waste such as electricity bills for lights on all night or photocopier expenses. The real institutional question can be boiled down to, *what knowledge is valued*? What is the university willing to pay as recognition or honorarium for valid knowledge? And, where is the larger institutional plan for relationship-building and organizational self-reflexive learning if Aboriginal education is to become a (marketable) priority?

To resolve my individual situation, I paid for the honorarium myself. I felt committed to facilitating what I thought would be a meaningful learning opportunity for my students, a number of whom live in the same First Nation community as the Elder I planned to invite. I was also eager to learn about local Indigenous knowledge of this Land that I was new to, so the visit would benefit me as much as it might others. I invited a friend who knew the Elder to join me in facilitating some activities during the class in order to encourage the students to contemplate intercultural differences, worldviews, and perspectives. I was grateful for her help in setting up the Elder's visit as well as facilitating the welcoming environment in the class for better reception and integration of the Elder's wisdom.

My determination to move forward with the Elder's visit and decolonizing the class environment were positive decisions. The wisdom that the Elder shared with us, and the rounds of circle work (sharing or talking circles), demonstrated that we all

engaged together with evident impacts. Students indicated their 'aha' moments during and after this dialogue when they discussed their desire to know more about their own cultures. This was an indication that was voiced by both Aboriginal and settler students alike. Many settler students began to think for the first time about the connection between local Indigenous knowledge and learning to live respectfully in relation with Indigenous peoples on Indigenous Lands, and many willingly acknowledged their ignorance and desire to overcome this.

More importantly, some Aboriginal students indicated that they felt proud that they held cultural knowledge that might help them give back to their own communities. Overall, there was a deepened commitment to learning about Aboriginal–settler cultural relationships and a stated desire to work with their future students to explore and reveal more honest understandings of (and disrupt) settler colonialism. The open-mindedness during the Elder's visit was more than I could have hoped for, and the learning surpassed what I could have possibly facilitated on my own.

Possibilities for Moving Beyond Personal Decolonizing Stories

In this chapter, Stories, I presented the narrative vignettes that served as preliminary analysis of my primary artifact data and that also generated new reflexive data for constructivist grounded theory analysis. I strove to evoke emotion and relevance for the reader by recalling personal memories and lived experiences, and engaging in narrative storytelling of touchstone moments (see Strong-Wilson, 2007). These recollections were juxtaposed with decolonizing counter-stories where I remembered and re-storied related subsequent events that helped me to refine my decolonizing lens, or gave me the ability to see Eurocentrism and/or enact respectful relationality.

By reflecting on what mistakes I may have made, what my ignorances may have been, and how I may have been complicit in ongoing Eurocentrism, I generated multi-vocal stories of confrontation that reflect my shifting or decolonizing understandings of my own life experiences, and have helped me to reinterpret meanings of past events and what I learned from those life experiences. Next, in Chapter Five, Findings, I describe the themes that emerged from my constructivist grounded theory analysis of my vignettes and artifact data, and I present the resultant conceptual model, Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality for Decolonization.

CHAPTER 5—FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the themes and theoretical findings that

were revealed through the constructivist grounded theory analysis of my narrative data.

First, I describe the process of identifying initial themes. (These themes are listed by

story and/or artifact in Tables 1 and 2 in the appendix.) Next, I explore the core category,

two sub-categories, five main themes, and sixteen sub-themes that emerged through

constant comparison during focused and axial coding. Finally, I present a new theoretical

model of settler decolonizing that integrates the themes of my findings. To help clarify

the organization of my various levels of themes, I offer the following as a guide:

Core Category: **Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality**

Sub-Category A: ***Settler decolonizing Learning Process***
        Main Theme 1: **Reflexivity**
            Sub-themes: (none)
        Main Theme 2: **'Cyclical Phases of Settler decolonizing Learning'**
            Sub-themes: a. pre-awareness
                                  b. awareness
                                  c. active learning
                                  d. internalization
                                  e. teaching
                                  f. mentoring
Sub-Category B: ***Settler decolonizing Understandings***
        Main theme 1: **Engaging with Indigeneity**
            Sub-themes: a. acknowledging Indigenous Land
                                  b. Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledges
                                  c. Land as teacher and home to all relations
        Main theme 2: **Settler Identity**
            Sub-themes: a. self as colonizer
                                    b. self as displaced person
                                  c. self as member of a family
                                    d. self as ecologically interconnected
                                  e. self as aspiring ally
        Main theme 3: **Dynamics of Settler–Indigenous Relations**
            Sub themes: a. settler colonialism
                                  b. contributions/generosity/resurgence of Indigenous peoples

Identifying Early/Initial Themes of Settler decolonizing

From the moment I began to gather artifacts and write narrative reflections in response to those artifacts, I made memos to myself, engaged in constant comparison, and made note of emerging themes. I continued to gather artifacts and write narrative vignettes until my data (stories and existing primary data or artifacts) reached a saturation point. I determined that I had reached 'theoretical saturation,' that moment when no stories or artifacts with new themes revealed themselves to me. Although I could have continued to remember and write infinitely about my life experiences (all of which have influenced my current identity), I reached a point where I could not remember any additional stories or experiences that would illuminate new topics or new decolonizing learnings other than those I had already written about.

Having reached saturation at this point in the constructivist grounded theory (CGT) analysis, I moved into a process of initial coding of my entire data set (artifacts, narrative vignettes, memos, and reflections). Building on my ongoing initial coding and the constant comparison that took place throughout my narrative writing, and drawing on memos and sensitizing concepts, I looked for both patterns and unique events in the data. To engage in this phase of the analysis, I employed line-by-line coding, which helped me identify themes embedded in discrete phrases. I also used incident-to-incident coding, which allowed me to note themes associated with a particular moment or event within a narrative, or with the entire narrative. I assigned at least one word to each statement, experience, part of an experience, or reflection to convey the overall meaning or theme of that particular statement or specific experience. My codes also reflected what I thought the experience or statement represented at the time it occurred, and what I may have

learned from it subsequently. Since I was not limited to a finite list of codes in initial coding, I was able to employ different but related words to identify similar, yet nuanced, themes that emerged through different vignettes.

Two charts, both found in the appendices, illustrate my initial open coding of the narrative vignettes (see *Table 1*, p 237) and other primary artifact data (see *Table 2*, p 246). During the CGT analysis, I was careful not to fragment my vignettes and thus de-contextualize the embedded themes, but rather I maintained the richness and complexity of each vignette intact. These charts of initial open coding were particularly useful because they allowed me to convey the overall themes of each intact vignette (and related reflection) as well as to provide a general overview of similarities and differences in themes across a wide variety of experiences.

Exploring the Core Category, Sub-categories, Main Themes, and Sub-themes of Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality

Once I had completed my initial coding, I determined patterns by re-examining the coding charts and coded data. I searched for key cross-sectional themes that would help me organize and make sense of my data, and illuminate emergent theoretical findings. This stage of constructivist grounded theory analysis involves focused coding and axial coding. While considering sensitizing concepts, I engaged in constant comparison during this phase in order to group and re-group initial codes into broader categories and/or meta-themes by considering similarities and differences between emergent ideas and reflecting on how they might be related to one another. This resulted in one overarching core category, which was divided into two sub-categories. The first

sub-category included three main themes and ten sub-themes, while the second sub-category included two main themes and six sub-themes. These are presented below.

Core Category

The core category that emerged from my study was *Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality*. This core category, or overarching theme, divides into two sub-categories that each describe related but distinct aspects of my theoretical conceptualization of settler decolonizing. These are: A) the continuous, reflexive, and transformative *Settler decolonizing Learning Process* (or, the gradual cyclical process of new awareness, learning, and ultimately change that generates decolonizing shifts), and B) the *Settler decolonizing Understandings* (or, what settlers need to know and enact in order to decolonize ourselves and contribute meaningfully to the primary goal of decolonization or Indigenous Land repatriation).

As settlers deepen their decolonizing awareness and understandings through a reflexive learning process, they shift towards a more respectful stance in relation to Indigenous peoples on Indigenous Land. The core category is salient because it reflects the ongoing nature of the *process* of decolonizing learning as well as the goal—respectful relationality—underlying *Settler decolonizing Understanding*.
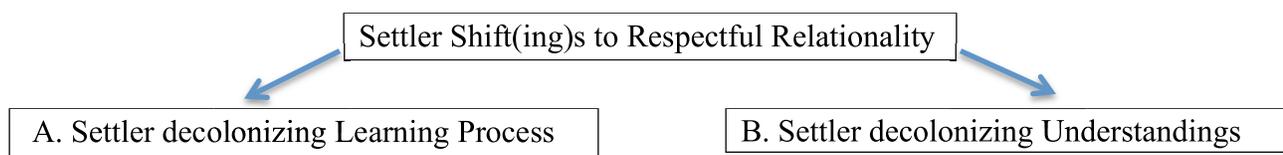
Figure 11. Sub-categories of Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality.

Sub-Category A: Settler decolonizing Learning Process

'Settler decolonizing Learning Process' focuses on the learning about, and the gradual transformation towards, increased decolonizing understandings and respectful relationality. This sub-category includes two main themes: 1) **reflexivity** and 2) **cyclical phases of learning**. 'Cyclical phases of learning' also has six sub-themes: a) pre-awareness; b) awareness; c) active learning; d) internalization; e) teaching; and f) mentoring.
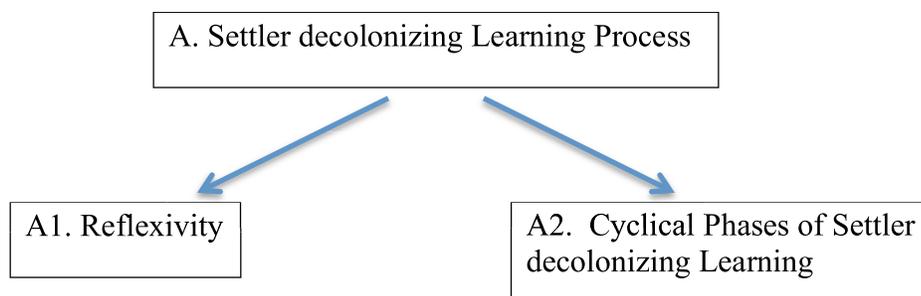
Figure 12. Main themes of Settler decolonizing Learning Process.

I found that settler decolonizing is an ongoing, reflexive, and relational learning process that cycles continuously through stages of passive learning, awareness, active learning, internalization, teaching, and mentoring others to teach. In this section, I discuss two main themes and six sub-themes, and I provide relevant examples from my narrative vignette data.

Subcategory A, Main theme 1: reflexivity.

My decolonizing process is largely a commitment to constant and ongoing reflexive thinking, which helps me to continuously shift from a *perfect stranger* stance to one that is increasingly respectful of Indigenous peoples and Lands. Over time, reflexive remembering of past life experiences reshapes my understanding of those experiences

and helps me see those experiences in the context of settler colonialism and my settler relationality with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Lands, even if I did not recognize that positionality at the time. As I learn to reframe past experiences in this way, I become better able to live relationally—to recognize my relationality *in situ* (in the moment or in the experience) and make more respectful decisions and actions accordingly.

A key finding of my study is that decolonizing requires reflexive thinking. Reflexivity in this context is the ability to reflect and re-reflect on oneself, continuously applying new frames of awareness to reshape the ways we might understand past experiences and consequently reshape our identity understandings. This is a vulnerable process since it illuminates racist and/or Eurocentric thinking and behaviours that are deeply embedded in settler worldviews and actions.

The reflexive process that is required to help us shift towards a more respectful relationality with Indigenous peoples can stir up emotions that both encourage and inhibit our ongoing decolonizing processes. For example, reflexivity compels those of us who are settlers to see and name the colonizer that lies within. Guilt, accountability, anxiety, embarrassment, the fear of making mistakes, and doing further harm are all part of the emotionally turbulent process of settler decolonizing. Part of decolonizing must be to accept and work with those emotions, with the goal of continuously shifting towards and enacting deeper and more nuanced understandings of respect.

Subcategory A, Main theme 2: Cyclical Phases of Settler decolonizing Learning.

A settler decolonizing journey is an ongoing epistemological and ontological shifting that compels me to constantly seek new levels of **awareness, actively learn**

about what constitutes respectful relationality, and then **internalize or integrate** these understandings into my identity, my worldview, and ultimately my interactions with others. The conundrum in describing settler decolonizing as a lifelong process is that, while it seems in some ways to be a chronological process of growth, in reality we are not born with Eurocentric (i.e., racist and colonial) attitudes, nor do we ever reach a 'decolonized' end stage. Rather, we are pushed, pulled, and influenced by settler colonial and anti-colonial social enculturation throughout our lives, both implicitly and explicitly. Decolonizing involves learning to see and work with and against these social forces in our own lives and in our teaching praxes.

As described above, there is a necessary reflexivity that underlies shifts in perspective towards greater understandings of respectful relationality amongst settler and Indigenous peoples and the Land. What has long intrigued researchers, however, is the gradual learning that extends beyond new levels of awareness (conscientization) to more complex, internalized understandings that lead to real ontological shifting towards relational identities. It is often epiphanies—moments of sudden realization or new awareness—that feel like the most significant learning moments in our lives.

Looking back at the narratives I chose to write in my auto-ethnographic study, I see that I have selected apparently unremarkable experiences, many of which seemed like brief passing interactions at the time. In retrospect, I can see that many of these narrative moments were significant because they represent or mark a point of new awareness—a moment when suddenly, through an experience or through reflection on an experience, I saw the world, and my positionality in it, differently.

I argue, however, that these moments of new awareness are notable not because they teach us the most or create the most change, but because they propel our learning. Such moments often illuminate areas of self-ignorance. If we are open to learning and have mastered some degree of reflexivity, these epiphanous moments can motivate us to inquiry in new directions, compel us to integrate and internalize our new understandings of the world, and eventually assist those of us who are educators to reconsider what and how we teach, and how we mentor others to teach. I find it interesting to consider how various life experiences shape our learning in multiple phases/realms, often simultaneously. Each phase also fosters new awareness, so although our growth may be occurring in all phases simultaneously, we also continuously cycle through these growth phases. In the next six sections I explain the sub-themes (phases) of settler decolonizing learning.
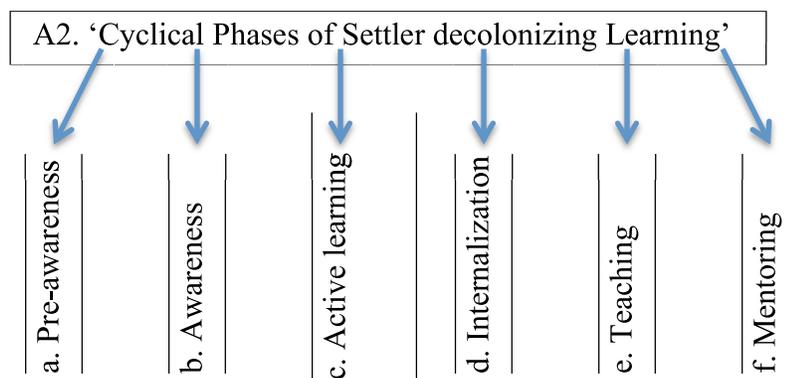
Figure 13. Sub-themes of 'Cyclical Phases of Settler decolonizing Learning.'

Six sub-themes of 'Cyclical Phases of Settler decolonizing Learning.'

A2a. Pre-awareness. This refers to a set of life experiences that occurred prior to any real awareness of my relationality with (contemporary) Indigenous peoples; however,

these were vital to preparing me for an eventual opening and receptivity to a decolonizing journey. These experiences may have been early critical thinking lessons, experiences that encouraged a respect of difference, family values of respect, or experiences in nature.

   A2b. Awareness. Awareness is when an individual encounters a new idea, fact, philosophy, perspective, etc. for the first time, or when they acquire a new perspective that alters a previous understanding. It follows pre-awareness or early consciousness, and motivates the settler toward more active learning. With new awareness, a non-Indigenous settler can actively make a choice to learn about and inquire further into that new awareness.

   A2c. Active Learning. This next phase is where cycles and cascading begin to become evident. While actively learning, two phenomena occur: The learner begins to integrate or internalize what they are learning into their worldview and into their way of being in the world; at the same time, the learner continues to encounter even more new awarenesses that continue to fuel active learning and then an internalization of the learning.

   A2d. Internalization. The fourth phase of decolonizing process is 'internalization' of learning, and in my experience, this happens gradually. A learner may not notice how internalized decolonizing learning has influenced them until, upon later reflection, they realize that their knowledge about the world, and perhaps even their beliefs and identity, have shifted. I have noticed that once a decolonizing settler begins to internalize some of their decolonizing understandings, and once their learning is cycling and cascading continuously, they often feel compelled to educate others, whether

through community activism, scholarship, teaching, or conversations with family and friends.

A2e. Teaching. This next phase stems from the cascade of awareness, learning, and internalization. At the same time, it continues to spark new awareness, require new active learning, and lead to new internalized understandings, which in turn continue to shape the way settlers teach. The teaching realm represents two pursuits: learning how to teach from an anti-colonial, respectful, relational stance; and inviting others to decolonize or facilitating a decolonizing process for others. This is indeed a complex and challenging endeavour requiring a settler teacher to continuously engage in cyclical and cascading reflexivity and self-learning as well as to become attuned to and responsive to the varying awarenesses, learning, and internalizing processes of their students. Finally, if a goal for teachers in B.Ed. programs is to be able to effectively and respectfully decolonize their own teaching and facilitate decolonizing processes of others, then I would expect that teacher educators need to be able to effectively mentor new teachers in this role.

A2f. Mentoring. As might be expected, this final phase, mentoring, comes with its own cascading cycles of new awareness, active learning, and internalization of learning, all aimed at determining how to teach other educators from an anti-colonial respectful relational stance and how to facilitate other educators' journeys towards being able to teach from an anti-colonial respectful relational stance and subsequently invite *their* students to engage in decolonizing learning.

Evidently, settler decolonizing in our schools and teacher education programs is messy and multi-layered. What my findings indicate most profoundly is the deep

commitment and extensive effort that will be required to decolonize teacher education programs, Western educational systems, and Eurocentric curriculum. Given the depth and complexity of the processes that shift educators towards respectful relationality, I am left wondering, is it even remotely ethical to be graduating new teachers from B.Ed. programs that are frequently delivered by teacher educators who teach from a *pre-awareness* realm of understanding or, worse, from an actively resistant or perfect stranger stance?

In presenting these phases derived from my auto-ethnographic inquiry, I am not suggesting that I have become proficient at mentoring or even at teaching a decolonizing respectful relationality. I have taught in teacher education programs and stumbled, fumbled, and grappled with the complexities I present here. I have also sought out settler mentors and learned graciously from the few I have met. For me, this realm of the journey most certainly raises new awareness, often in the form of questions that inspire a continued cyclical and cascading learning process.

Sub-category B: Settler decolonizing understandings

In this section I present the main themes and sub-themes related to the second sub-category, *Settler decolonizing Understandings*. This sub-category refers to the specific relational knowledge that settlers develop as they engage in the reflexive decolonized learning process described above. I discuss the three main themes and ten sub-themes, drawing on relevant examples from my narrative vignette data.

The ten sub-themes may best be described as 'settler moves to respectful relationality.' The main themes include: 1) **Engaging with Indigeneity** (which is related to learning about/with and building respectful relationships with the people who have

lived here since time immemorial and their relationships with their Land and all

relations); 2) **Settler Identity** (which is related to understanding our own cultural identity

and origin); and 3) **Dynamics of Settler–Indigenous Relations** (which concerns historic

and contemporary socio-cultural and political factors that have influenced and continue to

shape the lives of Indigenous and settler peoples in relation to each other). In the next

three sections, I discuss each of the main themes and their associated sub-themes.
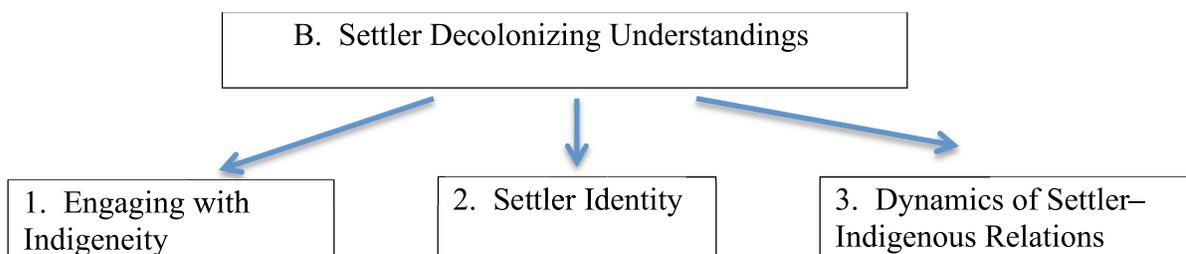
Figure 14. Main themes of Settler Decolonizing Understandings.

Subcategory B, Main theme 1: Engaging with Indigeneity.

My study found that to engage respectfully with Indigeneity requires educators to

deepen our understandings of, and learn to enact, three truths. First, we are living on

Indigenous Land. Second, this Land belongs to the Indigenous peoples who have lived

here since time immemorial and whose cultures, languages, and relationships have grown

out of and remain intimately connected to the Land. Third, as understood by Indigenous

peoples, this Land also belongs to 'all our relations'—to the animate and inanimate more-

than-human beings who have always existed here. This first main theme, **Engaging with**

Indigeneity, is divided into three sub-themes: a) Acknowledging Indigenous Land; b)

Indigenous Peoples, Cultures, and Knowledges; and c) Land as Teacher and Home to All

Our Relations.
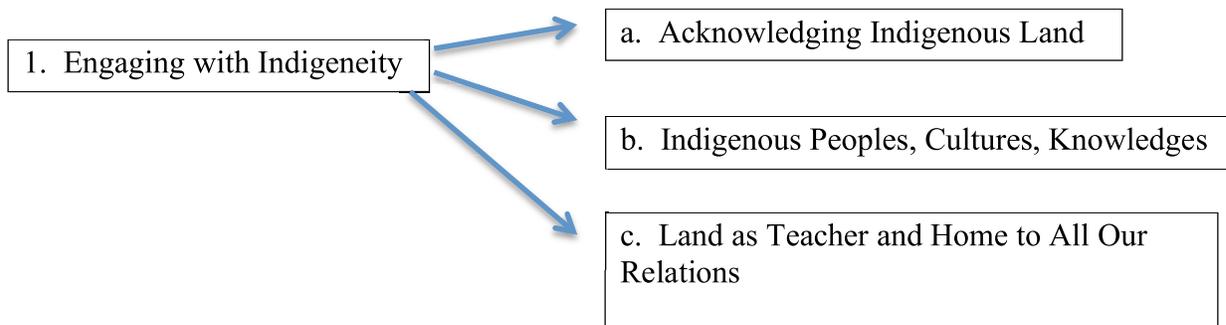
Figure 15. Sub-themes of Engaging With Indigeneity.

Three sub-themes of 'Engaging with Indigeneity.'

B1a. Acknowledging Indigenous Land. Acknowledging that all Land in Canada is Indigenous traditional territory is a key component (perhaps the most important) of settler decolonizing.

For settler educators, the practice (protocol) of acknowledging traditional territory may occur first, prior to a deeper internalized understanding of this reality. I do not recall where I first became aware of the formal practice of acknowledging traditional territory and the traditional people of the Land where one works, lives, and learns. Through a number of my vignettes (see *Meeting a 'Real Indian' …and Algonquin Educator*, p. 90; *Co-learning and Intercultural Dialogue,* p. 122*)* and artifacts (see themes for *Learning Café and Firepit & Shifting the Paradigm Conference;* and *UNBC Settler Circle*), I recalled times when I noticed that Indigenous public speakers, or those speaking during a sharing circle, often introduced themselves in their own language and acknowledged the traditional territory or Indigenous Land where we were located. Settler educators should pay attention to these types of examples set by Indigenous colleagues and community

members. These instances may assist settlers to become familiar with Indigenous

languages, such as the Anishnaabemowin or Mi'kmaw words of greetings I frequently

hear spoken by colleagues and friends in Thunder Bay and Unima'ki, respectively.

Another example for settlers to learn from is the manner in which Indigenous writers

often locate themselves and identify their culture and family origins in books and

published articles.

I do remember the first time I intentionally and publicly made an

acknowledgement of Indigenous territory. I was co-presenting at an academic conference

during the second year of my master's degree. We learned a few words of greeting and

how to introduce ourselves in the Anishnaabe language (Anishinaabemowin) from

Anishnaabe colleagues. We acknowledged the traditional territory where we stood and

we named our families' cultural backgrounds and where we were from. I recall being

nervous. I wondered how Indigenous audience members would receive the introduction.

How would it be perceived by other Western academics? Would I pronounce the words

correctly? Were we acknowledging the appropriate people, and were we leaving anyone

out? Following our presentation, an Anishnaabe student who had watched our

presentation approached me. She explained that she was from this territory and that she

appreciated our acknowledgement. She said that it had been a long time since she had

witnessed a respectful greeting in an academic setting in her home territory. I was glad I

had stepped out of my comfort zone to learn this protocol.

This respectful protocol, which occurs in many places and settings, usually by

Indigenous peoples or others who are working towards more respectful relationships with

local Indigenous communities, can teach settlers about respect for Indigenous peoples

and Land. Settlers can and should make a commitment to learning whose traditional territory we are visiting when we travel, and to making appropriate acknowledgements when we present at a conference, deliver a workshop, begin a canoe trip, or teach a class. Often, researching where we go, or the specific land we are on, takes intentional effort.

This practice of acknowledgement can have a profound influence on settler educators and our learning. Of course, simply saying these words does not equate with actual Land repatriation, but actively making this acknowledgement, taking the time to learn, and repeatedly saying the words aloud can shift our decolonizing understanding from a fleeting awareness to a deeper relational understanding that compels us to continually consider what it means for us to be living as settlers on Indigenous territory or Land. As a settler educator, making a public acknowledgement of Indigenous Land, and regularly emphasizing this point with students is important because it can signal respect to Indigenous students. It openly invites them to share their culture in a classroom, for example, and it can serve as an un-settling prompt to help disrupt non-Indigenous students' Eurocentric place-based myths.

B1b. Indigenous peoples, cultures, knowledges. Settler decolonizing involves interacting with Indigeneity. This requires learning to honour and respect Indigenous peoples and their diverse, dynamic knowledges and cultures.

> In Nunavut, the Land speaks Inuktitut. What I mean is that the Land (and sea) evolved a language to communicate with (and *through*) human beings, namely an indigenous language that naturally "grew" in that area over thousands of years of interaction between the elements and the human and plant and animal beings. (Rassmussen & Akulukjuk, 2010, p. 279)

The quote above, by Rassmussen and Akulukjuk, illustrates the deep interconnection and dynamic relationships of Indigenous peoples, their languages and cultures, and the Land. Decolonizing understandings that help settlers answer the questions *where am I, and whose place is this* involve experiencing Indigenous culture and language, interacting with and spending time in Indigenous communities, learning Indigenous histories, accepting Indigenous knowledges as legitimate, and building relationships with Indigenous peoples.

In this study I found that experiencing and actively learning about local Indigenous knowledge, values, culture, history, and protocols, when invited to do so by Aboriginal colleagues, friends, and community members, or when otherwise appropriate, is a key component of a settler decolonizing journey. These experiences may occur in public forums such as classes (see *Can I Participate?* p. 127; and *Living History and Anishnaabe Games*, p. 105) or events (see artifact themes for *KI Protest*), or through respectful relationships and conversation with Aboriginal peoples (see *(Dis)placing Myself Through Dialogue*, p. 97; and *My Student the Teacher*, p. 110). They may also take place while spending time in communities.

Engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities fosters understanding and respect in several ways. First, it teaches settlers that there are multiple ways to understand the world and encourages us to learn to see the world from a perspective other than our own (often dominant) perspective. Relatedly, immersing oneself in Aboriginal culture—whether in a class setting, a First Nations community, or other cultural event— can help settlers experience in some small way what it is like to engage when one's own culture, worldview, assumptions, and traditions are not the norm.

Second, core values such as respect, reciprocity, relationship, and responsibility (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 2001) are embedded in many Indigenous cultural traditions. As I explored in the vignette, *Can I Participate?* (p. 127), engaging Indigenous pedagogies or research methods can actively create community and foster (intercultural) respect differently (and perhaps more effectively), than Western approaches to discussion and decision-making while at the same time disrupting prevailing Western norms about what 'learning' and 'teaching' spaces and processes look like.

In my experience, working in a circle required me to listen differently (more patiently, with more consideration or 'open heart' and less academic judgment) to the ideas, perspectives, and experiences of others (*Can I Participate?,* p. 127). It taught me to listen first before trying to form my own opinions. I also felt a greater sense of responsibility to come prepared to class because it was evident that each person's preparation and contribution shaped our co-learning experience. When facilitating a sharing circle as a research method or as a pedagogy in my classes (see *A Generous Understanding*, p. 103), I have noticed that participants seem more committed to co-learning, self-reflexivity, and supportive listening than in comparable Western-style discussions that often take the form of debate or require participants to claim their own space in which to speak.

Third, witnessing strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples as exemplified through their vibrant contemporary cultural contributions helps dispel the often-perpetuated re-victimization of First Nations peoples. Visiting Indigenous installations at art galleries, seeing dramatic presentations by Indigenous playwrights, reading books by Indigenous authors, and attending cultural events such as powwows, are all examples of

Indigenous cultural representations that foster initial awareness and support active learning about the strength, resilience, and creativity of Indigenous peoples. I discuss in greater detail contemporary examples of Indigenous strength and resurgence in the section entitled *Dynamics of Indigenous–Settler Relations* (p. 185).

Witnessing strength and resilience may take many forms, but it is inextricably linked with recognizing ways in which Indigenous culture survives, thrives, and teaches despite settler colonists attempt to erase Indigenous peoples and cultures. In the vignette entitled *Meeting a 'Real Indian…and an Algonquin Educator* (p. 90), I described witnessing the strength of an Indigenous educator taking leadership to shape and teach about her vision for the education of young people from her community. In *Meet Your Neighbours* (p. 139) an Indigenous woman continues to practise traditional skills such as hide tanning and moccasin making. And, on a number of occasions, such as during the experiences described in *Eurocentric Power and Ignorance* (p. 112) and *An Elder's Invitation* (p. 145), I witnessed Aboriginal students ensuring the longevity of Indigenous traditions sharing their cultural knowledge with non-Indigenous students (see *Co-learning and Intercultural Dialogue*, p. 122), and speaking their own language with an Elder. While I did not always realize it at the time, I see now that these moments helped to both centre Indigenous knowledge and disrupt the notion that Eurocentrism should be the normative frame of understanding.

Finally, intercultural friendships and relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and commitment to learning can allow for deeper levels of dialogue about intercultural issues and understandings. I have described learning that occurred through intercultural friendship and relationships in several vignettes. For example, in *My Student the Teacher*

(p. 110), both my co-teacher and I made mistakes—she erred in her fabrication of a so-called Indigenous ritual, and I failed to speak up about it. In the end, it was a student who corrected us. While student–teacher dynamics are different than friendships due to institutionally embedded power dynamics of grading, it is fair to say that in our unique alternative setting, this student was (and still is) a friend. One of the reasons why that student was able to speak up and deliver the feedback to us in a caring and effective manner might have been our longstanding relationship with her. It can be easier for Indigenous friends who know us as 'settlers who are keen to learn' to give honest feedback about our Eurocentric mistakes than it may be for strangers who are unaware of our commitment to decolonizing and learning from Indigenous perspectives. Similarly, it can be easier for settlers to allow ourselves to be vulnerable, receive honest feedback, and ask difficult questions of friends whom we may feel will judge us less harshly and help us to learn.

This type of intercultural relationship is exemplified in the vignettes entitled *An Unsettling Surprise* (p. 132) and *(Dis)placing Myself Through Dialogue* (p. 97). In the contexts delineated in these vignettes, I may have been less worried about judgment or about exposing my ignorance since we had a positive existing relationship based on mutual respect. I am extremely grateful for my relationships with Indigenous friends, colleagues, and students and for what they have generously taught me even though it is not their responsibility to undo my inherited legacies of settler (systemic) ignorance. Together, through ongoing conversations, we have gradually been able to explore complexities related to decolonizing and intercultural learning. This has been immensely helpful to the gradual evolution of my knowledge and understanding.

Despite the importance of being willing to learn from our Indigenous students, Dion does (2009) remind settlers not to expect students to be experts about their culture or other Aboriginal cultures. They may not have knowledge of their cultural traditions, nor is it their responsibility to teach others. This is the conundrum I described in *My Student the Teacher* (p. 110) and *Student Resistance* (p. 118). In both of these instances, I ignorantly made the mistake of burdening an Indigenous person with the task of educating settlers. It is vitally important to remember that as settler teachers, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves so that we can teach honestly and respectfully about Aboriginal history, politics, and culture while at the same time creating an inclusive atmosphere in a classroom that welcomes Aboriginal students (and all students) to share their perspectives when they wish to do so.

B1c. Land as teacher and home to all relations. Settler decolonizing involves interacting with the more-than-human world. It requires getting to know and learning to honour and respect 'all our relations.' It also involves learning that the Land teaches deep relational knowledge.

One of the key tenets settlers can learn from many Indigenous cultures is the intrinsic value and equality of 'all our relations,' or all beings. We can learn from Indigenous knowledge that this place belongs to Indigenous peoples *and* to all Indigenous beings that have lived here since time immemorial. As settlers, part of decolonizing is striving to overcome Western anthropocentric attitudes and the resultant consumptive entitlement and exploitation of non-human entities.

Recently, an Anishnaabe friend posted on social media that she continues to be shocked by the lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples in books that represent

the Land. She asked, 'Don't people wonder everywhere they go whose footsteps came before them?' I found this question interesting in light of my reflections on the experiences I had as a young child, living on a boat on the Ottawa River (see *Oiseau Rock* (p. 97) and *Pipes and Pictographs* (p. 90). In those vignettes, I contemplated the ways in which my time on the river may have led me to Eurocentric, romanticized or historicized visions of Indigenous peoples and histories. I came to the conclusion that the Land was teaching me, and helping me understand my identity as an ecologically interconnected being, in a long history and future story that unfolds on the river.

As a young child, my sense of wonder about who had travelled and lived on the river before me, my sense of being part of a story that stretches into the past and future, and even my preliminary (if incredibly incomplete) sense of 'sacredness' and the inherent value of all beings, seemed to be fostered by the Land itself. In my childhood experiences, I was learning from the Land, although I did not at the time recognize the deep relational, contextual, and culturally specific nature of Land as First Teacher.

Settler environmental educators have much to learn from the work of scholars and Indigenous educators who are articulating Land-based pedagogies with greater nuance and complexity. For example, Styres' (2011) pedagogy of Land draws on "the interconnectedness and interdependency of relationships, an understanding of cultural positioning, as well as subjectivities that extend beyond the borderlands of traditional mainstream conceptualizations of pedagogy" (p. 722). Furthermore, Styres, Haig-Brown, and Blimke (2013) differentiate pedagogy of the Land from pedagogy of place: "We take seriously the materiality of Land, a pedagogy of Land refers also to the spiritual, emotional and intellectual aspects of Land. Land as sentient. Its existence now, and

since time immemorial. Its history. Land is a living thing. A river is a living thing. The air is alive" (p. 1). Part of settler decolonizing for environmental educators is to learn to listen to Indigenous stories from the Land itself and to work through and grapple with Indigenous conceptualizations of Land as sentient that may be difficult or challenging for us to fully grasp from a Euro-western frame of understanding.

Subcategory B, Main theme 2: Settler Identity.

The second main theme, **Settler Identity,** involves increasing our own self-awareness, and gaining knowledge and a deeper understanding of our own identity, culture, cultural heritage, family traditions and values, and ancestral origin(s). It also involves examining our complicity in ongoing settler colonialism and considering our positionality as members of the more-than-human community. This main theme includes five sub-themes: a) self as colonizer; b) self as family member; c) self as displaced person; d) self as ecologically interconnected being; and e) self as aspiring ally. These are discussed in the next section.
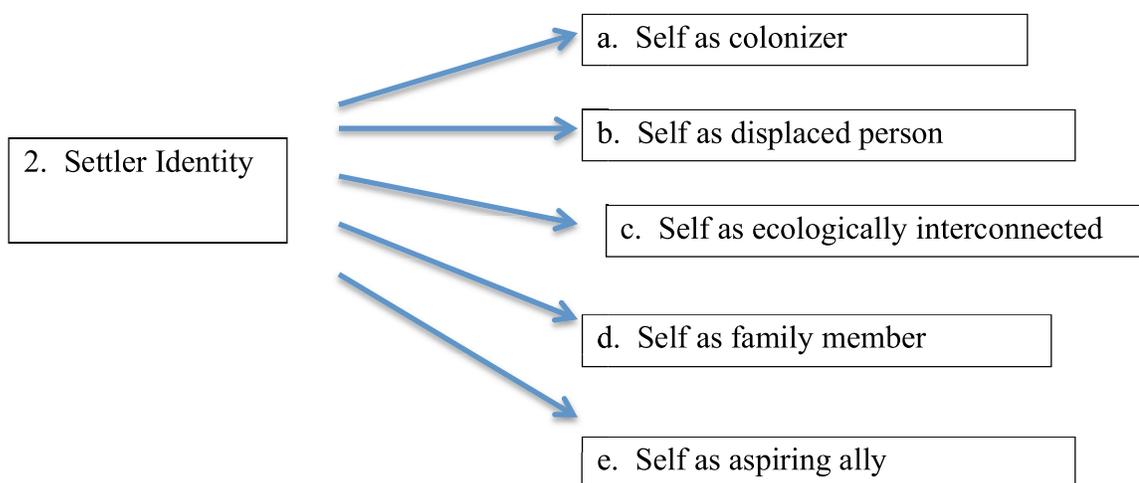
Figure 16. Sub-themes of Settler Identity.

Five sub-themes of 'Settler Identity.'

B2a. Self as colonizer. Settler decolonizing involves the deeply emotional work of learning to recognize, take responsibility for, and disrupt the ways in which we perpetuate colonial injustice and Eurocentric norms. This includes understanding how we continue to occupy and emplace ourselves on stolen Land.

Most settler colonizers do not see ourselves as colonizers, or we either refuse or resist this (political) label. Settlers often argue that we do not feel responsible for the colonial atrocities of our ancestors, preferring to see ourselves as benevolent peacemakers (Reagan, 2011) or as "perfect strangers" (Dion, 2009; Higgins, Costello & Korteweg, 2015). This notion fails to recognize our own implication in the ongoing occupation of unceded Indigenous Lands (Tuck & Mackenzie, 2015) and teachers' ongoing role in reproducing neo-colonialism through our teaching and curriculum.

The findings of this study support the assertion by Reagan (2011) that decolonizing requires settlers both to learn and tell the truths about our role in perpetuating colonial injustice. It also involves gradually refining one's ability to recognize and disrupt manifestations of Eurocentrism, colonizing attitudes, and ignorance. It requires understanding and choosing to overcome our typical complicity in settler colonialism and learning to 'see' the depths of and embeddedness of one's own Eurocentrism, privilege, sense of entitlement, and White normativity.

Graveline (1999) asserts that this process of recognizing and disrupting Eurocentrism is a necessary beginning for decolonizing change:

> If one can be acculturated to hold dominant views, they can also be
> unacculturated. I ask: How can students, steeped primarily in hegemonic

Eurocentric consciousness, become aware of the nature of their cultural

conditioning? I consider this to be a necessary beginning on the journey of change

in attitudes and behaviours towards peoples from our communities. The Western

foundations, upon which modern-day society rests, must not stand unchallenged.

Students, many of whom are White and middle-class, need to explore the legacy

of their Eurocentric culture and recognize its impacts on their lives and our

lives—personally and politically. (p. 90)

As exemplified through my vignettes such as *Eurocentric Power and Ignorance*

(p. 112), *My Student the Teacher* (p. 110), and *An Unsettling Surprise* (p. 132), and in

particular through my updated reflections on past events, learning to see increasingly

subtle examples of Eurocentrism takes time and conscientious commitment. It is a

constant process of overcoming ignorance. Learning to recognize the way we think and

act as colonizers often involves reflexively revisiting past experiences with new

decolonizing understandings to reveal previous attitudes and behaviours that relied on

and perpetuated Eurocentric assumptions. From this we may learn to recognize (and

hopefully avoid) increasingly subtle examples of colonizing in our daily lives.

In this study I also found that acknowledging our role as colonizers can lead

settlers to experience a number of difficult emotions including embarrassment, fear of

judgment, guilt, and fear of doing further harm. I was surprised to uncover through my

auto-ethnography how self-conscious I was about how my mistakes and ignorance would

be perceived by both other settlers and Indigenous peoples. The feelings of

embarrassment seem to be an indication and acknowledgement of how undesirable it is to

be a colonizer. Feelings of embarrassment—or wanting to shun or escape the horribly

dark aspect of settler identity—help non-Indigenous educators to move towards and enact social change. If we settlers are not embarrassed about our positionality as colonizers, then perhaps we do not really understand how insidious and harmful ongoing colonization is to Indigenous peoples and the Land. Part of the decolonizing process is allowing oneself to feel vulnerable and to overcome egregious ignorance, rather than shy away from it.

The two other main emotions that surface through decolonizing learning are guilt for having inflicted harm, and the resulting fear of doing further harm. Feelings of fear and anxiety accompany feelings of accountability, responsibility, and guilt. Guilt is often associated with becoming aware of the ways in which we have been responsible for harming others by dismissing or de-legitimizing Indigenous cultural knowledge or by normalizing and centring Whiteness and Euro-western values. I discussed some of the egregious Eurocentric mistakes I have made in the vignette, *Eurocentric Power and Ignorance* (p. 112)*,* when I failed to respect one student's spiritual practice of laying tobacco and another's cultural way of knowing and learning from dreams. Although these mistakes were not evident to me at the time, they became fairly obvious and easy for me to recognize once I began to learn about Eurocentrism and my role as colonizer.

One of the most difficult phenomena I experienced as I learned to recognize my 'self as colonizer' was the moment of realization that, despite my best intentions, I was still unable to see the full extent of my own Eurocentrism and its implications on others, even after becoming aware of its existence. I described this moment in the vignette, *An Unsettling Surprise* (p. 132). For settlers, this sort of deep, sudden realization can result in feeling fear and profound uncertainty as to how to learn, teach, and live in ways that

respect Indigenous peoples, their knowledges, and their cultures. Often settlers are acutely afraid of the harm we might do to others through the mistakes we inevitably make. Settler educators, from their privileged and powerful position as teachers, may be concerned about saying and doing something that will offend or harm our Indigenous students, or mislead, misinform and/or unjustly privilege our non-Indigenous students.

Since our Eurocentric ignorance already exists, and since mistakes are inevitable, then humility and a commitment to embrace vulnerability, invite and accept feedback, and learn from mistakes, are essential to decolonizing ourselves and building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples.

In my experience, Indigenous friends, colleagues, and students, can be very generous and patient teachers, willing to point out mistakes and teach those who are open to learning. Many of my vignettes describe the role these Indigenous friends, students, and teachers have played in my life. These include: my student in the vignette *My Student the Teacher* (p. 110)*,* who identified the problem with fabricating Indigenous ritual; my teacher described in *Living History and Anishnaabe Games* (p. 105)*,* who shared cultural knowledge and taught more honest versions of Indigenous–non-Indigenous shared histories; my teacher in *Can I Participate?* (p. 127), who introduced me to decolonizing scholarship and facilitated my personal learning journey*;* and invited guests, such as the Elder described in *An Elder's Invitation* (p. 145)*,* who generously and patiently shared his culture and knowledge. However, as I have noted elsewhere, and as I discovered through my experience requesting help from an Indigenous colleague who did not want to be burdened with the task of teaching an ignorant settler (*Student Resistance,* p. 125)*,* it is also firmly our responsibility as settlers to open ourselves to this learning

and to actively teach other settlers rather than assume Indigenous peoples will solve our settler ignorance, or burden them with the task of doing so.

I certainly learned about (and continue to learn about) my role as colonizer in many different settings, such as the sharing circles I attended *(*see themes listed for artifacts: *Learning Café and Firepit* and *Idle No More Settler Circle)*. I also came to understand my role as colonizer through art exhibits in various locations and through my ongoing dialogue with Indigenous and non-Indigenous friends with whom I worked, collaborated, and travelled (see *Co-learning and Intercultural Dialogue*, p. 122).

However, this work of undoing ignorance and learning by reviewing and reflecting on mistakes gained momentum when I was exposed to Indigenous and decolonizing perspectives in the classes I took as a graduate student. In that setting (see *Can I Participate?* p. 127*),* I became aware of and familiar with a vast dialogue of which I had previously been unaware. I began to learn a language and discourse to talk about colonization, Indigenous worldviews, and my decolonizing experiences. I quickly gained new knowledge about settler colonialism, decolonizing movements, and shared histories I was previously ignorant of. I met others who were thinking about how to decolonize educational praxes, and I had the opportunity and time to engage in deep dialogue with other settlers and Indigenous friends and colleagues. The deep impact of post-secondary schooling speaks to how crucial teachers may be to facilitating students' decolonizing understandings and helping students encounter Indigenous knowledges and perspectives, and more honest versions of history.

B2b. Self as displaced person. Settler decolonizing requires us to recognize ourselves as disconnected and displaced from our own Land so that we realize we are not

from 'here,' an awareness that can be accompanied by fear, uncertainty, deep sadness, and longing.

Recently a settler friend shared with me that some of her Inuit friends have told her that they feel sorry for her. They feel sorry that she does not have—and never will have—the same deep ancestral relationship with the Land that they do. Her anecdote reminds me of the experience I described in my vignette *(Dis)placing Myself Through Dialogue* (p. 97). I am extremely grateful to my Indigenous friend for her openness to hear me nervously articulate my very preliminary explorations of settler grief and sadness related to displacement. I am profoundly thankful for her patience while I accessed these deep emotions. Her words, paraphrased here, echo loudly: I've wondered if we're maybe better off than the settlers, because we still have our Land. I recall my deep sense of sadness and longing to know my own ancestral Land and culture and the devastating realization that I am so completely disconnected that I will likely never know where I am from, nor will I be able to remember the deep Land-based knowledge of my ancestors.

All humans, including settlers, have an innate desire and need to belong or connect to Land. This study found that part of settler decolonizing is remembering that our ancestors were once indigenous to somewhere and that they once had a deep and spiritual (indigenous) relationship to their indigenous Land. My findings show that a significant settler decolonizing understanding is to recognize ourselves as humans who are displaced or disconnected from our *own* ancestral Lands, and to grapple with the difficult emotions that accompany our this disconnection from our ancestors' Indigeneity, which occurred generations ago, beyond our choice or control.

Of particular significance is that decolonizing requires settlers to recognize that

the Land where our ancestors were once Indigenous is *not* the Land where we now live.

This study found that in order to fully make the acknowledgement that we are not from

here—that we live on someone else's (stolen) Land—requires us to engage with difficult

emotions associated with our own loss of Indigeneity. These emotions stem from the

realization that, since we are displaced and disconnected from the Lands where our

ancestors were once indigenous, we have (often completely) lost the possibility of

learning and acquiring our own intergenerational indigenous knowledge and culture.

In my vignette, *(Dis)placing Myself Through Dialogue* (p. 97)*,* I described the

feelings of profound sadness, longing, grief, despair, and insatiable curiosity that

accompanied the deep realization that I am displaced and completely disconnected from

my ancestral Land. While I have a general sense of what country my great-grandparents

came from, I will never be able to know exactly where my earlier ancestors lived for

generations, learn their indigenous knowledge, or build a relationship with the specific

Land where I am from. For settlers, these are difficult and uncomfortable emotions. I

posit that in order to avoid this deep discomfort, settlers often try to ignore our grief by

attempting, consciously or unconsciously, to impose our own meanings on the Land

where we now live—Aboriginal Land—which inadvertently displaces or erases the

original stories of this Land.

My study's findings indicate that in order to decolonize, settlers need to

acknowledge, accept, and contend with our own displacement and Land disconnection. I

argue that for some settlers (and perhaps particularly for outdoor and environmental

educators who seem to crave time in nature—on the Land—and respect the intrinsic

value of all beings), this process of acknowledging our own displacement and

disconnection, and the related grieving process, may be key to interrupting the settler colonialism that we perpetuate (and actively teach) through our pursuit of emplacement on Indigenous Land. However, my study also reveals that, compounding the emotions identified above, settlers may feel nervous to talk about emotions of sadness and longing associated with Land-disconnection for fear that it may be perceived as a contentious 'move to innocence' by Indigenous peoples, or that it might inappropriately re-centre Whiteness or reinscribe White privilege and entitlement. I discuss the contentious aspects of these findings by drawing on relevant literature, in Chapter Six.

My process of coming to terms with and making sense of this reality is not over and will no doubt continue to shape my decolonizing journey from here. I am interested in how this aspect of my identity and journey might challenge me or assist me to deepen my decolonizing understandings, live in respectful relationality, and work in solidarity with Indigenous peoples towards Indigenous Land repatriation. I am committed to continuously and reflexively examining this.

B2c. Self as ecologically interconnected. Settler decolonizing compels us to understand that, while we are not ancestrally connected to this Land, we are ecologically interconnected with the Land and all other beings that live here. Tommy Aklukujuk (in Rassmussen & Aklukujuk, 2010) observes the typical Euro-western ontological stance that perceives humans as separate from the rest of the natural world:

The Qallunaat (European-Canadians) have a strange concept of their environment. For instance, the term "wildlife" is used to separate themselves from their home and separate their community from the natural environment. They do not realize that they're part of the wildlife; they were wild once and will be part of the wild

forever, but they like to exclude themselves from anything the natural world

provides. (p. 281)

Understanding that we are ecologically interconnected to the Land is an important

foundation for settler decolonizing. Furthermore, respect for the inherent value of all

beings (rather than the typical Euro-western belief in the superiority and supremacy of

humans) is a key value inherent in Indigenous ways of knowing and relationships that

settlers often need to learn and internalize during our decolonizing journeys.

In some respects, outdoor and environmental settler educators accept the premise

of our ecological interconnection perhaps much more readily than other settlers (Root,

2009). We know that the Land nurtures us and that our actions impact the Land. We

drink water from our local area, we eat food grown from the Land, we pollute. These

actions mean that the Land influences and nurtures us, and we impact the Land. Some of

these understandings of ecological interconnection came from the time I have spent on

rivers and in forests, as I described in the vignettes, *Pipes and Pictographs* (p. 90) and

Oiseau Rock (p. 94).

Our work as environmental educators often encourages others to consider how

their actions and behaviours impact the flora and fauna of local ecosystems. I have

argued elsewhere (Root, 2009; 2010), as has Calderon (2014), that this understanding of

ecological interconnection and value for other beings may make outdoor environmental

educators ripe for decolonizing since there may be some points of resonance between

their values and Indigenous values for the Land.

On the other hand, in my experience, many Euro-western outdoor environmental

educators (especially those who educate through extended outdoor trips or nature-based

centres) often rely on false Eurocentric notions of a pristine, unpeopled wilderness (see

Student Resistance, p 118). They associate nature or wilderness with opportunities for

escape from the 'real world,' as a physical challenge to conquer, or as a generic natural

backdrop for personal or group development (Korteweg & Oakly, 2012; Newbery, 2012).

They may also focus on non-human ecology lessons or the pitfalls of contemporary

consumptive lifestyles without discussion of cultural values and norms. My own (and

others') complicity in Western outdoor education's Eurocentrism features in the

vignettes, *Playing 'Indian'* (p. 100); *Meet your Neighbours* (p. 139)*; Student Resistance*

(p. 118)*; My Student the Teacher* (p. 110)*; Apologizing* (p. 134)*;* and *Co-learning and*

Intercultural Dialogue (p. 122). In all of these cases, what settler environmental and

outdoor educators often omit, consciously or otherwise, is any understanding or

exploration of the Land as Indigenous Land. As Lisa Korteweg states (cited in Root,

2009), outdoor educators find it easy to love the Land, but not the people of the Land.

Recognizing our ecological interconnection is important, and this may be an area

where environmental educators are well poised to contribute to decolonizing. However,

we are not from here, and we have not inherited the deep ancestral Land-based wisdom

about the most ecologically sound traditions necessary for living in respectful relation

with the Land and all its beings. To understand and respect our ecological

interconnection with other beings where we live, we need to listen to and learn from

locally contextual Land-based knowledge and cultural practice.

B2d. Self as family member and inheritor of values. Settler decolonizing

involves learning about one's ancestors and cultural heritage and reflexively exploring

and appropriately celebrating one's own family traditions and the values one has inherited and learned.

Part of my decolonizing journey has been to strengthen, celebrate, and make meaning from appropriate family traditions and values, and to learn my family history and cultural heritage. For me, this understanding flourishes by spending time with immediate family and intergenerational relatives, by examining documents such as a family tree and photograph albums, and, more importantly, by asking questions and listening to the stories that these artifacts generate. Ritual traditions that mark significant family events or times of the year, family food and recipes, and songs passed through generations also create a sense of belonging to a family who loves each other and learns together. My grandmother baked with me, using recipes that she learned from her mother. My mother sang an Irish lullaby to me each night, which she had learned from her grandmother and that I now sing to my children. These small but significant family traditions are starting points for remembering our own cultural heritages that existed since time immemorial, before our ancestors became settlers.

Another role that family and cultural knowledge plays in settler decolonizing is to help us understand how our personal values were formed or inherited, and what role they have, or may have, in building more respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples. My auto-ethnographic inquiry reveals that very early formative experiences in school and with my family shaped my personal values in such a way that I would become open to decolonizing later in my life. While I was being enculturated into a role of 'perfect stranger'—disconnected from Aboriginal peoples, complicit in colonization, and largely unaware of Eurocentric histories and issues—I was simultaneously developing values

and attitudes such as respect for others and legitimacy of multiple or different perspectives, diversity of human experience, compassion and respect for other beings, love of the outdoors, curiosity, and critical thinking.

Many of these values were shaped early on, as I observed and emulated my parents, spent much time outdoors, and engaged in elementary school class activities. I recall participating in lively brainstorming sessions at school about fictional issues that encouraged us to 'consider all the factors,' think about 'other persons' viewpoints' and analyze information as 'plus-minus-interesting.' Another elementary school memory is playing at recess with peers who faced intellectual, physical, or developmental challenges. I remember having fun playing tag and ball with these peers and being curious about what life was like from their perspective. I wanted to learn about how they experienced the world. One of my favourite books at home was called *What It's Like to Be Me* (Exley, 1989). It was a compilation of true stories of difference told in children's own voices. To me, these experiences represent an early and genuine (albeit basic) understanding that different people see and experience the world from different perspectives, and that there is value and legitimacy in all of those ways of being and knowing.

What these experiences and self-knowledge teach me through my auto-ethnographic study is that while questions and uncertainty may abound about how, if, and when to teach children appropriately about the atrocious histories of colonization, as teachers and parents we can foster values of open-mindedness, compassion, curiosity, multiplicity of worldviews, and relationality so that students can be prepared to engage in intercultural experiences positively and respectfully. Formative learning may not provide

all of the complex details about historic and contemporary socio-cultural and political relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and is probably not sufficient on its own to prevent settler students from being enculturated into a 'perfect stranger' stance. It may, however, preemptively inform our openness to learning and our ability to grapple with the complexities of intercultural relationships and decolonizing understandings. This finding leads me to call on teachers and teacher educators to think deeply and critically about how to teach diversity and difference and how to foster classrooms that are inclusive and reflective of a wide range of worldviews and life experiences.

While decolonizing certainly involves learning to recognize and disrupt the colonizer within, the findings of this study indicate that it also involves identifying core values of respect and reconsidering how these are applied in our lives. Quite simply, settler educators might genuinely value honesty and truthfulness, but if we have never been taught about historic colonization, or if we have not learned to recognize the ways in which settler colonization continues, then it would be nearly impossible for us to teach 'honestly.' This does not excuse any disrespectful Eurocentric behaviour; rather, this paradox should drive us to constantly reassess our personal values and evaluate how we apply them throughout our relationships and other aspects of our lives. Settler decolonizing requires constant, ongoing critical consideration of our personal and family values, the way they manifest in our lives, and what role they play in perpetuating settler colonialism or facilitating a shift towards decolonizing education.

If settlers are to dis-place ourselves from 'here' and relinquish the fabricated identities that have offered us a (false) sense of belonging, purpose, and meaning—such

as that of 'benevolent peacemaker' (Reagan, 2011) or 'the rugged outdoor Canadian,' for example—then we will also need to fill that void and figure out who we are in relation to our own families and family histories. We need to take time to sort through how our family heritage has shaped our multi-layered settler identity. In striving to see Eurocentrism and White privilege more clearly, it is tempting to create monolithic categories of what it means to be a White, Western, Euro-Canadian-settler or what it means to be Indigenous. As settlers decolonize, we often learn to recognize the multiplicities that exist within Indigenous cultures. Yet, the refinement of our critical decolonizing lens can obscure the fact that multiplicities also exist in Western culture. Sometimes it is necessary to relearn that not 'all things Western' are bad. As humans, we are not only colonizers; we are also capable of love, compassion, and respect.

    B2e. *Self as aspiring ally.* Settler decolonizing involves learning how to be a respectful ally with the capacity to live in truth and build right relations—and continuously choosing to do so (Reagan, 2011).

    As I review my auto-ethnographic inquiry, it is evident that I still have much growth and learning to do as I work to shift towards a role of respectful and effective ally. I have not yet had the experience of building a long-term collaborative relationship with a particular Indigenous community through my research or teaching. This could be for a number of reasons. Partly, I admit, it is because I am shy, and it can feel uncomfortable to take the initiative to reach out; partly it is because I feel it might be more appropriate to wait to be invited to be of service rather than awkwardly impose any desire to collaborate onto a community with whom I have no relationship; and partly it is

because I have moved great distances several times to vastly different places, and my transience has made it difficult to maintain long-term relationships with one community.

This study found that despite the complexities mentioned above, settlers can choose to reject their colonizer complicity and rather enact allied solidarity with Indigenous decolonizing movements by disrupting offensive colonial attitudes and institutions in our community; we can foreground Indigenous knowledge and voices in our pedagogical praxes (see *Co-learning and Intercultural Dialogue,* p. 122, and *An Elder's Invitation,* p. 145), research and scholarship (see themes listed for artifact *Shifting the Paradigm*); making space for Indigenous cultures, worldviews, and Elder knowledge in our classrooms (see *Living History and Anishnaabe Games,* p. 105; *A Mi'kmaw Totem Pole,* p. 136; and *An Elder's Invitation,* p. 145); and teaching other settlers or inviting others onto a decolonizing journey. All of these are examples of everyday actions that respond to historic truths and are choices that can shift us towards respectful relationality. Collaborative relationships are dynamic and a constant choice that require ongoing reflexivity, commitment, and negotiation.

Subcategory B, Main theme 3: Dynamics of Indigenous Settler Relationships.

The main theme I have called 'Dynamics of Indigenous–Settler Relationships' encompasses deep learning about the social, cultural, political, and ecological dynamics and complexities of historic and ongoing Indigenous–settler relationships. This realm of inquiry helps settlers to consider how we came to be living on Indigenous Land, and the historic and ongoing impacts of our presence on Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Land, including other Indigenous beings. It also obliges settlers to recognize and learn from examples of Indigenous resilience, resistance, resurgence, and generosity. Finally,

it requires settlers to critically examine settler solidarity initiatives and the complexities of settler decolonizing efforts. This main theme is composed of two sub-themes: a) Settler Colonialism and b) Contributions, Generosity, and Resurgence of Indigenous peoples.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  3.  Dynamics of Indigenous-Settler Relations        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        ↓                                    ↓
┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│  a.  Settler     │      │  b.  Contributions, Generosity, and │
│  Colonialism     │      │  Resurgence of Indigenous peoples   │
└──────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────┘
```
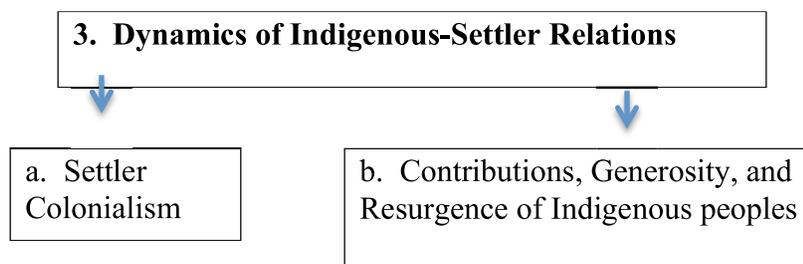
Figure 17. Three sub-themes of Dynamics of Indigenous-Settler Relationships.

Three Sub-themes of 'Dynamics of Indigenous-Settler Relationships.'

B3a. Settler colonialism. Settler decolonizing requires an understanding and interruption of settler colonial dynamics that facilitated our arrival on this Land and that continue to ensure our ongoing unjust privilege and false emplacement here.

While I've been working for a number of years to be able to 'see' and disrupt Eurocentrism and to understand my privileged experience as a settler, it has been only recently through literature reviews for this auto-ethnography and dissertation that I have become aware of the overarching dynamics and motivations of settler colonialism. It makes sense to me that understanding this dynamic is an important part of settler decolonizing. We need to gain a broader and more nuanced understanding of the pervasive and ongoing dynamic that brought us to 'here and now' and that perpetuates our privilege and ongoing occupation of stolen Land and the injustice faced by Indigenous peoples.

Unlike exploitation colonialism, in which colonizers aim to exploit human labour to aid in the extraction and exportation of Land 'resources,' settler colonizers seek Land both for wealth (resources) and, more notably, as a new permanent home. To this end, the goal of settler colonialism is to make Indigenous peoples disappear (Tuck & Mackenzie, 2015). Tuck and Mackenzie also note four general characteristics of settler colonial societies: First, we tend to refuse to recognize ourselves as colonizers, and colonialism as an ongoing force. Second, we settlers often naturalize our culture as "most superior and most normal" (p. 60) and feel entitled to possess (stolen) Land. Third is a triad dynamic where settlers attempt to eliminate Indigenous peoples while relying on and enforcing labour by migrant landless workers in order to achieve and maintain settlement. Finally, settler colonialism is "an attempt (and failure) to contain Indigenous agency and resistance" (p. 61). Settler decolonizing requires learning about, learning to recognize, and acting to disrupt settler colonialism. The deep challenge accompanying this endeavour is accepting that disrupting settler colonialism fundamentally unsettles everything.

While my exposure to the *scholarship* of settler colonialism occurred relatively recently, my vignettes and other primary data reflect life-long *experiences* that contextualize and provide examples of settler colonialism in Canada both broadly and in my own life. The political and corporate will to expand resource industries, such as mining on Kitchenumaykoosib Inninuwug's traditional territory in Northern Ontario (now banned), building the Northern Gateway Pipeline through Northern British Columbia First Nations Lands, and fracking on Mi'kmaw territory in Elsipogtog, New Brunswick, are recent examples of ongoing settler colonialism that Indigenous

communities have courageously fought. My auto-ethnographic study revealed that settler decolonizing involves learning about these settler colonial endeavours, reflexively exploring how our own attitudes, choices, and daily behaviours require settler colonial ongoing exploits, and striving to live in ways that are genuinely respectful of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous Lands, and all beings (see themes listed for artifacts *KI* and *Idle No More Settler Circle*).

Another reflexive endeavour that can assist settler Canadians in considering how settler colonialism is relevant to our own lives is to learn one's own immigration history and the story of how we came to be living on stolen Land. While part of learning about my family and cultural background involved identifying, reflecting on, and celebrating family traditions and intergenerational cultural knowledge, it also required me to grapple with my own family's legacy as colonizers and to struggle to hold myself accountable to that legacy.

Asking students to trace the heritage and pathways towards their privilege is one effective way to make settler colonialism visible. In this activity, students would reflect on where their own privilege originated in their family history and on who may have been exploited in order for their ancestors to acquire the privilege they have now inherited. In response to this exercise, students may reflect on the following: the specific places where families were given or acquired Land for homesteading (and considering who was displaced from that Land); which ancestors were given jobs and why (and alternatively who was not allowed to work in that capacity and for what social reasons); or who was given the opportunity (who had time and money) to gain an education, and how that family was then able to pass on social capital to subsequent generations. Often,

settler privilege can be traced back to Land ownership or access to Land—can be tracked to early family immigrants who emplaced themselves on Indigenous Land and in so doing displaced Indigenous peoples.

While my study supports the importance of this type of learning in order to decolonize our understandings of who we are and where we came from, I have found only minimal facts from my own family history about how and where we acquired Land. Similar to reflecting on the inheritance of privilege, thinking about how colonial attitudes may have been reinforced or disrupted through family generations is a part of decolonizing my understanding of my familial and cultural heritage. An example of my own intergenerational learning about family is evidenced in my opening vignette about my great grandfather who worked for the Department of Indian Affairs. This type of information has often not been recorded, or is not easily accessible, and relies on intergenerational storytelling or conversations. In my case, I have lost all but one of my grandparents, and my living grandmother is no longer able to communicate easily. I wish I had asked more questions and learned more about my family history when I was younger. This reflection indicates to me the importance of instilling value for intergenerational knowledge sharing early on in a child's life.

B3b. Contributions, generosity, and resurgence of Indigenous peoples. Settler decolonizing involves recognizing and appreciating the historic and contemporary contributions and generosity of Indigenous peoples that shape the socio-cultural and ecological places we live in, together.

Writing about the Indigenous renaissance in education, Battiste (2013) notes the following:

The initial struggle for Indigenous educators has been to sensitize the

Eurocentric consciousness in general, and educators in particular to the colonial

and neo-colonial practices that continue to marginalize and racialize Indigenous

students…. The second struggle is to convince [settlers] to acknowledge the

unique knowledge and relationships that Indigenous people derive from place

and from their homeland, which are central to their notions of humanity and

science, and passed on in their own languages and ceremony … The next tension

is for all learners to learn [Indigenous knowledge] respectfully with Aboriginal

people and without appropriating their new knowledge and experience for their

own ends. (p. 69)

Indigenous peoples have shown incredible leadership, fortitude, persistence and

generosity as they have worked to dismantle inequitable hegemonic systems and

foreground their relevant and much needed contextual cultural knowledge. Part of settler

decolonizing is recognizing and valuing those contributions. It also involves learning

from the leadership of Indigenous peoples and figuring out how to respectfully follow

and support Indigenous leadership.

Indeed, the Indigenous resurgence has been evident in mainstream and social

media in the past several years. Multiple vast movements have taken place within the

short time since I began my doctoral studies. In December 2012, Attawapiskat Chief

Theresa Spence began a controversial six-week hunger strike to draw the attention of the

Government of Canada to Aboriginal issues. Around the same time, momentum and

support grew for Idle No More a "peaceful revolution to honour Indigenous sovereignty

and to protect land and water" (www.idlenomore.ca). The Idle No More vision, as stated

on their website, includes resurgence of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood, pressuring government and industry to protect the environment, and building allies to reframe the nation-to-nation relationship.

Following the wave of support for Idle No More, which has a database of over 200,000 supporters, the Indigenous Nationhood Movement began. As the Idle No More momentum began to slow down, some members of that movement began to reflect on what had been accomplished and what still needed to be done. Taiake Alfred (in Shwartz, 2013, CBC News), suggested that while Idle No More was successful in educating Canadians about Indigenous rights, arguing for environmental protection, politicizing some Indigenous peoples, inspiring passion, and generating art and music, more needs to be done to create real change for Indigenous peoples.

To this end, the Indigenous Nationhood Movement was established. Pam Palmeter (in Shwartz, 2013, CBC News), a founder of Idle No More who also considers herself a part of the Indigenous Nationhood Movement, explains that the Nationhood Movement "is talking about action on the ground, real resistance, going out and living on the land and protecting territories and exercising jurisdiction and reclaiming and reoccupying, so it's not just about protest anymore, it's changing" (n.p.).

At this incredibly important time for Indigenous peoples, a significant period of resurgence, it is time for settler Canadians to reflect on and ask how we might be of service to Indigenous peoples leading and working hard in these endeavours. I know that I was not in a position of awareness and decolonialism that was sufficiently advanced to offer effective educational service. During these bourgeoning Indigenous social movements over the past several years, my engagement has moved from that of a (new)

learner into a teacher to other settlers of how we might shift, personally and collectively, towards respectful relationality for decolonization (or Indigenous Land repatriation). I found myself doing a lot of reading and discussing the goals and accomplishments of various Indigenous protests in my curriculum (see themes listed for artifacts: *UNBC Idle No More*, *KI Protest,* and *Media Exposure*). I taught about and made visible the themes and issues that were being foregrounded in the media and that were framing the public discussions. I played the role of bearing witness to protests—of hearing and listening to what was being spoken and communicated by Indigenous communities. I also observed, with fascination, the ways in which settler Canadians responded, perhaps with more interest than ever before, to the issues of settler colonial injustice and Indigenous rights.

Still, I continue to grapple with questions such as, how should settlers support Indigenous resurgence movements without attempting to claim, direct, or lead them? Is there a way for us to work in respectful solidarity? If so, how can we achieve this? I have learned that our participation may require us to know when to step back and 'get out of the way,' when to listen and learn, and when and how to work and serve as needed.

In this chapter I discussed and interpreted the complex themes that were revealed through constructivist grounded theory analysis of my narrative data. I identified the core category, 'settler shift(ing)s to respectful relationality,' which also included two sub-categories: one that focuses on decolonizing *understandings* and the other that focuses on the a decolonizing *learning process*. In the next chapter, I will present a new theoretical model of setter decolonizing that draws on the metaphor of a tree to integrate the themes of my findings.

CHAPTER 6—GROWING A TREE, NURTURING A FOREST

In this chapter, I cultivate a metaphor for my own development as a decolonizing settler outdoor environmental educator: a growing tree in a bourgeoning forest. I proceed through six sections that combine my own growth with the communities, or forests, of like-minded citizens who are engaging in a new movement of education-as-reconciliation.

I begin by retracing the trajectory of thinking in environmental education (critical place-based education) that initially prompted me to advocate for decolonizing the field of environmental education. I illuminate hopeful signs of decolonizing shifts that are occurring in environmental education discourse. These signposts emphasize the timeliness and relevance of my research to current trends in environmental education. In the second section, I review and answer my research questions by proposing a new theoretical model—symbolized by a growing tree—that conceptualizes settler decolonizing processes relevant to outdoor and environmental educators. Next, I re-engage a critical reflexive lens to assess the potential impact of my proposed tree model in the context of Tuck and Yang's (2012) and Tuck and Gaztamibide-Fernandez's (2013) critiques of settler solidarity work that call into question common 'settler moves to innocence' and the phenomenon whereby White-settlers thwart anti-colonial efforts through cooptation of critical discourses initiated by Indigenous and non-White settlers. In the fourth section, I assess and evaluate the quality of my research using Tracy's (2010) framework, the Eight 'Big Tent' Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. Fifth, I propose several topics for further research. I conclude this chapter by offering a final personal reflection on the next steps both in my own decolonizing journey and the

journey for decolonizing environmental education. Collaboratively and respectfully, we can grow into a forest of practitioners in education-as-reconciliation.

Nurturing a Respectful Relational Ethic in Environmental Education

Shouldn't environmental studies at universities be teaching the languages and epistemologies of the people indigenous to the particular biocultural region under study? In fact, doesn't it seem odd that this isn't already an automatic practice in environmental education? Doesn't it seem odd that a biologist would want to study 'arctic char reproductive stages' and not first make an effort to learn the words and stories relating 4,000 years of teaching about char encoded in the language and knowledge systems of Inuit? (Rasmussen & Aklukujuk, 2009, p. 280)

Despite increasing and prevalent evidence of the inequities and socio-ecological injustices faced by Indigenous peoples, I have argued from the position that Canadian schools still remain primarily Eurocentric and reproduce neo-colonialism. Euro-western education systems fail to provide Indigenous students with culturally relevant and respectful educational experiences, but they continuously succeed in re-centring Eurocentric curriculum and settler colonial agendas. Teachers continue to teach non-Indigenous students to position themselves as *perfect strangers* to Indigenous peoples and reaffirm White normativity, entitlement, and privilege to occupy and inhabit Indigenous territories, often without critical awareness of their historical damages and current negative impacts.

I have argued that the decolonizing process for settler colonial Canadians is longer-term, complex, challenging, not well-understood, and often actively rejected or

resisted. This is so even though there is a pressing need to decolonize curriculum by emphasizing correct history—including Indigenous representations or first-person texts of Indigenous experience—and equalizing educational infrastructure and spending. I have contemplated how recent shifts by some scholars in the field of environmental education towards Indigenous Land-based pedagogies may make the field of environmental education a prime site for better understanding and facilitating settler decolonizing.

Finally, despite some positive shifts that have begun to occur in the field, I have argued that there is still much more work to be done to decolonize and indigenize environmental education research and practice. To this end, I have identified a significant gap in the literature, or a lack of foundational understanding or attention to, Indigenous scholarship or any in-depth conceptualization of settler decolonizing.

As I draw near to concluding my dissertation, I find it important to reflect on my ongoing engagement with environmental education discourses and research emphases. In my master's thesis work (Root, 2009), I explored literature that aimed to mediate the tensions between critical pedagogy (Friere, 1970/2003; McLaren, 2007), eco-justice (Bowers, 2007), and place-based (Smith & Sobel, 2010) pedagogies. In response to these tensions, Greenwood (2003, 2008a) called for greater integration of the social and the ecological and the need to reinsert "Land" into our educational practices. He proposed a critical pedagogy of place that would educate for decolonization and reinhabitation of place. When I first encountered this literature during my master's degree, I was naïve about the explicit concept of settler colonialism, or the dynamic of settler myth-making and non-Indigenous desire for emplacement on Indigenous Lands. Despite what were

then only tentative shifts in my own decolonizing understandings at the time, I do recall feeling concerned that critical place-based pedagogies were another Western, Eurocentric attempt to "solve" our collective ecological crisis while ignoring Indigenous knowledge.

In my Masters thesis (Root, 2009), I argued that critical place-based pedagogies did not do enough to compel environmental educators to engage with philosophies of Indigenous education or to immerse ourselves in our own deep process of decolonizing. I posited that settler educators generally, and settler environmental educators specifically, should pay greater attention to Indigenous Land controversies, locally contextualized Indigenous Land-based knowledges and pedagogies, and Indigenous education epistemologies and discourses.

There were many reasons for my position that went beyond the decolonizing logic and focused instead on the potential possibilities for changing and shifting the place-based environmental education field towards Indigenous models of education. The Indigenous models are helpful because they are often *already* experiential, Land-based, relational, intergenerational, spiritual, and community oriented (Battiste, 2013; Cajete, 1999; Little Bear, 2009)—all tenets purportedly embedded in the various models of place-based education. In this dissertation, I retrace this thinking and trajectory because that specific debate in the literature was the crucial moment I became aware of and entered into environmental education discourse as a graduate scholar.

As a professional academic, and especially because I am working in environmental education through auto-ethnography, I am more keenly aware that Western outdoor and environmental education (generally), and place-based education (specifically), encourage settler–colonial emplacement onto Indigenous Lands. Most

notably, we as Western outdoor and environmental educators have been adept, perhaps even more than all other disciplines, at perpetuating and even explicitly teaching the main myth that ensures settler colonialism: that it is settlers who can and should emplace ourselves on stolen Indigenous Land to save the planet, the animals, wilderness, and nature. We take students on trips to so-called 'unpeopled wilderness' (see Korteweg & Oakley's critique, 2014) to build connections as humans with a disappearing and endangered 'nature' and to create a 'sense of place' and 'belonging.' All the while, we have largely ignored Indigenous peoples' knowledges, understandings of, and existing relationships with the Land, effectively continuing to erase and displace them from settlers' (false) myths of Canada.

As settler environmental educators, we must choose in our everyday actions and decisions either to default to our status-quo identity as a colonizer and remain rooted in praxis that ensures, enables, and perpetuates ongoing settler colonialism, or to acknowledge ourselves as colonizers and accept our responsibility (response-ability, or the ability to respond) to reject that stance (Memmi, 1974), overcome ignorance, and learn what it means to respect Indigenous peoples and Lands. With all of the Indigenous scholarship and clear evidence illuminating the continuing injustices and perils of settler colonialism, it is highly unethical for environmental educators to tolerate our own ignorance and remain a 'perfect stranger' (Dion, 2009). We must engage in committed ontological and epistemological work in order to start to decolonize ourselves, and our field, and to become respectful and effective allies who exist in solidarity and collaboration with Indigenous peoples, and who demonstrate respect for their longstanding and current contextual Land-based knowledge and relations.

Encouragingly, there are examples of socio-critical settler environmental educators who, in their own environmental education niches, are contemplating what it means to live and teach on Indigenous Land and in relation with Indigenous peoples, and thinking about how they might decolonize themselves, their research, and teaching praxes. The increase of environmental education (and related) scholarship that foregrounds 'Land Education,' is hopeful. Many examples exist, including the following special issues of certain academic journals: *Environmental Education* Research's Land *Issue* (January 2014)*; Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, Society's Land-based Pedagogy* (Spring 2014); and the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education's* Decolonizing & Indigenizing EE (#17, 2013). These special issues have contributed to a much deeper and more nuanced understanding of the complexities and implications of settler colonialism in (environmental) education and the myriad meanings and emphases associated with decolonization.

I am grateful for Indigenous scholars and their allies who choose to work in or contribute to the field of environmental education, and am especially thankful for the ways in which they help us all to think about very old pedagogies of the Land (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2002; 2008) and hybrid pedagogies that integrate Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, such as Indigenous métissage (Donald, 2009), ecological métissage (Lowan-Trudeau, 2012; 2013), Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012), Two Worlds Approach (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2013), and The Alaska Native Knowledge Network curriculum (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Barnhardt, 2008). These examples inspire collaborative possibilities for settler and Indigenous-educators. Indeed, all of these contributions are helping to indigenize environmental education and

foster more respectful Indigenous–settler relations.

As I have continued along my own decolonizing journey, I have remained increasingly fascinated with the complex endeavour of decolonizing settler Canadians, particularly teachers, and shifting them towards respectful relationality. If settler environmental educators are to effectively and respectfully teach on Indigenous Land, facilitate Land education, and foreground Indigenous Land-based pedagogies, then it is important for us to identify the foundational understandings we need to know and enact.

As a teacher and teacher educator who is regularly faced with the complex challenge of assisting non-Indigenous students and pre-service teachers "to learn to see what they can't," (Tompkins, 2002, p. 1)—or to become aware of Indigenous Land and cultures, settler colonialism, and their own relationality with Indigenous peoples—I recognize the urgent need for a comprehensive conceptualization and understanding of settler decolonizing processes and how they might best be facilitated. However, I also recognize how this will require ongoing commitment and serious, often uncomfortable, efforts to even realistically start a transformational movement in teacher and environmental education.

Recently, in the latest newsletter (winter 2015) from the Environmental Education Special Interest Group (EE SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the past-chair, Richard Kahn, drew attention to the excellent work of Delores Calderon (2014) and in particular her award-winning paper, "Uncovering Settler Grammars in Curriculum." He iterates her assertion that identifies settler colonialism as embedded in curriculum, and admonishes the longstanding subjugation of Indigenous peoples and knowledges. He writes, "I can't understand sustainability education today

without understanding environmental science; and I can't understand environmental science without understanding Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and why it is so infrequently included in what gets taught" (p. 23). He subsequently asks members of the EE SIG to consider what grammars shape both us, and our curricula.

All these 'rumblings' and signs of shifts in environmental education are more encouraging and hopeful than the prevailing discourse when I conducted research for my master's degree (Root, 2009). It seems as though settler environmental educators may now be taking the longstanding critiques by Indigenous scholars more seriously and be beginning to heed calls to disrupt settler colonialism, decolonize education, and honour Indigenous epistemologies. If this is the case, then the new theoretical conceptualization of settler decolonizing, presented below, is indeed relevant and well timed for assisting settler environmental educators to engage in our co-learning journeys (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012) with Indigenous peoples.

Theoretical Model: Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality for Decolonization

This study has sought to respond to the immediate and pressing need to decolonize Western environmental education, disrupt ongoing settler colonial myths about place, foreground Indigenous relational understandings of Land, and encourage settlers to shift towards respectful relationality with Indigenous peoples. Given the limited theories about what settler decolonizing entails in general, but more specifically how it relates to environmental educators, my study aimed to provide one in-depth model of 'unsettling the settler environmental educator.' Through my reflexive auto-ethnography and the narrative and grounded theory analysis of my own life experiences, I contribute a new theoretical model for settler decolonizing in the context of my identity

as an environmental educator.

My research questions were: ***What is the nature of my own settler decolonizing journey? And, how can my decolonizing experiences and reflections help to inform a new conceptualization of settler decolonizing for outdoor and environmental educators?*** I engaged with these questions throughout the dissertation by detailing the nature and complexities of my own settler decolonizing journey, and I return to them here, condensing them and responding to them more succinctly in the form of a theoretical model that represents the nature of my own decolonizing journey and proposes a conceptualization of settler decolonizing that should be applicable to other settlers and settler educators.

My findings as presented in Chapter Five—the core category, sub-categories, main themes, and sub-themes—comprise my new theoretical model, 'Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality For Decolonization,' which I present and summarize below. The model draws on the visual metaphor of a tree for several reasons. The tree represents lifelong growth. Each year it builds on and extends from earlier growth, showing its transformation through rings and an expanding trunk. Furthermore, a tree plays multiple roles within an ecosystem; it plants and nurtures other new life even while it is being nurtured by the Land, in a continuous circle or cycle. Like humans, there are trees that are indigenous to specific Lands or regions, and there are trees that have been introduced from elsewhere but are nonetheless ecologically interconnected to the Land and other trees, animals, and beings in the places that they grow. Finally, the tree as metaphor, with its capacity to symbolize (and thus help us understand) a cyclical relational process, reminds us that the Land teaches deep relational knowledge.
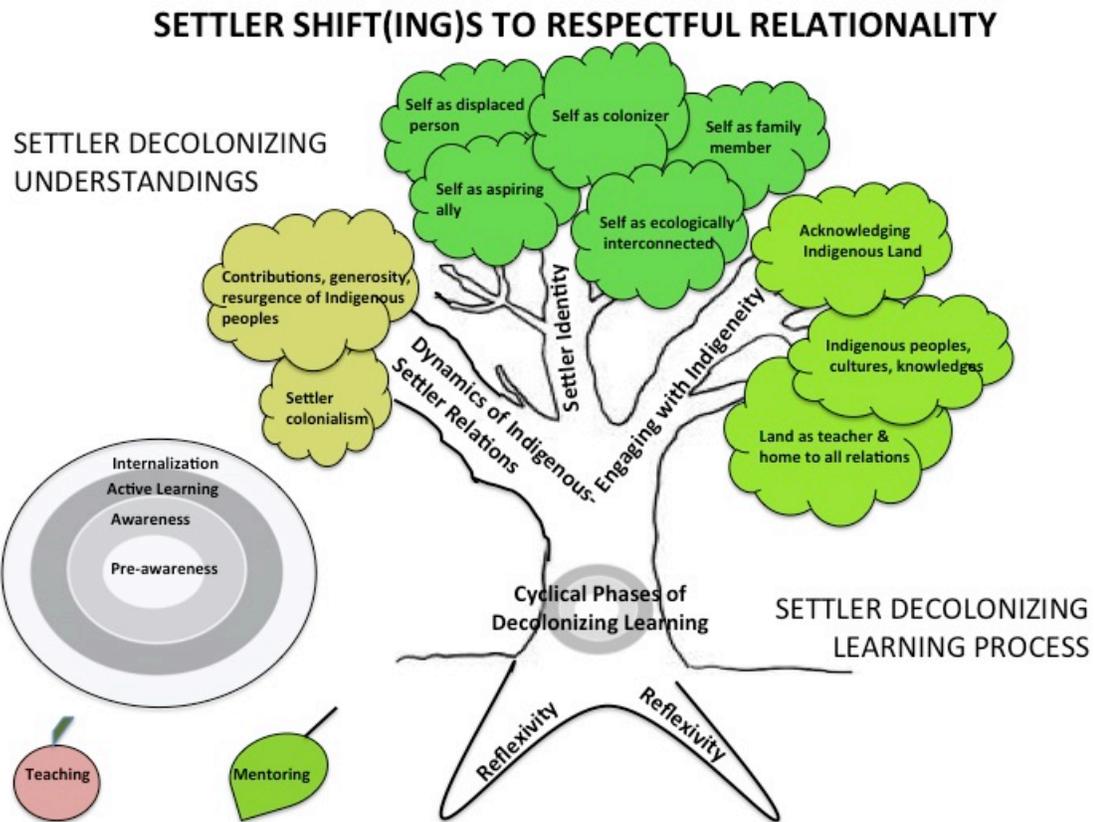
Figure 18. Root's Tree Model (2015): Settler Shift(ing)s To Respectful Relationality for Decolonization

Growing Branches of Decolonizing Understandings

In the tree model, the upper, ever-expanding, clusters of branches represent the

three main dimensions of decolonizing understanding: 1) Engaging with Indigeneity; 2)

Settler Identity; and 3) Dynamics of Settler–Indigenous Relations. My auto-ethnographic

process reveals that the first dimension of settler decolonizing understandings is to

engage with Indigeneity so as to come to a deeper understanding of where we are and

whose place/Land this is. We need to acknowledge first and foremost that we live on

Indigenous Land that has been home to Indigenous peoples, and that this Land has

shaped Indigenous cultures and languages since time immemorial. We need to learn

from Indigenous peoples, their cultures, and Land-based knowledges, and respect the Indigenous peoples of the places that we, as non-Indigenous settlers, are trying to occupy, settle, and inhabit. Finally, we need to acknowledge and honour the Land as teacher and as home to 'all our relations,' and the deep Land-based knowledge embedded in Indigenous ways of knowing contextual to specific Indigenous places.

The second dimension of this new settler decolonizing model, illustrated by the middle cluster of branches, examines questions and themes of settler identity and origin. These themes can encourage settlers to explore key decolonizing understandings related to self-awareness and self-cultural knowledge. The findings of this study identify five key aspects of identity that relate to decolonizing processes of settlers. 1. Shifting towards these deep intra-personal understandings requires exploring the self as colonizer in order to recognize and disrupt White normativity, Eurocentrism, and unearned, inequitable privilege. 2. It involves grappling with difficult emotions of loss and longing related to our displacement and disconnection from ancestral Indigeneity and our own home Lands. 3. Dimensions of settler identity also compel us to respect our ecological interconnections in the places where we live with Indigenous humans and other beings. 4. Our family histories, values, cultures, and traditions form another aspect of settler identity understandings in my model of settler decolonizing. 5. Finally, the last 'settler identity' theme conveyed by this model is the need to continuously learn how to choose to act as a respectful ally to Indigenous peoples.

The final set of branches on the tree model represents the third dimension of settler decolonizing understandings: dynamics of Indigenous–settler relationships. This dimension includes learning to recognize and disrupt features of settler colonialism,

including our complicity in ongoing settler emplacement on stolen Land, the enduring

detrimental impacts of settler colonialism and resource exploitation/extractivism on

Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Lands, and our personal colonial histories that

generate any personal and familial privilege from which we continue to benefit. Finally,

this model of settler decolonizing indicates the crucial importance of paying attention to,

learning from, and foregrounding the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples and

communities, and acknowledging the primacy and sophistication of their cultural

ancestral knowledges. We need to respect and appreciate the generous efforts of

Indigenous peoples to protect their Lands for future generations and to teach non-

Indigenous peoples respect for others and the Land.

Expanding Growth Rings, Planting Seeds, and Nourishing Learning

The tree model reflects the constant, ongoing, cyclical process of decolonizing

learning and growth. The tree draws water and nutrients from the soil in order to

flourish. In much the same way, decolonizing learners may draw reflexivity and lived

experience to learn about themselves and their relationality with Indigenous peoples and

Land. The tree grows and produces leaves or fruit. What the tree brings forth eventually

falls to the earth, where it nourishes the soil or grows new trees. The soil, enriched by the

decaying leaves, nurtures subsequent growth, and the fruits are seeds for new trees, which

grow in relationship to the parent tree.

Similarly, as a person encounters new decolonizing awareness, active learning

flourishes and nurtures new learning in any or all of the realms represented by the branch

clusters. In the model presented above, the cross section of the tree trunk, which shows

the growth rings of the tree, represents the first four phases of settler decolonizing

learning processes: pre-awareness, awareness, active learning, and internalization. The sap flows continuously through all of these layers and ultimately supports the tree to transform itself or grow a new ring. Likewise, a settler learner may exist simultaneously in, and flow continuously through, all of these realms of learning.

The core of the tree model represents the phase when settler learners learn passively (inadvertently or unconsciously), and yet move towards an epiphany or moment of new awareness. The next ring on the tree model represents moments of new awareness, when the settler learner can actively choose to engage in and seek out opportunities to decolonize their learning in the three key realms represented by the upper branches (Engaging with Indigeneity, Settler Identity, and Dynamics of Settler–Indigenous Relationships). Once they choose to actively learn (represented by the third ring), and also as they continue to cycle deeper into new awareness depths through new experiences and reflexivity, the decolonizing learning begins to internalize (the fourth tree ring). It helps to shift or transform the settler towards new ways of knowing and being in the world. As settlers decolonize their own ways of knowing and being, and begin to increasingly support Indigenous Land repatriation, they are more effectively positioned to teach and eventually mentor others to teach to come to similar decolonizing understandings and engage in decolonizing learning processes.

In the tree model, the seeds represent the teaching phase, in which a settler learner and educator invites others to decolonize their own learning. Finally, the falling leaves represent the mentorship phase, where settler educators work to nourish, facilitate, and support other educators so that they may decolonize their praxes. At the same time, the mentor continues to nourish and nurture their own reflexive learning process.

Like a tree, we are no doubt shaped by our ecosystem and influenced by the natural and built environment around us; also like a tree, which may contribute to and even transform its ecosystem by offering a home to a squirrel, providing shade to smaller plants, or changing the pH of the soil through the decay of its leaves, we have the capacity to contribute to and transform our ecosystem (our human and more-than-human communities) away from settler colonial culture and towards respectful relationality. We can achieve this through our own learning with and in relation to others.

Problematizing 'Invasive Plants' and Considering Possibilities for Self-limitations

My theoretical model, Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality for Decolonization, provides direction to settlers on how we might take responsibility to overcome our complicity in ongoing settler colonialism. Tuck and Yang's 2012 article, *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*, was pivotal in pushing me to consider even more deeply whether or not the way I conceptualize, enact, and teach about decolonization is sufficiently respectful and ethical. I know my intentions are sincere, but I also know that good intentions are not enough. Tuck and Yang state unequivocally that, "decolonization is not a metaphor." Rather, the primary goal of decolonization is (must be) Indigenous Land repatriation. They state:

> Decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of
> land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have
> always already been differently understood and enacted…. decolonization is
> necessarily unsettling, especially across lines of solidarity…. Settler
> colonialism, and its decolonization, implicates and unsettles everyone. (p. 7)

They identify and warn against several common "settler moves to innocence," (p. 1) which are stances or positions that non-Indigenous peoples often take in order to ignore or shirk responsibility for our culpability as settler colonizers in perpetuating settler colonial harm towards Indigenous peoples and Lands.

Settler Moves to Innocence

Tuck and Yang (2012) express their concern with the trend in educational discourse to metaphorize 'decolonization,' or to employ the term when referring to any, or all, social justice projects, critical pedagogies, and other efforts to de-centre settler perspectives. They argue, "decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (p. 1). Furthermore, they explain:

> Because settler colonialism is built upon an entangled triad structure of settler native-slave, the decolonial desires of white, non-white, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism. The metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or 'settler moves to innocence,' that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity. (p. 1)

Tuck and Yang identify and discuss six common settler moves to innocence, although there are likely infinitely more ways in which settlers try to assuage our guilt and either purposely or unconsciously reinforce subtle (yet equally insidious) forms of settler colonialism through our actions and the positions we occupy. Below, I summarize the six settler moves to innocence that Tuck and Yang identify:

Settler nativism. This occurs when a settler locates or invents a distant

Indigenous ancestor. This move generally leads settlers to eschew culpability in settler colonial violence while maintaining settler power and privilege (p. 10).

Settler adoption fantasies. This move to innocence, which rests on the erroneous assumption that Indigenous peoples are becoming extinct, positions settlers as the hopeful recipients of Indigenous knowledge and ultimately Land (p. 13).

Colonial equivocation. This refers to the equivocation of all forms of oppression as decolonization that lead to ambiguous understandings of decolonization and other forms social justice work (p. 17).

Conscientization. In this move to innocence, settlers exclusively focus on decolonizing the mind and cultivating critical consciousness, without actually working toward Indigenous Land repatriation (p. 19).

At-risk-ing/Asterisking. The at-risking phenomenon refers to the way in which settlers re-victimize Indigenous peoples by describing them as almost extinct, and as primarily struggling socially, culturally, or economically. Asterisking refers to the fact that the particularities of Indigenous groups are often poorly represented in data sets that inform public policy (p. 22).

Re-occupation and urban homesteading. Re-occupation can occur through social justice movements that advocate for anti-capitalist rights of marginalized groups, but which nonetheless reinforce pro-colonial occupation of Indigenous Land. Often, such movements call for the redistribution of 'wealth,' but fail to recognize or redress the fact that 'redistribution of wealth' requires a redistribution of Land (i.e., *Indigenous* Land) (p. 23). Furthermore, while urban homesteading (which can become akin to playing 'Indian') may reject aspects of Western state governance, the movement's imperative to

claim Land for the commons erases existing and future Indigenous rights to Land, leadership, and self-government (p. 28).

If settler environmental educators are serious about making an effective and respectful contribution to decolonization (including Indigenous Land repatriation), then we must familiarize ourselves with these settler moves to innocence. We must learn to see the ways we so easily fall into these traps, however wittingly or unwittingly. We must strive to resist the allure of a (false) sense of innocence. To do this—to resist innocence and instead unsettle ourselves—we need to know what moving towards accountability, responsibility, and respectful relationality entails.

As I delineated in Chapter 5, and summarized above, both my study and the resulting theoretical model of Settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality for Decolonization have provided ten moves to relationality that may help settlers to avoid the re-colonizing pitfalls that Tuck and Yang described as 'settler moves to innocence.' None of these 'moves to relationality' are easy, and all necessitate a deep, ongoing commitment to learning, even though this will require humbling ourselves and making ourselves vulnerable. They likewise demand grappling with resultant uncomfortable and unsettling emotions.

Taking Responsibility to Heal my Settler Colonial Disease

In this dissertation, I have proposed multiple unsettling understandings (as shifts towards relationality) that are part of what I have called a settler decolonizing journey. I still constantly question whether or not my work simply extends a metaphor, surreptitiously reinforcing settler colonialism rather than effectively operationalizing decolonization/Land repatriation. I have grappled with whether or not the model of

settler decolonizing that I propose is supportive of Indigenous Land repatriation and an

Indigenous futurity or if I am simply as of yet unable to see how they ensure settler

futurity.[8]

I appreciate Tuck and McKenzie's (2015) assertion that acknowledging and

exploring incommensurabilities between various goals of critical pedagogy or

environmental studies and Indigenous perspectives may lead us all to deeper learning. I

have tried to consider how each of the findings I propose in this study—in particular the

settler shift(ing)s to respectful relationality—may bring settlers closer to enacting Land

repatriation and actually dismantling the inequitable socio-ecological structures of settler

colonialism. I have contemplated if and how the shifts in understanding, which I

proposed in the findings and represented in the theoretical tree model, can help other

settlers as well as myself to learn to live *as though* this is Indigenous Land—because it *is*

Indigenous Land. How can settlers enact Land repatriation in our daily lives even before

settler colonial reign is abolished in laws, policies, and social institutions?

Along with my clear focus on the pathways for settlers to follow so that they may

participate respectfully in decolonizing education, I do take very seriously the critique by

Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) that multiple previous attempts to intervene on

the settler colonial project—notably multiculturalism, critical race theory, and

browning—have been thwarted primarily by White scholars who have co-opted and

appropriated the discourses, effectively subsuming these interventions into the normative

'Whitestream.' They posit that the reason why these interventions "failed to interrupt

---

[8]   Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) explain that 'futurity' does not equate with 'future' and rather
refers to the ways in which the future becomes knowable. They posit that Indigenous futurity does not
"foreclose the inhabitation of Indigenous land by non-Indigenous peoples, but does foreclose settler
colonialism and settler epistemologies … Indigenous futurity does not require the erasure of now-settlers in
the ways that settler futurity requires of Indigenous peoples" (p. 80).

settler colonialism and settler colonial replacement is that each has tried to make powerful shifts without alienating white settlers" (p. 85). They explain that scholars and community members working to decolonize are often expected either to assuage the anxiety and uncertainty that White-settlers feel or to provide direction to settlers about what to do and how to fit in to anti-colonial projects.

Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez advocate for "refusal" (p. 85), whereby Indigenous and non-White settlers would simply reject seeking settler colonial justification or soothing settler anxieties. They explicitly clarify that it is not Indigenous peoples' responsibility to spend time directing settlers, and they state that, "settlers … must hold one another accountable when they invade emergent work by requiring it to comfort their dis-ease. That is as far as we will go to provide instructions. There isn't an easy ending" (p. 86).

At various points in my learning journey, I have struggled with the settler sentiments that Tuck and Gaztambide (2013) have problematized. I regularly grapple with whether or not my engagement with 'decolonizing' co-opts the critiques of Indigenous educators, scholars, and communities, and whether or not my efforts actually re-centre Whiteness rather than decolonize. As I wrote about in several of my vignettes, I know that I have been enculturated over decades into a settler colonizer identity, albeit a White-settler who is deeply committed to continuously shifting this identity. I am well aware that I still cannot see the depth of my own Eurocentrism and colonizer identity, and I will not claim to have overcome the grip of the insidious settler colonial project of replacement. Quite possibly, someone from a stance other than my own might see instances of settler colonial replacement logic remaining in my thinking and actions—and

indeed, I would be grateful for this type of critical decolonizing feedback.

Tuck and Gaztambide's assertion (2013) that it is not Indigenous peoples' responsibility to instruct settlers or make room for settlers and that it is our responsibility as settlers to hold one another accountable is *precisely* the reason why I chose to continue to engage with the decolonizing project as my dissertation study. I do not wish to draw on decolonizing initiatives to comfort settlers' dis-ease. Quite the opposite, I want to hold myself and other settlers accountable. I want to invite other settler educators to engage deeply with important issues of Indigenous and Land justice despite the very unsettling and discomforting emotions that will emerge. I want to (un/re)learn, teach other settlers, and ensure that the next generations of non-Indigenous peoples living on Turtle Island are not enculturated to re-become settler colonizers. I want to persist in encouraging settlers to engage with education-towards-reconciliation despite the fact that to do so will be difficult, unsettling, and uncomfortable. To engage effectively, respectfully, or ethically will require all settlers to listen to, seriously contend with, and hopefully learn to move beyond, the settler pitfalls that may at times seem inescapable. The (re-)education of non-Indigenous Canadians is a contribution that I believe I am well-positioned to make.

Assessing the Quality of my Study

To assess and ensure the overall quality of my doctoral study, I draw on Tracy's (2010) Eight 'Big Tent' Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. There has been notable and understandable contention from qualitative researchers about the possibility of a universal set of criteria applicable to all qualitative research. Tracy acknowledges the debates that have occurred in discourses about qualitative research over the past one

or two decades about whether or not there is a need for standardized evaluation criteria and whether or not this is even possible or desired given the varied and complex nature of methodological approaches in qualitative research. However, Tracy makes a strong case for her model on the basis that it is flexible and expansive, and that it considers both the means (methods and practices) and ends of any qualitative research.

Positioning herself as a researcher who values interpretive, critical, and poststructural research, Tracy (2010) asks, "Is it possible to create a parsimonious set of universal criteria for qualitative quality that still attends to the complexity of the qualitative landscape" (p. 839)? Following an inductive analysis of qualitative best practices literature drawn from the fields of poststructural, performative, and creative analytic research, she answers, somewhat provocatively, with a tentative 'yes.' Tracy proposes eight 'big tent' criteria of qualitative quality: a) worthy topic; b) rich rigor; c) sincerity; d) credibility; e) resonance; f) significant contribution; g) ethics; and h) meaningful coherence. She writes:

> This conceptualization is designed to provide a parsimonious pedagogical tool, promote respect from power keepers who often misunderstand and misevaluate qualitative work, develop a platform from which qualitative scholars can join together in unified voice when desired, and encourage dialogue and learning amongst qualitative methodologists from various paradigms. (p. 839)

In this section, I evaluate the quality of my qualitative (auto-ethnographic) study in the context of Tracy's eight criteria.

Worthy Topic

The first criterion, ***worthy topic***, indicates that to be of quality, the research should

be relevant, timely, interesting, significant, or evocative. Its relevance or timeliness may be in the context of the discipline (e.g., a gap in literature, a recent disciplinary trend or conundrum), society (e.g., addresses a pressing social issue), or a personal event.

My study meets this criterion in all three of these contexts. In my introduction and literature review, I outlined and provided evidence for the deep and pressing need to work for justice for Indigenous peoples and Land, to overcome settler colonialism (particularly in educational settings), and to improve Indigenous–settler relations. I identified a gap in outdoor and environmental education discourse that perpetuated settler colonial logics of settler emplacement onto Land and established the need for a conceptualization of settler decolonizing learning. Furthermore, through my vignettes and personal reflections as data, I illustrated that this study was a timely and relevant next step in my own decolonizing learning journey. For these reasons, I am confident that I have met the first of Tracy's criterion.

Rich Rigor

Tracy's second criterion, ***rich rigor***, suggests that descriptions and explanations should be bountiful, generous, and unrestrained. Furthermore, Tracy argues that richness stems from having the appropriate levels of complexity, flexibility, and variety to match the multifaceted theories, data sources, contexts, and samples involved in the study. To compliment richness, *rigor* refers to the due diligence, care, time, and thoroughness of a researcher's work.

Prior to and during my study, I made a number of research decisions that I argue enhanced the rich rigor of my study. First, I blended evocative and analytic auto-ethnography, which allowed me to infuse my dissertation with plenty of unrestrained

description through personal vignettes or stories. My choice to leave these stories intact helped preserve the rich complexity that could not have been achieved through fragmented and decontextualized data. It was a flexible approach that assisted me in integrating several multifaceted sources of data, including personal memory, object-artifacts, photographs, existing written reflections, and newly generated narrative data. I also attended to care, thoroughness, and diligence throughout my research process. For example, during an early phase of data analysis, I took the time to solicit feedback from several 'critical friends' on the resonance of my findings with our field of practice. Second, found myself re-writing and expanding various chapters of my dissertation to reflect my ongoing learning each time I encountered a new theoretical lens that I may have missed in earlier iterations. I believe that these actions illustrate my deep commitment to rich rigor through my study.

Sincerity

The next marker of quality is ***sincerity,*** which occurs when the study achieves "self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). Tracy maintains that sincerity is connected to authenticity and genuineness, and she notes that self-reflexivity combines evidence of self-awareness and a willingness to expose oneself.

My study abounds with sincerity and self-reflexivity. For me, reflexivity was not an addition to a study of other people as participants; my study was an auto-ethnography that *relied on* reflexivity about settler decolonizing—a process that requires vulnerability, and that advocates for greater honesty and truth telling. Throughout my study, I strove to unsettle myself and share with my readers the difficult emotions and uncertainties that

accompanied my decolonizing learning process. I refused to shy away from sharing memories that may have been embarrassing, rather using those stories as opportunities to further my learning through the reflexive research process. Even beyond the narrative auto-ethnographic data, I maintained a reflexive lens throughout my dissertation, carefully explaining my intentions behind each research design decision, and acknowledging where I may have grappled with theoretical conundrums.

Credibility

Credibility, Tracy's fourth criterion, establishes trustworthiness and plausibility of research findings. Credible research is persuasive. It provides a believable account of a situated—cultural, individual, social, communal—reality. Several traits characterize or contribute to the credibility of qualitative research. Some, such as member reflections, are more applicable to research with participants. Others are more clearly compatible with auto-ethnographic research. These include 'thick description' (in-depth illustration and/or abundant concrete detail that provides context) and 'crystallization' (through multiple data types, researcher viewpoints, theoretical frames, and methods of analysis in order to expand the complexity and depth of an issue [p. 843]).

In my study, I strove to preserve and convey complexity rather than to reduce my findings, and I directly and indirectly suggested ways in which my rich situated experiences may be relevant to others. One way that I achieved this was by providing contextual details throughout my narrative data. I also invoked multi-vocality by remembering and writing from a variety of positions within my own identity at various stages of my learning journey. Throughout my study, I offered my authentic self through personal reflection, self-critique, and appreciative examples; I hope these traits will lead

readers to assess my research contribution as a credible and trustworthy account of a 'real' and believable settler decolonizing journey.

Resonance

The fifth benchmark, ***resonance,*** is "the research's ability to meaningfully reverberate and affect an audience" (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). This can be achieved in two interconnected ways: through a study's aesthetic merit (how it is presented, including evocation) and transferability or naturalistic generalization (p. 845). Transferability occurs when evocative stories create vicarious emotions in the readers, leading them to consider how the research relates to their own situations and experiences. Similarly, naturalistic generalization occurs when data from a specific case or moment in time inspires readers to reflect on similar themes in their own contextualized and lived experiences. Techniques such as direct testimony, rich description, and accessible invitational writing encourage transferability.

All of these techniques are evident in my research, and of particular note, the main outcome of my study, the theoretical model of settler decolonizing, is meant to invite others to shift towards decolonizing and to show readers how that process might be possible in their own lives. My use of Strong-Wilson's (2007) touchstone story/counter-story method to generate a story of confrontation served not only to generate reflexive data for my study, but also to illustrate to readers a tool or method that they could employ themselves to decolonize their remembering of past events.

Significant Contribution

This sixth marker of excellent qualitative research, ***significant contribution***, refers to three possible types of significance: practical significance (the research is useful

for creating change, working against injustice, framing a contemporary problem, or seeing the world in a new way); heuristic significance (the research develops curiosity, interest in further research, or novel concepts that can be explored in further settings); and/or theoretical significance (the research extends, critiques, or builds disciplinary knowledge).

I believe that my research makes significant contributions in all three of these ways. Practically, it works against settler colonial injustice and creates change both as a text that will be read by others and as an active process that helped to further my own decolonizing process. My study has heuristic significance because, while my findings are situated and partial, they provide a starting point from which other researchers and educators can learn from in their own contexts. I hope that the new conceptual model is flexible enough to encourage readers, educators, researchers, and students to think more deeply about the meanings of their own experiences. The theoretical contribution of my study to the fields of environmental education and decolonizing education is perhaps its most significant feature of this research. The findings of this study fill a significant theoretical gap in the literature, providing what I would argue is among the first of comprehensive conceptualizations of settler decolonizing processes in environmental education. I feel proud and excited to be able to make this contribution at this early stage of my academic career, and I look forward to working with others in the field to undertake further research in this direction.

Ethical Research

Tracy's seventh criterion is ***ethical research***. By this she means that a study meets or exceeds respectful procedural, situational, and relational ethical standards.

Procedural ethics are those that are formally codified by research ethics boards. Situational ethics asks whether or not the 'means justify the ends.' Relational ethics refers to an "ethical self-consciousness in which researchers are mindful of their character, actions, and consequences on others" (Tracy, 2010, p. 847).

The most salient ethical obligation I felt in my auto-ethnographic study was towards relational ethics. As an auto-ethnographic researcher, I did not have direct testimonials from participants. However, my own experiences, on which I was writing and reflecting, were all relational; they often implicated other people who, by the nature of my study, did not have the opportunity to share their opinions and perspectives about the situation. I used several strategies to ensure relational ethics. For example, I frequently omitted key details that would have compromised the identity of a person who I described in a story. At times, when I felt that it would be impossible to anonymize someone, I chose to omit the story itself from Chapter 4 of the dissertation, and instead represent its important themes in the table of artifact themes (in the appendix). Furthermore, I felt compelled to attend to relational ethics on a meta-level, which meant that with each research decision I made, and throughout my review of literature, interpretations, and discussions, I thought about how my words and actions would affect or impact my Indigenous colleagues, friends, community members, and other Indigenous scholars who have helped shape my understandings through their writing. I considered how to be as respectful and honestly decolonizing as I possibly could.

Meaningful Coherence

Finally, Tracy's eighth criterion, ***meaningful coherence***, occurs when a study meets four goals: "(a) achieve their stated purpose; (b) accomplish what they espouse to

be about; (c) use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms and (d) attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research foci, methods and findings" (p. 848).

My dissertation did not emerge in a linear fashion, and that is because I strove to maintain coherence throughout the entire study. I chose auto-ethnography because I had heard several Elders suggest that 'decolonizing' learning needs to start from within, with an understanding of one's own history, culture, and identity. As I encountered new literature that supported the purpose for my study or that enhanced the meaning of my findings, I updated my literature review. Throughout the research design process, I carefully considered how to blend approaches, such as evocative storywork and analytic constructivist grounded theory so as to tailor the design to my specific context and goals of decolonizing my research. I chose to feature storytelling and narrative as a form of data generation because this approach was congruent with Indigenous ways of knowing. When choosing an analysis method, for example, I followed the example of noted Aboriginal scholar, Margaret Kovach. My research questions very clearly respond to the gap in understanding that I identified in my literature review, and my findings are coherent specifically because they answer these questions and because the new conceptual model fits seamlessly into the literature trajectory that I outlined and discussed. Finally, I maintained coherence by continuously employing a reflexive decolonizing lens throughout all stages of my study and dissertation.

While I am confident that I have met all eight of Tracy's 'Big Tent' criteria for excellent research, the quality of my research must ultimately be assessed and evaluated by my readers. The value of this contribution to the fields of environmental education,

decolonizing education, and settler colonial studies will become evident in the ways that other scholars respond to and expand on this work in their own research. The usefulness of the conceptual tree model as a tool for self-reflection for educators and their students will become clearer as teachers and teacher educators implement it in their classrooms. I will be excited to have reached a point when I am able to disseminate my findings and proceed with further research to test the congruence of the new theoretical model, Settler Shift(ing)s To Respectful Relationality for Decolonization, with the lived experiences of other settler environmental educators. I will be equally excited to be able to test its effectiveness as a tool for promoting settler decolonizing both in and through education.

Future Research

While my study aims to fill a gap in the literature by conceptualizing decolonizing for settler Canadians, it is a small-scale inquiry via auto-ethnography. As such, it is not intended to provide a comprehensive or exhaustive explanation of all possible iterations of settler decolonizing journeys. By way of a model, this study provides a point of comparison for other researchers and educators who wish to reflexively explore their own decolonizing experiences in order to expand the theories about the multiple ways people learn, experience, and understand respectful relationality. It offers a point of departure for educators and teacher educators who may wish to draw on a framework for developing pedagogical, curricular, and programmatic approaches to decolonizing education. With this in mind, I also hope that my research and the findings of this study inspire future research on the topic so that we can work effectively in as many contexts as possible to disrupt and dismantle ongoing settler colonialism.

The settler understandings (or shifts to respectful relationality) that I propose here may be more useful to those educators working with students who are already convinced of the value and importance of self-reflexivity and decolonizing change. As such, more research is needed regarding how to disrupt deep racism and Euro-western ignorance amongst those settlers who are adamantly resistant to considering transformative change towards respectful relationality. Of particular interest to environmental educators may be research into how the field of environmental education could serve as a potential site for critical change that could inform other realms of decolonizing educational praxis.

While the auto-ethnographic narratives offer some examples of the kinds of experiences that facilitate settler decolonizing, more research is still needed on how to best facilitate/teach these deep relational understandings age-appropriately: in elementary and secondary schools; in bachelor of education programs, where students often operate at a pre-awareness stance and need to be able to teach when they graduate; and in graduate education programs, where future faculty members will be required to mentor new teachers. Future research might examine the curricular and programmatic design implications of my findings.

Of significant need and importance are studies that more closely examine the experiences of non-White-Euro-settlers (and others who often experience power inequities and injustices as a result of settler colonial dynamics) and White-Euro-settlers (and those who often claim/maintain power and privilege as a result of settler colonialism), and make clearer distinctions between them.

Finally, another direction for future research on settler decolonizing may be to explore the perspectives, insights, and experiences of Indigenous peoples who may

witness, support, teach, or be otherwise entwined in settler decolonizing. This could offer a closer examination of points of resonance with, and possible incommensurabilities of, settler decolonizing with decolonization's ultimate goal of Land repatriation (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuck & MacKenzie, 2015).

Epilogue

When I think back to the narrative I shared at the beginning of this dissertation, I once again find renewed hope. In my own family, in my grandmother's lifetime, there has been tremendous change—shifts in our awareness of Indigenous peoples and Land, in our critical self-awareness and commitment to disrupt settler colonialism, and in our understandings about how we might live respectfully here. Whereas my colonizer great-grandfather sought to 'help the Indians' by teaching large-scale farming and land cultivation, I am striving to learn from Indigenous peoples about how to respect the Land and the Indigenous people of the Land. I see that drastic change, both for better and for worse, can happen in one lifetime. We do have agency: We can choose to learn about ourselves, and our complicity in injustice, and we can decide to live respectfully. We have the capacity to change ourselves, and our communities, and specifically to decolonize our teaching praxes, schools, and educational systems.

I have two young sons, and already they are learning respectful relationality. My four-year-old knows that the families of Mi'kmaw people have always lived here and still do, and that our family ancestors used to live in Scotland (where he has visited), Germany, Switzerland, and England. When we lived in British Columbia, he loved to regularly visit the university displays showcasing the art of the Lheidli Tenneh and other west coast First Nations cultures.

Figure 19. Carving by Gitxan artist Ron Sebastian, Senate chamber doors, UNBC.

He has attended powwows and other cultural events where Mi'kmaw drumming and dancing take place. He has listened to Mi'kmaq in a story that was shared by the mother of his Mi'kmaw classmate. He has watched a film about Inuit stories of climate change in Nunatsiavut. My four-month-old was with me as I smudged at an event at Unama'ki College, and also on multiple occasions when we were invited into a round dance.

These are very small examples of intercultural engagement, and I know they are not enough, yet my older son's level of awareness and relational understanding is far beyond what my own was at that young age. In addition to all the other parenting responsibilities, I grapple every day with the ways in which my children are being enculturated into settler society, through my uncritical actions when I am tired and succumb to my colonial privilege of taking a break from considering these issues.

However, I also find hope in the fact that my young children have not yet been fully enculturated into a settler colonial worldview. I have the opportunity to help them learn respectful relationality now so that their future co-learning journeys with

Indigenous friends and community members will not need to focus on decolonizing and

disrupting settler colonial injustice. I am hopeful that when my own great-grandchildren

reach the age I am now, educational discourses of decolonizing (and indeed my tree

model) will be archaic or obsolete.

I often feel lost and uncertain as to how to teach and mentor my children towards

respectful relationality. I frequently wonder how and when will I introduce them to the

difficult knowledge about our shared colonial history with Indigenous peoples. How will

I help them understand who they are in a way that encourages accountability and respect,

but also teaches them to celebrate their own cultural heritages and family traditions? I

am grateful that I am surrounded by friends and colleagues with young children who also

think and talk about these intercultural issues. This community offers me hope. We may

not have all the answers, but we are critically and appreciatively aware of the questions

surrounding decolonization, and dedicated to seeking answers. We are committed to our

own learning and to helping our children learn and choose to enact respect.

And so, what would my vision be for my own children's education? I would like

them to play, work, and learn in the outdoors and in the community as much as possible,

guided in their learning by educators who respect the local Indigenous Land as First

Teacher. They would learn, alongside their Indigenous peers, the Indigenous place

names, histories, and meanings of the Land where they live. They would have the

opportunity to explore their own family histories and learn about other places that may

once have been their ancestral Lands. I hope that they have the opportunity to learn from

Indigenous and settler educators who work together to model respectful intercultural

relationships. Educators, in collaboration with parents, Elders, and other community

members, would mentor Indigenous- and settler children on their co-learning journeys. They would not shy away from complex issues, but rather work in circle to listen to each other, embrace uncertainty, and learn from incommensurabilities. Two-Eyed Seeing, ecological métissage, and other examples of intercultural ways of knowing would help students imagine or reimagine how to live sustainably and joyfully, using the wisdom of multiple cultural worldviews.

I have long been inspired by Marie Battiste's famous quote, "You can't be the global doctor if you're the colonial disease" (2005, p. 1). Outdoor educators and environmental educators often feel desperately compelled to heal the earth from the deep devastation and destruction of exploitation, and we may wish to reach out in solidarity with Indigenous communities as they lead the resilient and courageous efforts to protect their Lands and cultures. But Battiste's quote makes it clear: Working in respectful solidarity with Indigenous peoples and the Land is not possible without first healing ourselves from the ravages of our own disease, settler colonial enculturation.

I challenge all settler outdoor educators and environmental educators to reflect deeply on the questions and themes raised through the narrative examples within this study, the proposed settler Shift(ing)s to Respectful Relationality model, our own ongoing decolonizing experiences and understandings, and our lived individual and collective relations with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Lands. As Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall and Yupiak Elder Oscar Kawagley, from opposite coasts of Turtle Island have both articulated in their own way, the pathway to healing needs to start with self-understanding.

REFERENCES

Akulukjuk, T. & Rassmussen, D. (2009). My father was told to talk to the environment before anything else: Arctic environmental education in the language of the land. In M. McKenzie, P. Hart, H. Bai, & B. Jickling (Eds.), *Fields of green: Restorying culture, environment, and education* (pp. 285-298). Cresskill: Hampton Press.

Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(4), 373-395.

Archibald, J., Lundy, J., Reynolds, C., & Williams, L., (2010). *Association of Canadian Deans of Education Accord on Indigenous Education.* Retrieved from http://www.csse-scee.ca/docs/acde/acde_accord_indigenousresearch_en.pdf

Archibald, J. O'um O'um Xiiem. (2008). *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Ariss, R. with Cutfeet, J. (2012). *Keeping the Land: Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, reconciliation and Canadian law*. Toronto: Fernwood Publishing.

Assembly of First Nations. (2013). *Education, Jurisdiction and Governance AFN Annual Report 2013.* Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/policy-areas/education

Atkinson, P. (2006). Rescuing Autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(4), 400-404.

Barnhardt, R. (2008). Creating a place for Indigenous knowledge in education: The Alaska Native Knowledge Network. In D. Gruenwald & G. Smith (Eds.), *Place-based Education in the Global Age: Local diversity* (pp. 49-64). New York: Taylor and Francis.

Barnhardt, R. & Kawagley, A. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems and Alaska Native ways of knowing. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 8-23.

Bartlett, C, Marshall, M. & Marshall, A. (2012). Two-eyed seeing and other lessons. *Journal of Environmental Studies, 2*(4), 331-340.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the learning spirit.* Saskatoon: Purich Publishing.

Battiste, M. (2010). Nourishing the learning spirit: Living our way to new thinking. *Education Canada 50*(1). Retrieved from http://www.cea-ace.ca/sites/default/files/EdCan-2010-v50-n1-Battiste.pdf

Battiste, M. (2005). You can't be the global doctor if you're the colonial disease. In P. Tripp & L. Muzzin (Eds.), *Teaching as activism* (pp. 121-133). Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press.

Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an Ally.* Toronto: Fernwood.

Bishop, R. (2005). Chapter 5: Kaupapa Maori approach. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research third edition* (pp. 109-138*).* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bochner, A. P. (2000). Criteria against ourselves. *Qualitative Inquiry 6*(2), 266-272.

Bowers, C. A. (2007). A response to McLaren's revisionist interpretation of Friere. *Capitalism Nature Socialism, 18*(1), 109-118.

Brant-Castellano, M., Davis, L., & Lahache, L. (2000). *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Cajete, G. (1999). Reclaiming biophilia: Lessons from Indigenous peoples. In G. Smith and D. Williams (Eds.), *Ecological education in action: On weaving education, culture and the environment* (pp. 180-206)*.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Calliou, S. (1998). Us/them, me/you: Who? (Re)thinking the binary of First Nations and non-First Nations. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *22*(1), 28-52.

Calderón, D. (2014). Speaking back to manifest destinies: A Land-based approach to critical curriculum inquiry. *Environmental Education Research, 20*(1), 24-36.

CBC News (December 30, 2013). Top 5 Aboriginal Stories of 2013. *CBC News Canada*. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/top-5-aboriginal-stories-of-2013-1.2477363

CBC News (2008, June 11). PM cites sad chapter in apology for residential schools. *CBC News Canada*. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/pm-cites-sad-chapter-in-apology-for-residential-schools-1.699389

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry second edition* (pp. 249-291). London: Sage Publications Limited.

Council of Ministers of Education Canada. (2009). *Strengthening Aboriginal success.* Retrieved from *www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/221/aboriginal_summit_report.pdf*

Davies, L. (2010). Introduction. In L. Davies (Ed.), *Alliances: Re/envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships* (pp. 1-12). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Davies and Shpuniarsky, H. (2010). The spirit of relationships: What we have learned about Indigenous-non-Indigenous alliances and coalitions. In L. Davies (Ed.), Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigneous-non-Indigenous relationships (pp. 334-348). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2005). Introduction. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research third edition* (pp. 1-32). London: Thousand Oaks.

Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies for qualitative inquiry second edition* (pp. 249-291). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. & Smith, L. (2008). *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies.* Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. (2006). Analytic autoethnography, or déjà vu all over again. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 35*(4), 419-428.

Denzin, N. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dion, S., Johnston, K., & Rice, C. (2010). *Decolonizing our Schools: Aboriginal education in the Toronto District School Board.* Toronto. Retrieved from http://ycec.edu.yorku.ca/files/2012/11/Decolonizing-Our-Schools.pdf

Dion, S. (2009). *Braiding histories: Learning from Aboriginal peoples' experiences and perspectives.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Dion, S. (2007). Disrupting molded images: Identities, responsibilities and relationships – teachers and Indigenous subject material. *Teaching Education, 18*(4), 329-342.

Donald, D. (2009). Forts, curriculum, and metissage: Imagining decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian relations in educational contexts. *First Nations Perspectives 2*(1), 1-2.

Donald, D. (2012). Forts, curriculum and ethical relationality. In N. Ng-A-Fook & J. Rottmann (Eds.), *Reconsidering Canadian curriculum studies: Provoking historical, present, and future perspectives* (pp. 39-46). New York: Palgrave, MacMillan.

Ellingson, L., and Ellis, C. (2008). Autoethnography as constructionist project. In J. A. Holstein & J. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 445-466). New York: Guilford Press.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P., (2010). Autoethnography: An Overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1), Art. 10. Retrieved from http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108.

Ellis, Carolyn. (2004). *The Ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography.* Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). *Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject.* In N. K. Denzin, ed. , & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 768– 733). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2006). Analyzing analytic autoethnography: An autopsy *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35(4), 429-449.

Exley, H. (Ed.) (1989). *What it's like to be me*. Cincinnati OH: Friendship Press.

Fitznor, L., Haig-Brown, C. & Moses, L. (2000). Editorial: (De)colonizing academe: Knowing our relations. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 24*(2), 75-81.

Freire, P. (1970/2003). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Godlewska, A, Moore, J., & Bednasek, C.D. (2010). Cultivating ignorance of Aboriginal relations. *The Canadian Geographer, 54*(4), 417- 440.

Gorski, P. (2008). Good intentions are not enough: A decolonizing intercultural education. *Intercultural Education*, *19*(6), 515 - 525.

Government of Alberta. (2002). *First Nation, Metis, and Inuit education policy Framework.* Retrieved from www.education.alberta.ca

Government of Alberta. (2009). *First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Council.* Retrieved from (www.education.alberta.ca)

Government of Ontario. (2009). *Building bridges to success for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students.* Retrieved from (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/),

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

Gruenewald/Greenwood, D. (2003). The Best of Both Worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher, 32*(4), 3-12.

Gruenewald/Greenwood, D. (2008a). A critical pedagogy of place: From gridlock to parallax. *Environmental Education Research, 14*(3), 336-348.

Gruenewald, D. (2008b). Place Based Education: Grounding culturally responsive teaching in geographical diversity. In D. Gruenewald & G. Smith (Eds.), *Place-based education in the global age: Local diversity* (pp. 137-153). New York: Taylor and Francis.

Haig-Brown, C. & Dannenmann, K. (2008). The land is first teacher: The Indigenous knowledge instructors program. In Z. Bekerman & E. Kopelowitz (Eds.), *Cultural education – cultural sustainability: Minority, diaspora, Indigenous and ethno-religious groups in multicultural societies* (pp. 245-264). New York: Routledge.

Haig-Brown, C. & Dannenmann, K. (2002). A Pedagogy of the land: Dreams of respectful relations. *McGill Journal of Education 37*(3), 451-468.

Haldane, S., Lafond, G., & Krause, C. (2012). Nurturing the learning spirit of First Nation students. *The report of the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve*. Retrieved from http://firstnationeducation.ca/wp-content/themes/clf3/pdfs/Report_02_2012.pdf

Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity and voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Higgins, M., Costello, B., & Korteweg, L. (2015). Witnessing halted destruction. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 18*(2), 251-256.

Jones, A. & Jenkins, K. (2008). Rethinking collaboration: Working the Indigene-colonizer hyphen. In K. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, & L. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 471-486). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Kapryka, J. & Dockstator, M. (2012). Indigenous knowledges and Western knowledges in environmental education: Acknowledging the tensions for the benefits of a "Two-Worlds" approach. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 17*(1), 80-96.

Kawulich, B. (2004). Data analysis techniques in qualitative research. In, D. Twale (Ed.), *Journal of research in education, 14*(1), 96-113.

King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories*. Toronto, Anansi Press.

Kirkness, V. and Barnhardt, R. (2001). First Nations and higher education: The Four R's - respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. In R. Hayoe & J. Pan (Eds.), *Knowledge across cultures: A contribution to dialogue among civilizations*. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.

Korteweg, L. & Oakley, J. (2012). Eco-heroes out of place and relations: decolonizing the narratives of Into the Wild and Grizzly Man through Land education. *Environmental Education Research, 20*(1), 131-143.

Korteweg, L., Root, E., Peerla, D. (2014). *Dark matters of decolonizing Canadian environmental education*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Korteweg, L., & Russell, C. (2012). Editorial: decolonizing + Indigenizing = moving environmental education towards reconciliation. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 17*, 5-14.

Korteweg, L. (2010). *The Lakehead Public School Board's Urban Aboriginal Education Project final report.* Retrieved from: http://ontariodirectors.ca/UA_Pilot_Project/files/Lakehead%20RE/UAEP_FINAL_ REPORT_Review%20and%20Research%20Study_LK_July16.pdf

Kovach, M. (2010). *Toward an IK-friendly pedagogy in mainstream classrooms. University of Saskatchewan*. Retrieved from: http://www.usask.ca/education/aboriginal/downloads/ik-friendly-pedagogy.pdf

Kovach, M. (2011). *Indigenous methodologies and modified grounded theory method*. Retrieved from http://www.thesummerinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/Indigenous-Methodologies.pdf

Lavallee, L. (2009). Practical application of an Indigenous research framework and two qualitative Indigenous research methods: Sharing circles and Ansishnaabe symbol-based reflection. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *8*(1), 21-40.

Little Bear, L. (2009). Naturalizing Indigenous knowledge, synthesis paper. Saskatoon, Sask: University of Saskatchewan: Aboriginal Education Research Centre & Calgary, Alberta: First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium. Retrieved from www.ccl-cca.ca.

Lowan-Trudeau, G. (2014). Considering ecological metissage: To blend or not to blend? *Journal of Experiential Education, 37*(4), 351-366.

Lowan, G. (2012). Ecological metissage: Exploring the third space in outdoor and environmental education. *Pathways: Journal of Outdoor Educators of Ontario*, *23*(2), 10-15.

Lowan, G. (2009). Exploring place from an Aboriginal perspective: Considerations of outdoor and environmental education. *The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 14*, 42-58.

Maréchal, G. (2010). Autoethnography. In, A. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research volume two* (pp. 43-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Margaret, J. (2010). *Working as allies: Winston Churchill fellowship report*. Retrieved from: http://www.antarvictoria.org.au/documents/Jen%20Margaret%20Winston%20Churchill%20Report%202010.pdf

Marker, M. (2006). After the Makah whale hunt: Indigenous knowledge and limits to multicultural discourse. *Urban Education, 41*(5), 482-505.

McLaren, P. (2007). Conservation, class struggle, or both: A response to C.A. Bowers. *Capitalism Nature Socialism 18*(1), 99-108.

Metis National Council. *Definition of Metis*. Retrieved from http://www.albertametis.com/MNAHome/MNA-Membership-Definition.aspx)

Memmi, A. (1965/2010). *The colonizer and the colonized*. New York: Orion Press.

Mizzi, R. (2010). Unraveling researcher subjectivity through multivocality in autoethnography. *Journal of Research Practice*, *6*(1). Retrieved from http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/201/185

Morgensen, S. (2014, May 26). White settlers and Indigenous solidarity: Challenging White supremacy, answering decolonial alliances. *Decolonization.* Retrieved from https://decolonization.wordpress.com

Morse, J., Stern, P., Corbin, J., Bowers, B., Charmaz, K., & Clarke, A. (2009). *Developing grounded theory: The second generation*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast.

Nash, R. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Newbery, L. (2012). Canoe pedagogy and colonial history: Exploring contested space of outdoor environmental education. *The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 17*, 30 - 45.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007). *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework.* Retrieved 18/07/2010 from: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiFramework.pdf

Peerla, D. (2012). *No means no: The Kitchenuhmaykoosib and the fight for resource sovereignty*. Retrieved from http://www.miningwatch.ca/sites/www.miningwatch.ca/files/No%20Means%20No.pdf

Rasmussen, D. & Akulukjuk, T. (2009). My father was told to talk to the environment first before anything else: Arctic environmental education and the language of the land. In McKenzie, M., Hart, P., Bai, H., & Jicklin, B. (Eds.), *Fields of Green: Restorying culture, environment, education* (pp. 279-294). New York: Hampton.

Rasmussen, D. (2002). Qallunology: A pedagogy for the oppressor. *Philosophy of Education,* 85-94.

Reagan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Reed-Danahay, D. (1997). Introduction. In D. Reed-Danahay (Ed.), *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social* (pp. 1–17). Oxford: Berg.

Richardson, L. (2000). Getting personal: Writing stories. *Qualitative Studies in Education,* 1-6.

Root, E. (2010) This land is our land? This land is your land: The decolonizing journeys of White outdoor environmental educators. *The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 15,* 103-119.

Root, E. & Dannenmann, K. (2009). Kitakiiminaan: Learning to Live Well Together on Aboriginal Lands. *Norwegian Journal of Friluftsliv*. Retrieved from http://norwegianjournaloffriluftsliv.com/doc/52010.pdf

Schwartz, D. (2013, November 10). Idle No More anniversary sees divisions emerging. *CBC News Canada*. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/idle-no-more-anniversary-sees-divisions-emerging-1.2420524

Senninger, T. (2000). Abenteuer leiten – in Abenteuern lernen. Münster/Germany: Ökotopia.

Settee, P. (2000). The issue of biodiversity, intellectual property rights, and Indigenous rights. In R. Laliberte, P. Settee, J. Waldram, R. Innes, B. Macdougall, L. McBain, & F. Barron (Eds.), *Expressions in Canadian Native studies* (pp. 459-488). Saskatoon, SK: University of Saskatchewan Extension Press.

Simpson, L. (2010). First Words. In L. Davies (Ed.), *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships* (pp. xiii-xiv). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Simpson, L. (2004). Anticolonial strategies for the recovery and maintenance of Indigenous knowledge. *The American Indian Quarterly*, *28*(3), 373-384.

Simpson, L. (2002). Indigenous environmental education for survival. *The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 7*(1), 13-24.

Sium, A., Desei, C., Ritskes, E. (2012). Towards the 'tangible unknown': Decolonization and the Indigenous future. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society, (1)*1, *i – xiii.*

Smith, G. and Sobel, D. (2010). *Place- and community-based education in schools: Sociocultural, political, and historical studies in education.* New York: Routledge.

Smith, G. (2009). *The future of Indigenous knowledge*. Professional Development Seminar: American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, California (April 17).

Smith, L. T. (2005). Chapter 4: On tricky ground: Researching the Native in the age of uncertainty. In Y. Lincoln & N. Denzin (Eds.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research third edition* (pp. 85-107). London: Thousand Oaks.

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

Stanley, P. (2015). Writing the PhD journey(s): An autoethnography of zine-writing, angst, embodiment, and backpacker travels. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography. 44*(2), 143-168.

Statistics Canada. (2006). Retrieved from: http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-560/p16-eng.cfm

St. Denis, G. (2005). *Tecumseh's bones.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

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

Strong-Wilson, T. (2007). Moving Horizons: Exploring the role of stories in decolonizing the literacy education of White teachers. *International Education, 37* (1), 114-131.

Styres, S., Haig Brown, C., & Blimke, M. (2013). Towards a pedagogy of Land: The urban context. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36*(2), 34-67.

Styres, S. (2011). Land as first teacher: A philosophical journeying. *Reflective Practice: International and multidisciplinary perspectives 12*(6), 117-731.

Tompkins, J. (2002). Learning to see what they can't: Decolonizing perspectives on Indigenous education. *McGill Journal of Education, 37*(3), 405-422.

Trowsse, F. (2007). *Making meaning of whiteness: Explorations by white community college faculty*. Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Canada.

Tuck, E. & Gaztambide-Fernandez, R., (2013). Replacement and settler futurity curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 29*(1).

Tuck, E., McCoy, L., & McKenzie, M. (2014). Land education: Indigenous, postcolonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research. *Environmental Education Research, (20),*1, 1-23.

Tuck, E. & MacKenzie, M. (2015). *Place in research*: *Theory, methodology, methods*. London: Routledge.

Tuck, E. & Yang, W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education, and society, 1*(1), 1- 40.

Union of BC Indian Chiefs. (2013). *First Nations Remain Steadfastly Opposed to Proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline.* Retrieved 03/02/2013 from http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/News_Releases/UBCICNews12191301.html#axzz2sHWD6tsm

Yvonne, V. (2008). *Nourishing the Learning Spirit: Elders' Dialogue*. University of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Education Research Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan & First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium, Calgary, Alberta. Retrieved from: http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/ablkc/ATB2_EldersDialogue_EN.pdf

Wall, S. (2009). *The nurture of nature: Childhood, antimodernism, and Ontario summer camps 1920-1955*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(1), 175-179.

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

Zinga & Styres (2011). Pedagogy of the Land: Tensions, Challenges, and Contradictions. *First Nations Perspectives 4*, 59-83.

Table 1: Initial Open Codes of Narrative Vignettes.

1a	Residential schools exhibit (Introductory story)	- exposure to injustice faced by Aboriginal peoples - exposure to a lesser-known history - discovering my ignorance of Aboriginal issues - desire to teach - learning through art
1b	Family photo album (Introductory story)	- my ignorance of my family - my ancestors as colonizers - accountability to a colonial legacy - recognizing Eurocentrism - longing to know my history - grief over lost knowledge of family history - active research about family (documented, oral) - hope, possibility for change
2a	Meeting a 'Real Indian'…	- us–them dichotomy - Aboriginal as 'exotic' stereotype - romanticism of Aboriginal culture - my own 'perfect stranger' stance - formative learning/preparation for later learning - interrupting colonial enculturation
2b	…and an Algonquin Educator	- teaching/mentoring other settlers - learning from Aboriginal people - settler transience as barrier to respectful relationality - my 'perfect stranger' stance - respectful relationality as constant process - whose responsibility to learn/teach? - anxiety about making mistakes (offending) - feeling ignorant about Aboriginal cultural protocols - anxiety about imposing a burden on Aboriginal peoples - acknowledging Indigenous Land
2c	Reflection on 2a and b	- examining intentions and motivations - uncertainty (helping students see and navigate cultural difference) - uncertainty (ensuring respect in mixed cultural

		groups of students) • challenge of teaching decolonizing while personally decolonizing • challenge of transience • commitment to continued self-learning
3a	Pipes and Pictographs	• sensory, embodied, kinesthetic experiencing of nature/Land • curiosity about the past of this place • longing to know my past • desire to engage with and feel connected to the past • learning from local oral stories • valuing family tradition • feeling part of a story that extends into past and future • familiarity with a landscape, feeling at home • learning from the Land • lack of knowledge of colonization • historicization, romanticization • respect of perceived sacredness • desire to conserve tradition
3b	Reflection on 3a	• lack of awareness • recognizing my lens of ignorance • recognizing a prior lack of questioning • valuing family tradition • recognizing romanticism • preemptive disrupting of myth of pristine wilderness • respect for perceived sacredness • self as situated in a (colonial) story that extends from past into the future • learning from the Land • contemplating seven generations thinking • desire to conserve tradition • unextraordinary/realistic vs. exotic/romanticized past
4a	Oiseau Rock	• sensory, embodied, kinesthetic experiencing of nature/Land • learning from local oral stories • familiarity with landscape, feeling at home • valuing family tradition

		• curiosity about, desire to learn about Aboriginal history • early awareness of Aboriginal historic presence/connection to Land • ignorance of contemporary Aboriginal peoples • awareness of other beings (species) • community, pleasure from belonging to a social group with traditions • feelings of respect for something sacred • sensing spirituality related to being on Land
4b	(Dis)Placing Myself Through Dialogue	• Aboriginal peoples' contemporary connection to ancestral Lands • accepting, embracing my settler identity • fear of mistakes • feelings of displacement, disconnection • grieving my loss of Land/ancestral indigenous culture • Longing to know my ancestral identity and Indigenous Lands • honest, meaningful, respectful relationship with Aboriginal friend • Aboriginal–settler dialogue • valuing Indigenous knowledge • acknowledging injustice faced by Aboriginal peoples • acknowledging White privilege • empathy
4c	Reflections on 4a and 4b	• learning by reflecting on past experience through a decolonizing lens • questioning authenticity of early learning • my lack of self-cultural knowledge • contemplating how Land teaches • recognizing that I also 'write' a contemporary story in this place • understanding my contemporary ecological interconnectedness • embracing autobiography as pedagogy • accepting the challenge of teaching settlers Land–culture connections • experiencing displacement, disconnection, grief • reflecting on loss of connection to my ancestral Land and Land-based knowledge

5a	Naming Cultural Appropriation	• becoming aware of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation • first awareness of contemporary colonialism? • cultural appropriation as common to outdoor education • realizing Indigenous stereotypes exist, are inaccurate, disrespectful
5b	Reflections on 5a	• auto-ethnography as learning process • open (rather than resistant) response to seeing colonialism
6a	'Playing Indian'	• discomfort with colonial misrepresentation of Aboriginal culture • early exposure to cultural diversity (or not) • settlers' difficulty 'seeing' Eurocentrism, White privilege • refining the ability to recognize Eurocentrism • discomfort giving feedback • settler dismay at realizing a Eurocentric/racist mistake • settler acceptance of feedback • intentions vs. . actual impact
6b	Reflections on 6a (A Generous Understanding)	• fine line between decolonizing/colonizing better (Haig-Brown) • respecting some, offending others • mistakes • mis-educative lessons • others' perception of me (anxiety) • generosity of Aboriginal teachers • acknowledging teachers • responsibility to teach, disrupt • foregrounding and creating space for Indigenous knowledge • what does respect look like (multiple, varied, dynamic)? • respectful relationality (complex)
7a	Living History…	• simultaneous learning/teaching • first time teaching about Aboriginal culture (nervous) • lack of exposure to Aboriginal culture • curiosity, eagerness to learn

		• my responsibility to share teachings • acknowledging teacher • unaware of concept of decolonizing • others' perceptions of me • what does respectful sharing look like?
7b	…and Anishnaabe Games	• settler students' desire for (fabricated) ritual • 'playing Indian' (discomfort, anger) • Eurocentric belief: 'playing Indian' honours Aboriginal people • racism by kind, socially aware, engaged educators • offensive misrepresentation in physical infrastructure • my silence • desire to distance myself from others' Eurocentrism • discomfort being White teacher of Aboriginal students • concern about subjecting Aboriginal students to racism • lack of cultural sharing by students • vulnerability, uncertainty, nervousness
7c	Reflection on 7b	• pitfall of 'good Whites vs. bad Whites' dichotomy • containing dialogue and simplifying content to prevent conflict • avoiding deeper issues of relationality • comfort zone, learning zone, panic zone model for effective learning • scaffolding learning • modelling self-reflection in teacher education • encouraging new teachers to embrace vulnerability, uncertainty • patience required • does gradual pace permit continued racism?
8a	My Student the Teacher	• Aboriginal misrepresentation • student as teacher • humility in the face of mistakes • re-learning, or 'I thought I had already learned that' • fear of confronting settler Eurocentrism (fear of

		conflict) • desire to distance myself from others' Eurocentrism • lack of energy, busyness as impediment to decolonizing • dismay when realizing our own Eurocentrism • admitting, apologizing for mistakes
8b	Reflections on 8a	• inaction as a choice, harm through inaction • preparing teachers to be open to feedback • constant engagement and commitment • decolonizing as an omnipresent choice to engage • mental and emotional energy • imposed time construct as institutional barrier • fear of conflict
9a	Eurocentric Power and Ignorance	• organizational support, culture • incongruence (policy and individual student need) • rigid vs. flexible rules • equality vs. equity • exposure to injustice faced by Aboriginal peoples • how best to support Aboriginal student needs
9b	Reflections on 9a	• power and privilege (teacher positionality) • Eurocentric policies that maintain power and privilege • awareness of ignorance • learning from students • generosity of Aboriginal students (as teachers)
10a	Dreams	• missed opportunity for intercultural learning • rigid, rigorous curriculum expectations • my Eurocentrism • my inability to facilitate intercultural sharing • importance of pace and timing • balancing institutional expectations with individual student needs • my anxiety over cultural difference
10b	Tobacco	• my ignorance, lack of knowledge • exposure to Aboriginal culture, spirituality • perpetuating injustice • inconvenience as a barrier to cultural respect

10c	Reflections on 10a and 10b	- recognizing self as colonizer - recognizing my Eurocentrism - feeling sorry, guilty - Eurocentric pedagogical norms - simultaneous (re)colonizing and decolonizing - ethics of (colonial) government accredited B.Ed. programs
11a	Resistance and Responsibility	- encountering settler desire for ritual - encountering misconception that misrepresentation honours - facing student resistance (frustrating, futile) - de-escalating racist commentary - burdening Aboriginal people
11b	Reflections on 11a	- taking responsibility - teaching by modelling - appreciative inquiry for decolonizing change - where should I devote efforts? - am I doing enough?
12a	Co-learning and Intercultural Dialogue	- acknowledging Aboriginal traditional territory - teaching relationality - facilitating respectful dialogue - co-learning with informed others - creating space/time for intercultural dialogue - exposure to Aboriginal cultural, spiritual traditions - active learning, desire to learn - contemplating appropriate knowledge sharing - acknowledging cultural teachers
12b	A Fine Line (Co-Learning and Intercultural Dialogue)	- questioning intentions and motivations - active, continuous reflexivity - communicating relationality - fine line between decolonizing and (re)colonizing - complexity of co-teaching - desire to be respectful - developing confidence to share/teach - acknowledging traditional territory

12c	Reflections 12a and 12b	'good White, bad White' pitfall - critical academic praxis - academics outside of academia - questioning language of decolonizing - problem of rigid binaries
13a	Can I Participate?	- Desire to learn about Aboriginal culture - learning to recognize Eurocentrism - learning about colonial injustice, history - uncertainty - questioning my role - naming a conscious decolonizing journey - academic decolonizing - lifelong commitment - calming effect of spirituality in the classroom - experiencing Aboriginal culture, spirituality, pedagogy - learning about self-settler identity - importance of listening - learning with other settlers - getting accustomed to Indigenous pedagogies - the circle as hard work and comforting - seeing my ignorance - inspiring and disorienting experience - interconnections (Land and Aboriginal peoples) - shifting environmental educator identity - offending other settler environmental educators
13b	Meeting a Mentor (in Can I Participate)	- meeting a settler mentor - gradual shifting - reflexivity and meaning making - longer term learning - looking beyond Outdoor education culture - encouragement - making sense of literature
14	An unsettling surprise	- still learning to see what I can't - self-reflection - discomforting self-awareness - deep roots of racism - refining my ability to see Eurocentrism - apologizing - multiplicity of cultural identities - teaching diversity of Aboriginal cultures

		• respecting Aboriginal self-representation
15	A Mi'kmaw Totem Pole?	• respecting Aboriginal self-representation • complexity of teaching Aboriginal students • student co-learning • autobiography as pedagogy • creating space for Aboriginal voices in class • integrating Aboriginal education in sustainability education • honouring traditional territory with class • teaching, living from a settler positionality • inviting Elders to class • facilitating circle work • teaching about Aboriginal community success • mentoring new teachers
16	Meet Your Neighbours	• discomfort with Eurocentric outdoor education • discomfort with settler lack of relational respect • settler resistance • 'loving the Land but not the people of the Land' • disease with historicization, romanticization, pan-Indian, appropriation • encountering settler desire to become 'Indigenous' • pausing to observe and reflect • feeling dismissed • trying to disrupt ignorance • perfect strangers • honouring local knowledge, Land relationship • missing protocols to acknowledge Indigenous Land
17	Living in a Fishbowl	• decolonizing research • intercultural collaboration • sharing circle as Indigenous research method • student resistance • teaching identity • students' Western individualism • White students' inability to see culture • White students' longing for culture • facilitating students' self-cultural knowledge • autobiography as pedagogy

		• disconnect from the 'other'
18	An Elder's Invitation	• inviting Elders to class • generosity of Elders • valuing, respecting Indigenous knowledge • lack of institutional support • importance of local relationships • institutional Eurocentrism • asking for help in relationship building • my desire to continue learning • teaching students who are open and want to learn • student epiphanies • student desire to learn about self-culture • circle work in the classroom • mentoring new teachings

Table 2: Initial Open Codes from other Primary Data (Artifacts).

19	Explaining 'Aboriginal' and 'Mi'kmaq' to my three-year-old son	• perceiving change in one generation • hope • responsibility • desire to teach • complexity of colonization • seven generations thinking • contemplating enculturation • teaching, mentoring about Indigenous Land
20	Travelling to Norway with Anishinaabe Friend	• spending privilege • settler Canadian positionality • respect • honouring voice • seeking self-knowledge
21	Elementary school Activities (CAF, OPV, PMI)	• respecting difference • awareness of perspective • fostering open-mindedness • practising respectful dialogue • pre-awareness of colonization

22	Apology for a Mistake (COEO Conference)	• embarrassment • miscommunication (importance of communication) • taking responsibility • learning from mistakes • importance of protocol • teaching by example
23	Media Exposure (Idle No More, Missing Women, Land Injustice)	• exposure to injustice faced by Aboriginal people • interconnection of Aboriginal people and Land • shifting settler awareness
24	KI Protest	• encouraging and inviting family to engage • family fear of offending • exposure to injustice faced by Aboriginal people • strength, resilience of Aboriginal people • being the visible minority (White) • witnessing, learning, teaching • acknowledging Indigenous Land
25	The Learning Café, Fire Pit	• appropriate, inappropriate participation • feeling out of place • feeling welcome • circle work and healing, learning • hearing Indigenous language • actively trying to learn • taking risks • working together and apart
26	Moving to new Territories	• disconnected due to transience • relationship building takes time • active learning takes time • lack of knowledge • desire, responsibility to learn • asking for help to learn • discomfort, shyness • positioning, (re)presenting oneself to others • acknowledging Indigenous Land
27	*What it's Like To Be Me* (book), special needs classmates	• desire to learn about difference • respect for difference • curious about another person's experience, worldview • first voice accounts

28	Shifting the Paradigm conference	• indigenizing academia • valuing my work • First Nations cultural resilience • diversity of Aboriginal peoples • learning through art • collaborative learning • introductions to acknowledge Indigenous Land
29	Fort George Park	• exposure to injustice faced by Aboriginal peoples • colonization as recent and ongoing • first voice perspective
30	UNBC Idle no More, settler circle, Paper Dolly Protest	• being of service when asked • inviting settler students • learning through sharing circle • Indigenous language in circle • valuing my work • teaching others
31	Offending a Settler Friend	• disrupting Eurocentrism • teaching other settlers • teaching mistakes • accepting feedback • self-awareness