

Indigenizing Environmental Education: How Can Land-Based Practices become an Educational
Journey of Reconciliation?

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Abstract

Environmental education today centres on the protection and conservation of land for settler-Canadians. This research explores how including an Indigenous perspective of Land into environmental education can aid non-Indigenous environmental education teacher candidates in widening their understanding of Land so that they are able to address the neo-colonialism that exists in the field while also participating in a journey of reconciliation. By centering the tenets of Indigenous research—respect, responsibility, relationship and reciprocity—I participated, observed and conducted narrative interviews to explore pre-service teachers' changing understandings of Land and Indigenous people. This study spanned two Land-based programs (a single day immersion event and a six-week, one afternoon per week, program) and each involved pre-service teachers, professional educators, and Land-based activities. The one-day event opened the door for non-Indigenous pre-service teachers to imagine a journey of reconciliation whereas the longer six-week experience created the actual time and space for this journey to actualize and begin in earnest, to allow for deeper and broader understandings of awareness, relationship building and restitution. This study demonstrates the longer non-Indigenous educators can participate in Land-based activities with Indigenous youth and students, the greater the potential for deeper, more significant learning towards reconciliation-through-education.

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Chapter 1 - Situating Myself

My name is Michelle Clarke and I am a White Euro-Canadian settler. I was born in London, Ontario, Canada before moving to the Netherlands at a year old. My family returned to Canada when I was two and a half to live in the small town of Holland Landing, Ontario, which is on traditional Ojibway (Chippewa) territories in southern Ontario. At this point, I have spent six years living in Thunder Bay, Ontario on the traditional territory of the Fort William First Nation on Anishinaabe Land.

As I transitioned from my undergraduate degree into the workforce, I found myself teaching outdoor environmental education whilst remaining totally naïve to the political, historical, or cultural significance of the Indigenous land or territories that we call Canada. I have worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students trying to help them connect to the Land (or what I understood as “the outdoors”) because I believed that if they spent enough time outside then they would want to protect and care for the natural world as they learned to love it. Often, however, I would finish a course or program feeling as if something was missing. I am now confident that the missing piece was acknowledgment of Indigenous peoples and epistemologies. I was passionate about outdoor environmental education, yet I had very little knowledge about Indigenous topics, history, and culture. I was not able to perceive any connections between Land and/or environmental issues with Indigenous issues and vice versa. I now understand that “[t]he damages of colonization on the earth and to Indigenous peoples and their lands are inextricably intertwined” (Korteweg & Russell, 2012, p. 6). In my early days as an outdoor educator, I somehow missed that connection, even as I spent most of my working days outdoors on wilderness trips *and* on Indigenous traditional territories. Learning that the issues facing

Indigenous peoples today are meshed with environmental or land-based issues has led me to deeper, richer understandings of both.

This study investigates how non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educators can experience land-based activities to (a) raise cultural awareness of the Land (Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimkie, 2013) that neo-colonialism erases and (b) challenge the colonialism that exists in outdoor (recreation) education. With these secondary questions in mind, my guiding research question is: *How can land-based practices become an educational journey of reconciliation?* I believe this study will help move non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educators, like me, along their journeys of decolonization towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by experiencing “Land as first teacher” (Styres, 2011). I should acknowledge that there are many individuals who identify as both an environmental educator and an Indigenous person (Lowan-Trudeau (formerly Lowan), 2009; Simpson, 2002) and I recognize that their journeys may be quite different from my own as well as the journeys of the research participants in this study. This research will also help non-Indigenous outdoor educators develop understandings of Land in a way that acknowledges Indigenous people, culture, and history, so that we may travel with humility rather than entitlement (Newbery, 2012).

Important Terms and Terminology

There are terms in this thesis that are important to define in order to clarify intended meanings. I will use the terms “Indigenous” and “Aboriginal” interchangeably to refer to a global community of people whose cultures and languages are shaped by a profound connection to a specific land-base, and who inhabited these homelands since time immemorial, long before colonization. They are the first peoples who have maintained distinct, nuanced cultures and

claim nationhood status to these lands (Brayboy, 2005; Cajete, 1994; Simpson, 2002). I will also use the terms First Nations, Métis or Inuit when specificity is necessary.

The term Land is intentionally capitalized as a sign of respect and to honour an indigenized understanding of place or environment. The meaning of Land when capitalized includes larger cultural constructions that signify a complex entity that includes physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional characteristics (Styres, 2011; Styres et al., 2013). I also refer to Land as first teacher, to locate Indigenous knowledge systems and culture as intimately embedded in the land and connected to all relations—creatures of the earth, land and water as well as all those elements that are spiritual, ancestral and inanimate. I choose the term Land-based practice in this study to encompass all activities that are intimately tied to Indigenous peoples and cannot be practiced without the Land. In this study, Land-based practices include: dogsledding, Indigenous winter games, snowshoeing, teachings done in a wigwam, bannock making, and canoeing.

Environmental education (EE) is a central concept in this study because I employ the components of EE that are concerned with developing a citizenry that can work individually and collectively toward solutions of current environmental problems and the prevention of new ones (Adkins & Simmons, 2002). Another realm of EE is the close associations with outdoor and experiential education. Although these two sub-disciplines can stand alone, their educational practices are often combined to draw on the strengths of each. For this thesis study, I use EE as an umbrella term to draw on the combined educational practices of experiential and outdoor education (Adkins & Simmons, 2002; Carlson, 2000; Chase, 1985; Kirk, 1980).

Finally, it is critical to define reconciliation, a central term of the research question that guides this study. Reconciliation suggests a past action where a wrongdoing has been committed

and impacted a relationship. It also implies that there is the possibility of forgiveness through an act of coming together again (Walcott, 2011). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2014), reconciliation is about bringing awareness to our (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) common history as a way to renew relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. Reconciliation is about moving forward in a manner and relationship where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians can stand side-by-side, nation-to-nation, where all parties experience restitution and the right to self-determination.

Situating Myself

In this next section, I follow a set of questions or ‘teachings’ identified by the famous and local Anishinaabe Woodlands-style artist, Roy Thomas. These teachings were presented by a panel of friends (and Roy’s wife, Louise Thomas) at the Roy Thomas retrospective exhibit at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery (L. Thomas personal communication, September 13, 2012). These questions help us to orient ourselves in our life journey (see Figure 1).

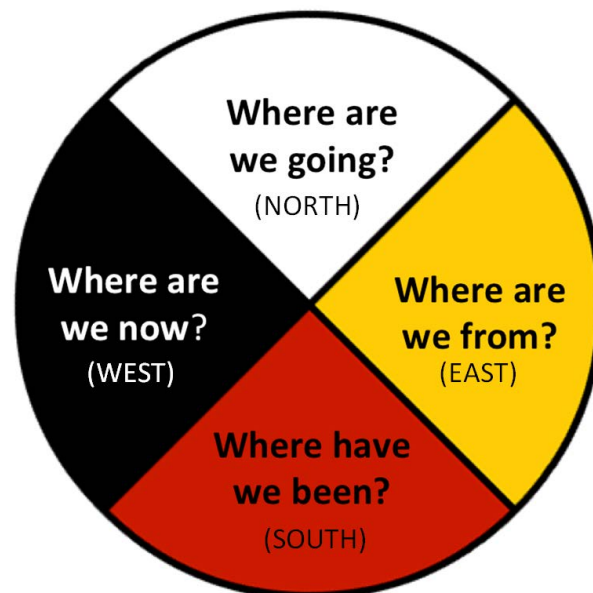


Figure 1. Roy Thomas’ Circle Teaching, showing a framework of how we may think about and communicate our identity.

In the east, I begin my identity journey with the important question of “where am I from?” or the foundation of my culture, community, language, and Land. Next, in the south, my identity is influenced by “where I have been” or those experiences that have shaped and moulded who I am, how I relate to others, and how I relate to the world around me. In the west, I ask the question “where am I now?” to orient myself in the present day. Finally in the north, I look to the future and try to answer the question “where am I going?” It is in this direction where my past and present influences my future. These four questions help me understand and communicate my life journey and identity. I interface these Anishinaabe identity orientations with Root’s (2010) core findings as to how White (non-Indigenous) outdoor educators can journey from unconscious to conscious decolonization. The decolonizing journey is deep and complex, where educators struggle with recognizing the pervasiveness of Eurocentric colonial attitudes in contemporary social institutions and in their own assumptions and practices. Root (2010) found that the decolonizing journey for non-Indigenous outdoor educators is facilitated by three main factors: (a) relationships with Aboriginal peoples and exposure to Aboriginal culture, (b) relationships with allied and resistant non-Aboriginal people, and (c) time on the Land. By examining my own journey using Roy Thomas’s circle work and comparing it to the findings of Root (2010), I am able to situate myself more honestly in this research and give context to my work.

Where I Come From

For most of my professional life, I was enacting what Dion (2007; 2009) calls the “perfect stranger” stance wherein non-Indigenous Canadians unknowingly claim a deep ignorance, preferring to know nothing about Indigenous peoples so that they can remain innocent, without causing harm toward Indigenous people. I spent more than a year of my life in a professional guiding position, leading expeditions. I am embarrassed to think of all those nights

out on the Land when I was enacting a “perfect stranger” position, allowing myself to ignore the historical, cultural, and social significance of those Indigenous Lands. I did not feel I was knowledgeable enough or qualified to teach Indigenous topics. I was terrified that if I ever tried to teach Indigenous issues that I would make a mistake and greatly offend people—both non-Indigenous and Indigenous. This was a chance I was not willing or prepared to take at that time.

I am compelled to think about this standpoint, my past “perfect stranger” position since most of my professional outdoor environmental education work occurred after a very positive experience in a Chipewyan community in the Northwest Territories. I presume, despite this amazing experience and great learning, I was still scared to make a mistake or be accused of cultural mis/appropriations. In my mind it was better to leave the work of teaching Indigenous culture and history to Indigenous people, to opt out of any relations, and like many other White outdoor educators, I did just that (Newbery, 2012). I believe that if I had been more aware and confident of my own understandings of Indigenous issues, I would have been able to move from a position of awareness into enacted and embodied responsive practices (Korteweg, Fiddler, Bissell, Primavesi, Clarke, & Moon, 2014). However, my new awareness has also made it clear that by not addressing Indigenous issues while on expeditions, I was perpetuating the very ignorance that most settler Canadians have and, therefore, helped maintain or perpetuate the injustices that most Indigenous people still face today (Newbery, 2012). Even in the act of typing these sentences, my body reacts in an uncomfortable way. I think my visceral reaction is part frustration that I was not taught a truer history of Canada and part anger that there are people who know about these injustices and still choose to do nothing about the maintenance of the typical non-Indigenous Canadian “perfect stranger” position. I also experience deep

embarrassment that it has taken me 30 years to begin to understand this issue for myself as a Canadian.

My Unconscious Decolonization: Where I Have Been

I am on a difficult, confusing, and simultaneously inspiring journey of decolonization in order to work towards reconciliation for myself, my community of non-Indigenous outdoor-environmental educators, and Indigenous—non-Indigenous relations. It is difficult to pinpoint where my journey of decolonization began. There are many moments and experiences that have affected and influenced me along the way. I would like to highlight a few in order to situate myself within this work. Root (2010) found in her research that “unconscious decolonization journeys ... seem to be characterized by shared experiences with Aboriginal peoples, immersion in Aboriginal communities, exposure to Indigenous worldviews and culture, and an openness to learning throughout” (p. 111). These themes resonate throughout my own personal journey towards decolonization. For me, one of my most important experiences was a two-week educational trip to Lutsel K’e, located on the northeastern arm of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories. It is a Chipewyan community, one of the four communities represented by the Akaitcho Territory Government (Lutsel K’e Dene Band - Designated Authority, n.d). At the time of my visit, Lutsel K’e was in negotiations with Parks Canada to protect 30,000 square kilometers of traditional Dene Land through the creation of a community co-managed park, now known as Thaidene Nene. My classmates and I were expected to provide the community with information about education, tourism, and heritage interpretative opportunities that may exist with the development of a national park. Upon our arrival in the community we realized that the community was not as far along in the planning stages as we initially anticipated, so we ended up doing other community work and received a valuable “crash course” on life in a remote First

Nations community. This experience was eye opening for me and although I have many memories, there are some key moments of learning that stand out for me.

According to Root (2010), shared experiences with Aboriginal peoples are often a launching point for non-Indigenous people to unconsciously begin to decolonize. This is true of my experience and is exemplified in my time in Lutsel K'e. I felt as though I was able to see how the people of this community lived every day and I realized that they worried about many of the same things as me. The people of Lutsel K'e became "real" people and not just the mythic "other" I had imagined and learned about through misrepresentations by the media (Donald, 2010; Francis, 1999). Although I had many great experiences in the community, such as taking the high school students rock climbing or joining in on a fishing trip with community residents, I believe it was the everyday experiences that helped break down my "perfect stranger" stance (Dion, 2009). Everyday experiences, including going to the store and sharing in the frustration of the cost of food or sharing in the fun of playing community bingo on Tuesday night, were the experiences that helped me feel that we were not just tourists, but rather that if we had stayed longer, we could have built real and meaningful relationships.

Another key learning for me was the value of community within Indigenous communities. When I use the term "community," I am not referring to community in the sense of people living and working in the same neighbourhood living in close proximity but maintaining mostly anonymous lives, but rather community where people depend on one another and share resources in order to meet everyday realities. This immersion in an Indigenous community is also something Root (2010) identifies as a piece of the unconscious decolonization journey and is reflected in my experience in Lutsel K'e. One prominent example of reliance in community happened when seven students from my class were taught to drive snowmobiles. After our

introduction we headed out onto the ice to set some nets. The next day we returned to the nets, pulled out huge fish which we loaded onto our sleds, and headed to the school where the family studies teacher taught us all to fillet the fish. From there, we took the fresh filleted fish to a community barbeque. Soon after, there were vegetables and meat to accompany the fish we had helped catch, cooking away for the whole community to share in a type of feast. It was this sharing of time and resources that I really enjoyed, which caused me to examine more closely the segmented “do it yourself” (DIY) mentality that was the regular way of relating in my life at home or in southern/urban Canada.

All of the experiences in Lutsel K’e were deeply enlightening for me personally. At the time, I felt that we were giving back to the community by bringing all of the park development information with us. I realize now I was enacting a “settler move to innocence” described by Tuck and Yang (2012), as a strategy “or positioning that attempt[s] to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up Land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all” (p. 10). Upon reflecting on this experience, I can see that I was enacting this “settler move” during a meeting with a group of teachers and parents in Lutsel K’e when we were discussing some of the information we had researched on how to connect tourism, heritage interpretation, and education to the proposed national park. One community member spoke up and said it was great that we came up to visit the community and share our knowledge, but that we would be gone again in two weeks and they would be back to square one. She explained how this is often the cycle in the community: outsiders come in with great intentions, stay for a while, and then leave without any continuation of effort or information. I remember feeling very deflated after this meeting, having gone to Lutsel K’e believing that I was doing this very helpful work, but suddenly realizing that we would leave and likely nothing we started would continue. I

am grateful that this woman had the courage to speak up and tell us the truth about what was actually happening in this community-university visit and partnership. Although some parts of my experience were uncomfortable, like this conversation, I believe as a maturing student, I did my best to maintain an open mind and heart, trying to pull as much learning from the experience as possible. An openness to learning is the last characteristic of the unconscious decolonization journey described by Root (2010). After we left the community, the partnership we began was able to continue between the community of Lutsel K'e and the Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism (ORPT) department at Lakehead University through other courses.

There are many important experiences from my time in Lutsel K'e. I learned many things because the experience was so rich and pivotal in beginning and influencing my journey of decolonization. Although I realized I was learning a lot, I do not believe the decolonization piece was conscious. Even after Lutsel K'e, I still preferred to do outdoor environmental education that was earth-centred, helpful for all youth, regardless of their history, culture, or experiences of Land, to re-connect with nature. Even then I preferred to remain disconnected from Indigenous peoples on their traditional territories (what I called Canadian wilderness).

My Conscious Decolonization: Where I am Now

It has only been since starting my Master of Education degree that I am conscious of the fact that I have embarked upon a journey of decolonization. Through the classes I have taken, I am learning to recognize more honestly my social position and acknowledge the privilege that I have unconsciously benefitted from in my life. The study of de/colonization and Indigenous issues in my courses caused me take a closer look at the injustices that Indigenous people face every day here in Thunder Bay. For two years before returning to university for graduate school, I worked at the Boys & Girls Club, in a low-income neighbourhood in Thunder Bay. I ran an

after-school program from Monday to Friday. Most of the youth that attended this program were First Nations. I tried to include culturally relevant programming into our schedule, but I often felt like the kids did not care and it also seemed that many of their parents were disconnected from what their children were involved in. There are likely many reasons for this and perhaps my perceptions were not even accurate. However, at this point in my studies, I have come to learn more about Residential Schools so I now realize that some of what I may have been observing at the Boys & Girls Club might have been related to inter-generational trauma caused by this dark chapter of Canadian history (Battiste, 2005; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2014). It is only now that I realize that these Indigenous parents could have been suffering from the experience that their parents and family members (the grandparents, aunts, and uncles of my Boys & Girls Club students) experienced at the Residential Schools. I found it difficult to witness this suffering. It was even more challenging when I was obligated to call Dilico Anishinabek Family Care (Indigenous child welfare services) because I knew, in my heart, that the family breakdowns I was witnessing were often not the parents' direct individual fault but rather all of our faults, a systemic injustice of the history of Residential Schools that Canada exerted over Indigenous peoples across this country.

I understand that this is a very simple and singular observation of a much more complex and widespread (systemic) situation, but I did observe colonization as having a very large negative impact on the health and well-being of my youth club members. Despite the challenges faced by many of the youth, I also observed their resilient and active participation in many wonderful moments including the dance recital a group of youth participated in, the community dance the members organized, and in the many smiles and laughs as we played together each day after school. The highs and lows of this job were immense. When I finally left my position at the

Boys & Girls Club, I felt tired and burnt out, as though I had been working alone to help these youth learn and engage in their own culture, all while feeling entirely inadequate and ill-equipped to do this work.

I began my Master of Education degree shying away from any Indigenous-centred courses and continually pushing the thought of indigenizing education out of my mind. Yet, I kept thinking about my recent experiences at the Boys & Girls Club and thinking about all of the wonderful youth I met there. I thought about how they were swimming against a very strong, oppositional, systemic current in Canadian society just because they are Indigenous. My reflections and the memories of these children kept pushing me back to the topic of decolonization. It made me take a second look at what I was doing to contribute to the ongoing problems of colonization that weigh upon Boys & Girls Club youth with whom I worked. I realized that by failing to understand my position of privilege and not taking the time to learn about the history of Canada or the non-Indigenous legacies of colonialism, I was continuing to be a part of the problem, not helping with any reconciliation solution. I was afraid to take on this work because I knew it would be difficult, uncomfortable, and I would make a lot of mistakes. I still try to avoid making mistakes but I also realize that I will have to continue to lean into the discomfort and engage in this journey of decolonization, and if not for me, then for the 50 children that came to participate at the Boys & Girls Club every night.

Outside the discomfort of the decolonization process, there is a responsibility that I feel I now have to embrace as I move forward: to help other non-Indigenous people open their eyes to Canada's colonial past and present and how these continue to affect present-day relations with Indigenous people. This feeling of responsibility was something that Root (2010) also found in her research and writing: "[people] are impacted by a sense of respons/ability to confront

Eurocentrism and teach other non-Aboriginal people about respectful relationships and Aboriginal people” (p. 114). This responsibility feels overwhelming at times, but is necessary if I am going to contribute to reconciliation in any way. When I go to visit the Boys & Girls Club now, I feel proud of the work I have done in my thesis research as it has helped me continue to learn. I am committed to being part of working towards changes that will mean more Indigenous youth being able to grow up feeling proud of their Indigenous culture and seeing it reflected in many places and sectors of Canadian society.

Where am I Going from Here?

I am beginning to understand what direction my decolonizing work and contribution might be in, as I begin to consciously decolonize my practices as an outdoor environmental educator, continue to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous people, and come to understand what restitution means in my line of work. What seems to be emerging for me at this time in my studies is that decolonization for Indigenous people is not about accountability to settler/colonizers (like me), rather it is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (Battiste, 2005; Tuck & Yang, 2012). In other words, Indigenous people should not be made responsible to teach non-Indigenous people how to act respectfully; it should be non-Indigenous people teaching other non-Indigenous people what it means to be culturally respectful (Root, 2010). As a non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educator, this means that I must begin by acknowledging that the Land that I travel upon (by canoe, ski, and foot) is traditional Aboriginal territory, not just a physical place to recreate on.

It is my role to educate others about the truths of Canada’s colonial past and present, to come into relation as treaty partners, and to ensure that students learn the cultural, social, and historical significance of the Land on which they travel, live, and learn. As Battiste (2005) states,

Indigenous peoples' culture, language, and knowledge is wrapped up in the Land and, in order to fully respect it, we (settler-Canadians) must respect the traditional people of the Land as well. I aim to address the issue of colonialism in environmental education to encourage others to open up and discuss this issue as well, especially when outdoors, and on the Land. The more settler-Canadians talk about colonialism the more comfortable it will become, and the more role models and mentors there will be of non-Indigenous environmental educators starting to take responsibility.

I have already learned a lot about myself even though I am at the start of this conscious journey of decolonization. Some parts have been amazing and uplifting while others have been difficult and discouraging. I am comforted by the fact that I am not alone on this journey of "braiding our lives into relation" (Nicol & Korteweg, 2010, p. 183). I still have a long way to go on this non-linear journey, but I am ready for a series of winding cyclical paths as I move from ignorant "perfect stranger" to a prepared, participating ally.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This literature review explores the link between Indigenous and Western worldviews and the understandings of how all people might work towards reconciliation in the Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationship that is the core of Canadian society. I begin by exploring what is meant by Indigenous and Western worldviews, and then I examine the cultivated ignorance of non-Indigenous people within the Canadian education system. In order to examine Indigenous and Western epistemologies, I discuss theories of, and research on, decolonization and reconciliation. Both of these concepts are understood differently within Indigenous versus non-Indigenous perspectives and with claims or implications that have different outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. I focus here on the non-Indigenous perspective, given the nature of this study and my own position as a settler-Canadian. Next I discuss ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews can work together to improve understanding more broadly of the natural world, the Land, upon which we all live. Finally, I examine what it means to indigenize environmental education (EE) and explore how place-based and Land-based pedagogies may be used as frameworks for indigenizing outdoor and environmental education.

Indigenous and Western Worldviews

According to Guba (1990), a worldview is a “basic set of beliefs that guide action” (p. 17); Graveline (1998) describes a worldview as a collective consciousness or a set of images and assumptions about the world that are influenced by history and interpret the experiences of people over time. Worldviews “shape the philosophies of a culture and guide a society’s institutional policies.... A worldview is an unspoken but inevitable outcome of the socialization process, yet it is all but invisible” (Ham, 2006, p. 480). In other words, a worldview is invisible yet it shapes the way people live in the world every day and has a direct impact on understanding

the self and others. It is widely recognized that Indigenous worldviews and Western worldviews are fundamentally different (Bartlett et al., 2012; Ermine 2000; Friedel, 2011; Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012), but this should not lead to the assumption that all Indigenous people share the same worldview. Indigenous people of North America identify 300 distinct tribal groups (Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002). In Canada, there were 50 distinct Indigenous language groups at the time of European contact (Dickason, 2010). Neither do I want to generalize that all Western people share the same worldview. However, I discuss these two umbrella worldviews in this literature review in the same way they are discussed in Indigenous education research.

An Indigenous worldview is based on relationships and connectedness that brings about holism (Alfred, 1999; Ermine, 2000; Graveline, 1998; Styres, 2011). At the centre of this relationship is connectedness to the Land (Styres, 2011). According to Mohawk scholar Alfred (1999): “Land, culture, and government are inseparable in traditional philosophies; each depends on the others” (p. 2). Indigenous worldviews encompass a holistic sense of the world where the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual sides of an individual cannot be separated or fragmented any more than an individual can be seen as separate from their community or (home) Land. In other words, Aboriginal identity is tied to the Land. According to Ermine (2000), a member of the Sturgeon Lake First Nation:

in their quest to find meaning in the outer space, Aboriginal people turned to the inner space. This inner space is that universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self, and the being. (p. 103)

An Indigenous worldview gathers an understanding of the natural physical world by understanding its relationship to the individual on a spiritual, emotional, and intellectual level. Battiste (2005), a Mi'kmaw educator, explains:

Indigenous peoples live in communities where they acquire, develop, and sustain relationships with each other and with their environments. By building relationships with the land and its inhabitants, they come to understand the forces around them. They transmit their knowledge through their languages and through many diverse ceremonies and traditions. These cultural forms are the fundamental sources of Indigenous knowledge. (p. 122)

Insight from these Indigenous scholars—Alfred (1999), Battiste (2005) and Ermine (2000)—help develop understanding that an Indigenous worldview involves a deep understanding of oneself in relationship to place and Land. Indigenous knowledge, according to Emery (1997), is both cumulative and dynamic, and varies among community members depending on age, gender, social status, capabilities, interests, and professions. An emphasis on totality or holism in relationship to Indigenous worldviews “can be conceptualized as the web of relationships between Indigenous people and the ecological world at a specific location” (Battiste, 2005, p. 132). In other words, locality or Land-based is key to understanding Indigenous epistemology because it emphasizes a knowledge base specific to the Land. Many Indigenous languages are understood as language of the Land where people, knowledge, and language are all embedded in their homeland (see Battiste & Henderson, 2011; Ermine, 2000).

A Western worldview can also be called “Eurocentric,” “White,” “Settler,” and/or “colonial” (Battiste, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Root, 2010). It is difficult to pinpoint an understanding of a Western worldview without generalizing, however, various scholars identify common themes (Battiste, 2005; Battiste & Henderson, 2011; Dion, 2007; Ermine, 2000; Graveline, 1998). For example, a Western worldview perpetuates the fragmentation or compartmentalization of knowledge into packaged concepts in order to try and view the world

objectively (Ermine, 2000). According to Battiste and Henderson (2011), “the world is a background against which the mind operates, and knowledge is regarded as information that originates outside of humanity” (p. 12). In Western worldviews, there is a tendency to view one’s own cultural group and knowledge as superior (Battiste, 2005; Reagan, 2005). This approach creates a hierarchy in which a Western worldview continually follows an “us” (we) versus “them” (others) dualistic ranking, in order to fulfill a superiority complex. Due to the hierarchical nature of Western knowledge, humans are given superior status above and distinct from the natural world.

It is important to remember that both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing are dynamic and evolving. According to Bielawski (1990):

Indigenous knowledge is not static, an unchanging artifact of a former life way. It has been adapting to the contemporary world since contact with ‘others’ began, and it will continue to change. Western science in the North is also beginning to change in response to contact with Indigenous knowledge. (as cited in Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 12)

Changes in the (dominant) Western worldview are slow and incremental, but will hopefully continue to open up and respond to new epistemologies in order to shift the power dynamic that has been enforced but which does not help relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Cultivated Ignorance and the Perfect Stranger Stance

The education system is one foundation of Canadian society that is greatly impacted by the assumed superiority of a Western worldview. Due to colonialism, the Canadian education system privileges a Western worldview and those that conform to it, leaving many students marginalized due to different abilities, cultures, and belief systems. This is especially evident in

Canadian schools that largely fail to address Aboriginal curriculum content and Aboriginal students' needs (Tupper & Cappello, 2008). As stated by Donald (2012), "the significance of colonialism, as a social, cultural, and educative force has not yet been meaningfully contemplated in Canadian educational contexts" (p. 91). Donald's point is supported by Godlewska, Moore, and Bednasek (2010), who found that in Ontario only 1.9% of secondary school curriculum covers Aboriginal content, issues, or history. Although elementary education tends toward more Aboriginal content, it is concentrated into just a few grades and often positions Aboriginal people in a historical context (Godlewska et al., 2010). Further "through continued silence of these issues, Ontario schools are complicit in perpetuating this self-serving ignorance and maintaining the injustices of Canadian history as a living reality for Aboriginal people today" (Godlewska et al., 2010, p. 419). Unfortunately, Ontario is not the exception. Across Canada the issue is the same. This is evident in the high number of Indigenous students who drop out of high school (over 50% in 2006), or who are likely "pushed out" implicitly by a lack of curriculum and representations of Indigenous people (Association of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010). If the curriculum is not addressing Indigenous issues for Indigenous students, then it most certainly is not delivering Indigenous content to non-Indigenous students.

Due to this cultivation of ignorance, a situation has arisen in which most educators, like most Canadians, have a limited understanding of Indigenous peoples, history, and cultures. What most people (educators and non-educators alike) do know is informed by dominant discourses (Dion, 2007) that are often stereotypical or re-enforce the "imaginary Indian" (Francis, 1999; King, 2013). This ongoing non-Indigenous position has been termed the "perfect stranger" (Dion, 2007) and refers to teachers who believe they cannot deliver curriculum in any manner or pedagogy other than one informed by Eurocentrism, which equals "success" in the current school

system. This was a position I found myself in as new environmental educator. Many teachers believe they are distinct from Indigenous people, therefore they are uncomfortable or unwilling to deconstruct or critically reflect on their own position (Donald, 2011; Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2013; Root, 2010; Strong-Wilson, 2007). Those who stand in the role of the “perfect stranger” seem not to see the roles that ignorance, whiteness, and privilege play in cementing this position; hence, when enacting the perfect stranger stance, white educators are “protecting” themselves from the uncomfortable and difficult knowledge of our colonial past (Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2013). Alcoff (2006) explains that “only recently have whites in large numbers felt self-conscious as white, aware of themselves as not only having a gender, a nationality, an occupation, perhaps an ethnic origin, but also as having a race” (p. 118). Whiteness is so pervasive and normative that it escapes the consciousness of many white people, and simply continues to perpetuate the ‘perfect stranger’ phenomenon. If non-Indigenous Canadians, the majority of whom are white, are unable to see their own white privilege, they will continue to live in a state of ignorance of the history and politics of race that have so deeply impacted and continue to impact Canada, our environment, our school systems, and the core relationship of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Decolonization

Beginning the work of decolonization will help educators move beyond the “perfect stranger” stance and recognize the history of colonization that marines our education systems and continues to damage the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (Battiste, 2005). Decolonization, like colonization, is a complex process that must be carried out in different ways for different cultures and people. I am only at the beginning of my own decolonizing journey. I am starting to understand the deep discomfort of this process. According

to Cannon and Sunseri (2011), “the journey of decolonization requires an understanding of the aspirations, protocols, philosophical foundations, and systems of knowledge that reflect Indigenous worldviews” (p. 164). This step is critically important, however, the accurate authentic meanings of Indigenous worldviews cannot be understood without understanding how colonialism has impacted Indigenous peoples in the past and present.

Graveline (1998) warns educators to understand how imperialism and colonialism affect all people, so that we do not repeat neo-colonial situations by perpetuating oppressive hegemonic forces against Indigenous peoples. This is a difficult and massive task as most Canadians have grown up accepting and reproducing the dominant discourses of education, rather than becoming aware of our own patterns of complicity in colonization. Graveline discusses two stages of deconstruction or critical self-reflexivity that must take place in order to begin to decolonize. The first is to examine one’s own history and how it has contributed to the history of the world. Second, Graveline advocates for a rewriting of colonial history to show how it truly unfolded, not how it unfolded from a Eurocentric perspective.

As Canadians, we must look at the colonization of Indigenous peoples in the past and the implications of colonization for all people in the present day. Smith (2006) states that decolonization must begin by “working backwards, carefully working out the lineage that brought current conditions into being. Only then can thoughts of ‘what is to be done’ be meaningful” (cited in Donald, 2012, p. 93). Indigenous people and settler-Canadians must look at our past, no matter how painful or uncomfortable, to be able to understand how we have arrived here today. Smith’s work reminds me once again of the identity questions created by Roy Thomas and how perhaps they can be used as a tool to understand the journeys that have led us to the present day. As Donald (2012) writes, “colonialism is a shared condition wherein

colonizers and colonized come to know each other very well” (p. 93). Yet, this does not mean that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples understand decolonization in the same way or should go about the work of decolonization in the same way. Because this thesis examines an educational journey toward reconciliation for non-Indigenous educators I will explore processes of decolonization for non-Indigenous people.

Decolonization for Non-Indigenous People

As Root (2010) highlights, the non-Indigenous educator is often positioned as the colonizer, making it difficult to find respectful roles in the process of decolonizing education. It is my belief that non-Indigenous educators must learn to position themselves within the story of colonization in order to work towards becoming allies. Bishop (2002), who writes about allies in general, says we must become conscious of the oppression as a first step to healing. In order to work towards an ally-stance, non-Indigenous educators must understand that we did not individually bring this situation about and therefore, we cannot simply fix this longstanding set of tragedies and systemic conditions with mere individualistic goodwill. As allies, we must work together to act and change social conditions and institutions (law, education, government), since doing nothing only perpetuates the status quo (Bishop, 2002). As I understand it, my overall role is to work towards becoming an ally. Tuck and Yang (2012) remind non-Indigenous people that decolonization is not a metaphor and that “solidarity is an uneasy, reserved, and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict” (p. 3).

Some Indigenous scholars have suggested how non-Indigenous peoples can begin to decolonize through education (Battiste, 2002; Dion, 1997; Graveline, 1998; Strong-Wilson, 2007). Graveline (1998) seeks to challenge the dominant Western education system that is currently privileged. She offers in its place a personal, holistic, and circular model that works to

revitalize Indigenous knowledge and tradition while working within a Western education system. Another example is Dion (1997), who works with non-Indigenous teachers to help them question their existing “truths,” their own investment in dominant discourses, and how to work towards change. She argues that non-Indigenous educators must “use the act of remembrance to raise awareness of the ways in which the identities of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada have been shaped by the colonial encounter and its aftermath” (Dion, 1997, p. 340). In other words, settler-Canadians must critically reflect back on how, why and where they learned about Indigenous and settler-Canadian identity, in order to begin pull apart what is meant by decolonization.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is not an easy concept to define. There is much debate in the literature over what it means, how to carry it out, and if reconciliation can even be achieved. Confusion and ambiguity over the term reconciliation becomes increasingly obvious when examining some of the current literature from various colonial countries struggling towards reconciliation, such as Canada, Australia, and the United States. For example, Walcott (2011), states “reconciliation is but a beginning or opening; as yet unimagined transformation is the desired outcome” (p. 348). Although this definition allows for forward movement in the discussion, it offers no next steps and no sense of where the final destination may be. Scholars like Kriesberg (2004) and Lederach (1997) discuss four similar elements of reconciliation but using different terms: truth, justice, mercy (regard), and peace (security). Though these are helpful building blocks, I am left wondering, in relation to the legacy of colonization in Canada, what is meant by justice, mercy, and peace? What will achieving these goals look like? As an alternative to defining reconciliation as a single concept, Ross (2004) suggests that reconciliation is a continuum from

its weakest manifestations to the strongest. Simpson (2011), on the other hand, argues against using the term reconciliation. She believes that reconciliation has become institutionalized and what may result is once again an asymmetrical change that allows settler- Canadians to free themselves of guilt “while neutralizing the legitimacy of Indigenous resistance” (p. 22). Simpson (2011) shares:

For reconciliation to be meaningful to Indigenous Peoples and for it to be a decolonizing force, it must be interpreted broadly. To me, reconciliation must be grounded in cultural generation and political resurgence. (p. 22)

Simpson (2011) believes that resurgence generated from within Indigenous culture is critical to the project of decolonizing and by extension reconciliation, while the reconciliatory role of settler-Canadians should be to support that movement of decolonizing resurgence.

Confusion around the term reconciliation and the implications of the settler role in this social movement leaves more questions than answers. Some of these questions are articulated by McIntosh (2014):

One of the stumbling blocks is the view that reconciliation is intangible and therefore impossible to measure. Is it an attribute of individual minds, or of groups, or both? Is it a process or a destination?... There remains much conceptual confusion surrounding the term reconciliation and also the process. The gap between theory and practice is considerable, and we know little about the impact of varied reconciliation initiatives. (p. 57)

McIntosh (2014) goes on to discuss Gladwell’s (2000) theory of tipping points as an integral part of the movement in the journey of reconciliation. McIntosh suggests reconciliation should be seen as a series of tipping points as events and people change the momentum of this

movement (Kriesburg, 2004; McIntosh, 2014). Researchers such as Kriesburg (2004), Alfred (2009), and Mitra (2011) can help us understand what this social movement might look like in Canadian society by suggesting elements that must come into play in order to approach meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In the literature on reconciliation, three important elements consistently surface: awareness (responsibility), relationship, and restitution. In deepening my own understanding of what reconciliation could be and how Canadian society would need to change to move toward a more indigenized stance on reconciliation, I have developed a visual model demonstrating that reconciliation may occur where these three elements intersect and merge (see Figure 2). This model is a heuristic tool to educate settler-Canadians on how much work needs to be done to move settler-Canadians toward reception of this social movement led by Indigenous people. I am humbly reminded by Simpson (2011) that all settler-Canadians have to enter this process of re-education with eyes, ears and hearts wide open so as to not reproduce and perpetuate the power imbalances that have taken place throughout Canada's history of colonization. I take seriously Tuck & Yang's (2012) declaration that decolonization (and by extension, reconciliation) cannot just be an academic or symbolic metaphor instead of real social action.

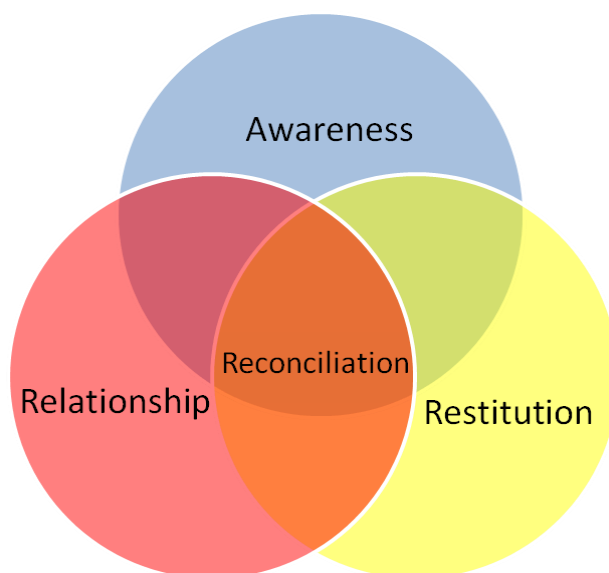


Figure 2. Venn diagram showing the relationship between three essential elements of the journey of reconciliation.

Awareness. The starting point for all Canadians, but in particular non-Indigenous settler-Canadians, is awareness: the responsibility to become aware not only of Indigenous peoples’ existence, rights, their incredible diversity of history, cultures, and worldviews but also an increased awareness of the role settler-Canadians have played in colonialization and continue to play or reproduce as neo-colonialism today through our institutions (including schools and education systems), societal structures, and social interactions. A large part of settler responsibility is doing this serious and “unsettling” work of settler decolonization (Battiste, 2005; Christian, 2011; Dion, 2007; Simpson, 2011). Chambers (2009) challenges settler-Canadians to “look, in all honesty, at our complicity in maintaining the status quo – the hegemonic colonial paradigms that historically, and in the present day, perpetuate unequal power relationships through the systemic privileging of settler peoples’ knowledge, languages and values” (p. 286). Acknowledgment and awareness are an important part of reconciliation but there also must be movement beyond this stance (Chambers, 2009; Mitra, 2011). As suggested above, settler-Canadians are stuck in the mindset of problematizing Indigenous peoples, positioning FNMI (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) people in constant deficit, and seeking quick

settler-based solutions to “Indian problems” (e.g., addictions, unemployment, and poverty), instead of examining non-Indigenous settlers’ own role in maintaining the status quo and perpetuating neo-colonialism (Mitra, 2011). By gaining awareness of our non-Indigenous (White) power and privilege as settler-Canadians we can begin to engage with Indigenous people in more authentic and meaningful ways.

Relationship. Throughout the literature, meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are highlighted as an important element of a movement or journey of reconciliation (Christian, 2011; Dion, 2007; Root, 2010; Walcott, 2011). For this reason, I want to believe that building authentic meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is a tipping point that could move people towards reconciliation (Gladwell, 2000). Although Indigenous and non-Indigenous people each have their own work to do, colonization began and is still forged upon the Indigenous—non-Indigenous relations on this Land; therefore, if healing is to occur, both parties must engage with each other at some point in a more equitable relationship. According to Christian (2011) from the Secwepemc-Syilx Nation:

In the healing process, once the silence is broken and each party is taking responsibility for their part of the relationship and relating to each other as dignified, autonomous human beings, then a new relationship can begin. I see that a new way of being in the cultural interface of Indigenous peoples and all settler communities has to begin with a shared active engagement in the decolonizing process while simultaneously participating in a cultural healing of both communities, which I believe is necessary for both Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous settler peoples of Canada. (p. 76)

This relationality must be played out and embodied in the day-to-day routines of Canadian life: in the family, the school, the neighborhood and the wider community (Mitra, 2011).

Restitution. Alfred (2009) argues that reconciliation without restitution will only perpetuate the injustices of colonialism. He states:

Restitution is purification. It is a ritual of disclosure and confession in which there is an acknowledgement and acceptance of one's harmful actions and a genuine demonstration of sorrow and regret, constituted in reality by putting forward a promise to never again do harm and by redirecting one's actions to benefit the one who has been wronged. (p. 182)

Without major political reforms that include restitution for Indigenous people, peaceful relations are not possible (Alfred, 2009; Walcott, 2011). Alfred (2009) urges us to look at the real, deeper problem of colonialism, and that is the theft of Land. He demands that for true reconciliation to take place, there must be restitution by settlers "making things right by offering us the dignity and freedom we are due and returning enough of our power and Land for us to be self-sufficient" (p. 182). Restitution is about Indigenous peoples having the right to self-determination recognized and sovereignty over their nations (Alfred, 2009; Battiste, 2011; Donald, 2010; Simpson, 2011). Other forms of restitution need to be considered and pursued simultaneously on personal, institutional and governmental levels if there is to be a surge of social movement that will become a significant tipping point along the path (journey) of reconciliation.

Moving Towards Reconciliation: A Two-Worlds Approach

I refer to reconciliation as a process of making compatible (or bringing into relation) a Western and Indigenous worldview, where both are inherently respected and valued. There are many people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who believe that by working within the tension of these positions, relationships can be built on the foundations of respect and reciprocity. Western environmentalists tend to think of the Land in terms of protection and conservation while Indigenous people see themselves in relationship with the Land, a relationship that is so essential

to who they are as people that it cannot be separated (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; McKeon, 2012). Instead of seeing these Indigenous and non-Indigenous positions as incompatible with one another, we can choose to use these different ways of viewing our environment as a chance to gain a deeper understanding of our current environmental crises (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; Korteweg & Russell, 2012; McKeon, 2012). A two-worlds approach to environmental education (EE), as described by Kapyrka and Dockstator (2012):

acknowledges the differences between the knowledge systems of both Indigenous and Western perspectives – it upholds tenets of both methods of learning. A crucial aspect of this approach is that it does not merge two knowledge systems together, nor does it paste bits of Indigenous knowledge onto Western curricula, rather it avoids knowledge domination and assimilation by engaging in a learning philosophy based on equitable inclusion. (p. 106)

This approach seems idealistic and the chance of misrepresentation and/or appropriation is high based on the dominance of Western systems. Similarly, Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall developed the idea of “two-eyed seeing” to describe learning to see the strengths of Indigenous knowledge with one eye and the strengths of Western knowledge with the other. Then, Bartlett, Marshall, and Marshall (2012) describe using both together for the benefit of all people. This combination of worldviews can be difficult to achieve, but perhaps by working from a strengths-based approach a shift towards greater understanding can begin. Aikenhead and Michell (2011) share the following description: “as two-eyed seeing implies, people familiar with both knowledge systems can uniquely combine the two in various ways to meet a challenge or task at hand. In the context of the environmental crises alone, a combination of both seems essential” (p. 114). Indigenizing EE through a two-worlds or two-eyed seeing approach benefits Indigenous

students by honouring their worldview, and benefits non-Indigenous students by introducing them to another way of thinking that is foundational to developing a decolonizing perspective (Cajete & Pueblo, 2010).

Indigenizing Environmental Education

According to Friedel (2012), “restoring Indigenous cultures through education means to not only decolonize, but to indigenize in ways that permit learning to occur multi-dimensionally and in linked tribal contexts” (p. 540). One way this can be done is by indigenizing environmental education. Since “every environmental controversy, every environmental education issue that is Land-based, is de facto an Indigenous issue in Canada” (Korteweg & Russell, 2012, p. 7), the importance of this connection must not be forgotten. There is a growing understanding that the health of the environment is a defining factor in our global society which has led to environmental education broadening to include social, political, historical, cultural, and economic dimensions (McKeon, 2012). Environmental education:

can play a vital role in decolonizing Eurocentric education by including Indigenous Knowledges and pedagogies that will help broaden all peoples’ understandings of interconnected relationships with the earth, human and non-human animals, and living and non-living entities in the environment and beyond. (Sutherland & Swayze, 2012, p. 81)

As non-Indigenous environmental educators work towards becoming allies for Indigenous peoples, they must situate themselves to be open to new ways of thinking about the environment that include Indigenous epistemologies (Lowan, 2009). Korteweg and Russell (2012) write:

Environmental educators are particularly adept and well-positioned to work towards Land-based education and can welcome inclusive Indigenous knowledge and create

respectful spaces within environmental education to help non-Indigenous students acknowledge and respect the increasingly relevant, foundational, and critically important Indigenous knowledge of the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples on whose land they live. (p. 7)

By creating respectful spaces in EE, environmental educators can acknowledge their own positionality, privilege Indigenous knowledge and knowledge holders in their practice, and return the representation to Indigenous peoples to reclaim their voices by sharing their stories. In these respectful spaces non-Indigenous peoples can listen and learn a new way of seeing the natural world as being in relationship with themselves.

Environmental Education as Eurocentric

Although environmental education could work with Indigenous epistemologies, most outdoor environmental education programs continue to focus on students connecting to the Land in order to help foster a desire to protect and conserve the natural environment, and ignore the socio-cultural history of the Land (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; Newbery, 2012; Root, 2010). Perhaps Friedel (2012) expresses this best by writing, “the overly deterministic environmentalism that marks many outdoor and environmental education programs runs squarely up against Indigenous traditions of knowing” (p. 540).

I have experience with this deterministic environmentalism personally in completing an Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism and Natural Science degree before moving into teaching outdoor environmental education. I felt very attached to the Land that I was learning, playing, and living on, yet I was incredibly ignorant and naive to the historical, political, or cultural significance of the Land and was not even aware that this was a blind spot in my education. Newbery (2012) emphasizes her frustration, explaining that:

For years as an environmental educator working in a primarily canoe trip based context, I put an emphasis on the land, tried to slow down and be quiet enough for students to develop a sense of place, a respect for this more-than-human world. But the trickiness of the place – the contested histories of space, the ambivalent role that the canoe played in Canada’s origins, the very context for all this learning – tended to go unacknowledged in my pedagogies. Among my colleagues, I believe I am unremarkable in this regard. (p. 30)

Today, wilderness is often taught as a space that is neutral and empty, one that exists to enjoy recreationally, to get away and escape for awhile. Environmental educators are missing the multitude of meanings the Land has from cultural, historical, social, and biological perspectives. Newbery (2012) asserts that “wilderness is neither natural or neutral, but *cultural* and *hegemonic*, written through relations of power” (p. 34). In order to disrupt the Eurocentric discourse in EE, environmental educators must become aware of the hegemonic systems in power. There are some examples of settler-Canadian history taught within outdoor environmental education, such as voyageur songs or trapper trader games, but these topics are often glorified, usually interpreted from a Western worldview, and only show a small piece of the larger puzzle (Newbery, 2012). This type of education regarding colonialism only perpetuates our hegemonic system. In outdoor and environmental education programs and practices, it is “colonialism not cultural incommensurability that must be addressed. In order to fully decolonize education, an approach that is centred on Indigenous knowledge as well as anti-racist and anti-colonial pedagogy is required” (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011, p. 165). A shift in pedagogy can only occur once the colonialism present in outdoor environmental education today is addressed, while working to reshape what outdoor environmental education could look like in the future.

Place-Based Education versus Land-Based Education

Due to colonialism as well as other hegemonic discourses, educators steeped in a Western worldview have often failed to recognize or appreciate Indigenous epistemologies that taught environmental and social sustainability for hundreds of generations (Cross-Townsend, 2011). As environmental educators start to acknowledge the lack of recognition of Indigenous knowledge, and see the value of a two-worlds approach, interesting paradigms emerge. One such paradigm is place-based education, which advocates for students to make a connection with their particular place or corner of the world, focusing on problems arising from a particular community or neighbourhood (Greunewald 2003; Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). For thousands of years, education was taught in relationship to place because that was what was known and understood. As information became easier to transmit and acquire, people began to think about issues on a larger scale, and education became more institutionalized and regimented. In the Western tradition, educators like John Dewey were working with this idea as far back as 1915, writing that “all studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the one life lived upon it” (cited in Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000, p. 1).

Place-based education is inherently multidisciplinary, experiential, and connects place with self and community (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). For these reasons, place-based education can be seen as a good fit for both environmental education and Indigenous education combined. According to Greenwood (formerly Gruenewald), it aims to “enlist teachers and students in the firsthand experience of local life and in the political process of understanding and shaping what happens there” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 620). In more recent years, Greenwood has begun to use the term “critical pedagogy of place,” to address the agenda of cultural decolonization in place. He argues that a critical pedagogy of place includes reinhabitation and reconciliation as two

complimentary pieces that depend on one another (Gruenewald, 2008). I fear that in this context decolonization is used as metaphor, a term adopted to supplant talk about social justice or critical pedagogies and to work against institutional education, rather than the colonization of people (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As Tuck and Yang (2012) advocate, decolonization is something distinct from other forms of justice because decolonization must recognize sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous peoples. For non-Indigenous environmental educators, place-based education may seem to occupy space at the intersection of environmental education and Indigenous education; however, to be an effective tool for decolonization, it must include Indigenous epistemologies (Root, 2010; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Although there has been much research supporting the merit of a critical pedagogy of place, there are also scholars, many Indigenous, who believe it does not adequately address Indigenous knowledge or epistemologies, nor does it take into account “the Land as a living fundamental being” (Styres et al., 2013, p. 38). One response to the call to ground place-based education in Indigenous pedagogies is a shift towards studying and working with a pedagogy of Land. This has also been called Land as first teacher, Land-based education, or Land pedagogy (Graveline, 1998; Styres, 2011; Styres, et al., 2013). For the proponents of Land-based education, one distinction between it and place-based education is that it moves beyond seeing the Land in the physical sense to understanding Land as spiritual, emotional, and intellectual (Friedel, 2011; Styres, 2011; Styres et al., 2013). As I understand it, place-based education is a Western pedagogy that focuses on a specific space and this space may or may not involve the natural environment, and it only focuses on physical or Western constructs of “nature.” Land-based education, on the other hand, embraces an Indigenous epistemological stance that views the relationship to the Land as the *source* of all experiential and theoretical knowledge (Simpson,

2002; Styres, 2011). Land, as compared to place, is further described by Styres (2011) as “more than a noun-infused fixed geographical space; it is also a spiritually dynamic, organically fluid and relational place” (p. 722). Because of the holistic and interconnected nature of Indigenous worldviews, it seems more respectful and aligned with decolonizing to use the concept of Land, with all its deep associations and meanings, to help all students better understand environmental education.

Both of these educational paradigms, whether the emphasis is on place or Land, “are deeply pedagogical centres of experience and meaning making” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 636). In either case, these paradigms call for a shift in our educational systems, away from the segmented routine of breaking education into subjects and time blocks to a “reengagement with the cultural and ecological contexts of human and nonhuman existence” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 645). I believe emphasis should be placed on re-engagement with the cultural and ecological contexts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. And undoubtedly with successful re-engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and epistemologies, a similar healing between the human nonhuman world must follow. This shift is important so that relationships between peoples, the environment, and the non-human (or more-than-human) world can heal.

Conclusion

By examining the differences between Western and Indigenous worldviews, non-Indigenous environmental educators can either continue to see them as entirely incommensurable or acknowledge these differences and work within the tension, in an in-between intercultural space, that some Indigenous scholars have referred to as “ethical space” (Donald, 2012; Ermine, 1997) or a mode of *métissage* to move towards reconciliation (Donald, 2009; Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Regardless of the epistemic space, recognition and understanding of

colonization's effect on Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is the first step in the dialogue. This will be a difficult process for most non-Indigenous Canadians who have been taught to be ignorant and marinated in Western colonial systems of "cognitive imperialism" (Battiste, 2005). As we shed our cultivated ignorance we take on the work of reconciliation, beginning a journey that is difficult, uncomfortable, and full of mistakes; however, it is only by doing this work that non-Indigenous educators can begin to decolonize themselves and their practice as an act of restitution and reconciliation.

Many scholars have advocated for using a two world or two-eyed approach as a framework to acknowledge both Western and Indigenous worldviews (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011; Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; McKeon, 2012). By combining our strengths and working in paradigms such as place-based and Land-based education, it is possible to reframe environmental crises and work towards creating a culture of respect and responsibility for all people and the environment.

More research must still be done on how to educate and help non-Indigenous environmental educators to teach all students to understand the Land in a way that acknowledges the history, culture, rights, and territories of Indigenous people, or how to do outdoor environmental education where the Land is first teacher. This study will contribute to research that addresses the intersection between social justice for Indigenous peoples and our current environmental crises by examining how land-based activities can become a tool for teaching environmental education while also beginning a journey of reconciliation.

Chapter 3 - The Research Design

Theoretical Framework

I am fortunate to be in a position to conduct research framed in such a way that the process is equally as important, if not more, than the final product. I draw upon the work of Tuck (2009) to frame my research from a position of desire, so that this research can be viewed in a way that would open the door for the pre-service teachers and educators in my research to engage in a more socially just educational future. This research has “braided” together Indigenous methodologies (Donald, 2010; Kovach, 2010) with narrative inquiry into a form of *métissage* qualitative research (Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). By using a *métissage* qualitative research approach, I was able to explore “contemporary peoples’ lives, experiences and perspectives through a narrative approach” (p. 117). I work from an understanding that reconciliation involves relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; hence, this research will focus on relationality as a catalyst for decolonizing and reconciliation for non-Indigenous environmental educators (Donald, 2010; Kovach, 2010).

Very often, educational researchers fall into a deficit or damage-centred research framework that looks to find the gaps, problems, and shortcomings within an educational situation or system (Tuck, 2009). According to Tuck (2009), one alternative is to shift the research lens to a desire-centred research approach. I understand desire-centred research as research that acknowledges the past and, at the same time, works to identify a desirable alternative for the future. Desire-centred research is framed by questions that help people to focus on positive outcomes, or to re-imagine the status-quo in order to envision and enact alternatives to their current situations in education. Tuck (2009) explains, “desire is about longing, about a present that is enriched by both the past and future. It is integral to our

humanness” (p. 417). Desire is not just about wanting but rather a stance of “informed seeking” (Tuck, 2009, p. 418). My research question: *How can Land-based practices become an educational journey of reconciliation?* fits well within a desire-centred framework. Through this research question, I must acknowledge Canada’s colonial history and present and the difficult relationships that have developed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, while at the same time focusing on the end goal of reconciliation and examining ways in which we can work towards this outcome. My desire is a future where Land-based activities can help facilitate awareness for non-Indigenous educators and encourage them to build relationships of respect and responsibility with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, in an effort to move toward reconciliation.

Indigenous methodology. Kovach (2010) discusses Indigenous research methodology as a framework that provides insight into researchers’ epistemological beliefs about knowledge production. I acknowledge the inherent values of Indigenous pedagogy by using Indigenous methodology to guide my own study. According to Lowan-Trudeau (2012), Indigenous methodologies are guided by Indigenous researchers and their allies, with the development of research approaches “*by, with and for* Indigenous people” (p. 114, emphasis in original). My research was conducted in relation with Indigenous people but I did not include or focus on the experience of First Nations’ peoples. My research was specifically designed with the goal to improve education *for* Indigenous people by stimulating non-Indigenous participants to examine their own place in relation with Indigenous people and worldview. I did this through Land-based experiences that were shared with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It was beyond the scope of this Master of Education research to include the experiences of the First Nations students.

Most Indigenous researchers emphasize the “4 Rs”: respect, responsibility, relationship, and reciprocity as guiding principles for research. I worked to maintain these principles in the methodological approach of this study with the participants and in communication of research results to them (Archibald, 2008; Kirkness & Barnhart, 1991; Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Some scholars choose the term relevance over responsibility (Styres, Zinga, Bennett, & Bomberry, 2010). I believe that both responsibility and relevance need to be incorporated into the “5 Rs” of Indigenous respectful research as they are both valuable tenets to doing Indigenous respectful research. This research is focused on non-Indigenous environmental educators and their journeys towards reconciliation; however, it was important to conduct this work in a way that centred respect, responsibility, relationship, relevance, and reciprocity as first principles in order to honour the Indigenous people with whom myself and the non-Indigenous participants were building relationships through Land-based activities. Respectful research is mindful of the participants in the research as well as those who may be affected by the results of the research (Kovach, 2010). Responsibility implies knowledge and action and is inseparable from respect and reciprocity (Kovach, 2010). Relationship refers to the connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, between researchers and participants and the relationships within each of these groups. Donald (2010) states that it is “an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of the relationship we have with others, how our histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other, and how our futures as people similarly are tied together” (p. 7). The fourth R, reciprocity, requires the researcher to give back to the individuals as well as the collective (Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). In this research, it is important that research participants, as well as their wider community, benefit from the research as much as, if not more so, than the researcher and research community.

Another important principle of Indigenous *métissage* is to promote ethical relationality (Donald, 2010; Kovach, 2010). According to Donald (2010), “ethical relationality 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). Ethical relationality invites the researcher to closely examine the historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a person experiences the world and to keep these considerations in the forefront when doing research (Donald, 2010; Kovach, 2010). In order to be ethically relational, I have woven in my own experiences, stories, and journey of decolonization and reconciliation as a researcher and non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educator. Indigenous methodologies braided with qualitative research can build a strong and more meaningful research approach. This idea is summarized by Kovach (2010) who states, “given a mutual desire, the relationship between Indigenous methodologies and qualitative research can deepen and build trust and openness” (pp. 177-178).

Narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry has grown out of an oral tradition that allows participants to explore the meaning of experience and life histories (Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Although narrative inquiry does not necessarily include an Indigenous perspective, sharing what one has learned is an important part of Indigenous tradition (Archibald, 2008). This sharing can take the form of story or of personal life experiences. It is the life experiences of the research participants in this study, as well as my own, that I have attempted to capture through a narrative inquiry approach.

In many ways the 5 Rs as well as ethical relationality can be found in a narrative inquiry method. According to Clandinin and Murphy (2009):

First and most important, we speak to our participants and ourselves to fulfill the relational responsibilities of representing our co-constructed experiences. The priority in composing research texts is not, first and foremost, to tell a good story; the priority is to compose research texts in relation with the lives of our participants and ourselves. (p. 600)

The narrative inquirer embraces ethical relationality in the roles and interactions of the researcher as well as the participant. Ethical relationality is about “attending to and acting on experiences by co-inquiring with people who interact in and with classrooms, schools, or other contexts into living, telling, retelling and reliving stories of experiences” (Huber, Caine, Huber, & Steeves, 2013, p. 213). It is this journey or movement that I tried to capture in my research as I gathered stories from research participants and reflected on my own journey of lived experiences in this research process. However, Huber et al. (2013) remind those conducting narrative inquiry that the stories (narratives) are never ending but constantly changing as they become increasingly layered and contextualized. Each and every experience shapes and modifies our stories and leads us to new ways of understanding and being. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe the understanding of experience as central to narrative inquiry. They state:

As we tell our stories as inquirers, it is experience, not narrative, that is the driving impulse. We came to narrative inquiry as a way to study experience. For us, narrative is the closest we can come to experience.... Our guiding principle in an inquiry is to focus on experience and to follow where it leads. (p. 188)

Within my research it is the experiences of the pre-service teachers, non-Indigenous environmental educators, as well as my own, that I have tried to learn from. Although the data I gathered represents a small moment in each of our lives, I will demonstrate how the experience

had an impact on how we (pre-service teachers, non-Indigenous environmental educators and I) view our past and future understanding of Land and of our relationships with Indigenous people.

The Researcher's Role

Within an Indigenous framework, Kovach (2010) declares that there must be an integral, ongoing decolonizing perspective to research processes. She observes that a decolonizing approach “is particularly effective in analysing power differences between groups; that it provides hope for transformation; that there is a role for both structural change and personal agency in resistance” (p. 80). Further, a decolonizing lens prioritizes the centrality of voice and forces the researcher to closely examine the subjectivity of the research and to understand their own position in it (Kovach, 2010). For this very reason, it was important to position myself in the first chapter of this thesis and study. Rasmussen (2003) states that as researchers we should study our own culture first, because before we can do any good we must learn to stop doing harm. Throughout this year, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on the privileges that I experience in my life and I have consciously deliberated on where I can address power imbalances as part of my decolonizing journey. As discussed in the literature review chapter, a decolonization journey is distinctly different for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Reconciliation, however, involves building bridges of relationship between the two groups. I understand that I cannot get rid of the privilege or power I have inherited as a white settler-Canadian, but the work I know I can accomplish to modify this inherent privilege is to initiate and help other white settler-Canadians (specifically my non-Indigenous peers and colleagues in outdoor environmental education) to recognize and deepen their own decolonizing journeys.

Ethics

This section examines the steps taken to obtain permission from the Research Ethics Board (REB) as well as the process involved in participating in two unique Indigenous-centred events, thereby allowing me to connect with non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educators participating in Land-based activities.

I submitted a research application for ethical review to the Lakehead Research Ethics Board in December 2013. The application included a copy of an information summary letter for outdoor educators (Appendix A), an information summary letter for the Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education (OE3) pre-service teachers (Appendix B), a letter of consent for outdoor educators (Appendix C), a letter of consent for OE3 pre-service teachers (Appendix D), and a copy of the completed Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) 2 certificate. My research application demonstrated an awareness and sensitivity to possible emergent ethical issues that may have occurred as the research proceeded. The information summary letter described the purpose of my research and explained the foreseeable risks or harm associated with participation in the study, along with research team contact information. The consent form detailed the terms of agreement between research participant and researcher and reiterated the rights of the participant (for example, the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and the right to not answer any question asked as part of the research, should they choose to take part in my study). My study received approval from the Lakehead REB on January 17, 2014.

I came into this research project through my work and association with Dr. Lisa Korteweg, my thesis supervisor. I have worked to follow Dr. Korteweg's plan of engagement from her SSHRC-funded research entitled, *Points of Viewing Culturally Responsive Aboriginal Education*. Through that research she has been collaborating with Indigenous community members in Thunder Bay through formal and informal community engagement plans over the past 10 years. This includes ongoing partnerships with federal and provincial school boards on different initiatives/projects, mostly focused on improving teachers' understanding of and engagement with Indigenous students. Dr. Korteweg is currently working with principals, superintendents and teachers at all levels (elementary and high school) to design initiatives that educate teachers on decolonization and indigenizing their pedagogies; she has at the same time created initiatives that actively benefit Indigenous students (through curriculum design, student civic engagement, extra-curricular activities, additional teaching supports through teacher candidates, and service learning projects of volunteering). It was Dr. Korteweg who had the relationships, trust of the Indigenous community leaders/educators, and the connections to initiate and coordinate the two events (that will be discussed in more depth in the following paragraphs) that became a part of my research project, as well as the research project of another graduate student working under Dr. Korteweg's supervision. The result of this long-standing relationship of good faith supported her Master of Education students to be able to proceed in a manner that I believe was respectful and beneficial to all involved. Although these two projects can stand on their own and they had very different foci, they will both contribute to a larger body of knowledge regarding culturally responsive education, through Dr. Korteweg's research.

Dr. Korteweg teaches the course, EDUC 4000—Indigenizing Practices and Perspectives in Education (IPPE), to students in the professional year of the Bachelor of Education program. Each year in the winter semester, she brings together students from a federal high school, pre-service teachers from her IPPE course, and pre-service teachers from the Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education course (OE3), for a full-day Land-based program at a heritage park. Unique to the course during the fall term of 2013, a pre-service student who was registered in both the IPPE and OE3 courses, Lesley (a pseudonym), was able to organize a four-week dogsledding program for her students during her formal teaching practicum in a federal school. This program was made possible through the guidance of her Associate Teacher, the support of the school principal, and research funding from Dr. Korteweg. This was a pilot curricular unit and its approach sparked the similar six-week program the following semester (winter term) that I participated in and collected data during. Although the winter term dogsledding project was initiated by a pre-service teacher during her fall placement, it was continued and extended due to the strong relationship and trust that Dr. Korteweg had established with this particular school, its principal and teachers; Dr. Korteweg supported this study's goal to better serve Indigenous youth in a tangible way through using her research funds to ensure the program could operate.

This study spanned two events and each involved pre-service teachers, professional educators, high school students and Land-based activities. Although my research did not focus directly on the experience of the First Nations students, the second simultaneous project of another graduate student's Master of Education thesis, under Dr. Korteweg's supervision, did focus on the students' experiences and voices. To ensure

consent for both of these projects and both events (that will be discussed below) Dr. Korteweg partnered with the federal school's Anishinaabe principal, understanding his role as *locus parentis* for underage participants, as a representative of the administering education council, and responsible to all the communities/families who had entrusted him with the education of their children. The principal clearly gave permission and support to have his students participate in the Land-based experiences and understood the goals, ethics and contributions of my research study as well as the other graduate student's study. It was clearly communicated and understood that my research was focused on the non-Indigenous pre-service teachers and in-service educators to inquire into their decolonizing and reconciliatory journeys with Indigenous youth in general and as a focal part of their current non-Indigenous teacher identity formation. While I recognize that I was capturing the teachers' views and experiences as they participated in a focused set of Land-based events with First Nations students (who were incidentally affected), the point of the study was to understand how these experiences impacted the relational understandings of non-Indigenous educators, from their point of view, as they engaged in Land-based activities beside Indigenous youth.

Data Collection Strategy/Method

The research participants. For my research participants, I chose to focus my attention on the five people who were constant participants through all of these Land-based activities, the three pre-service teachers, the teacher from the federal school, and the owner/operator of the dogsledding company. All of these individuals were non-Indigenous settler-Canadians. I wanted to gain an understanding of how participation in Land-based experiences had affected their perception of the Land, their relationships with Indigenous people, and their understandings of

reconciliation. I also spoke with five pre-service teachers who only participated in the single full-day program (field trip) at the heritage park. All of the research participants have been given pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

The three pre-service teachers who were in both the IPPE and OE3 classes were directly contacted about participating in this research project because of their unique position of being in both of these Bachelor of Education classes. I gave these three students an information letter and consent form as well as verbally explained the research project to them. All three consented to the research and I was able to conduct my first set of interviews with these pre-service teachers approximately one week before the first Land-based experience. These three teacher candidates also did the briefings for each of the classes prior to the first activity/day at the heritage park. During this briefing, I explained my research to the entire OE3 class and asked students to sign the consent form (Appendix C) if they were interested in participating in the study. The course instructor also signed a consent form at this time. On the consent form, they had the option of checking a box if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview with me about their experience at the heritage park. I also asked the students to write on a cue card one question or curiosity they had in anticipation of our experience at the heritage park. During the day at the heritage park, I spent time observing the pre-service teachers, but did not conduct any formal interviews. After the experience at the heritage park, I interviewed the three students who were in both the IPPE class and the OE3 class again (see Figure 3). As I mentioned earlier, I also selected five other students from the OE3 class to interview after this program (see Figure 3). I selected these students based on observations of the day at the heritage park, that they had consented to a follow-up interview, and that they had asked a relevant question on the cue card during the pre-briefing class. I also conducted an interview with the instructor of the OE3 class,

specifically in relation to a debriefing discussion that the students had in class after the heritage park experience.

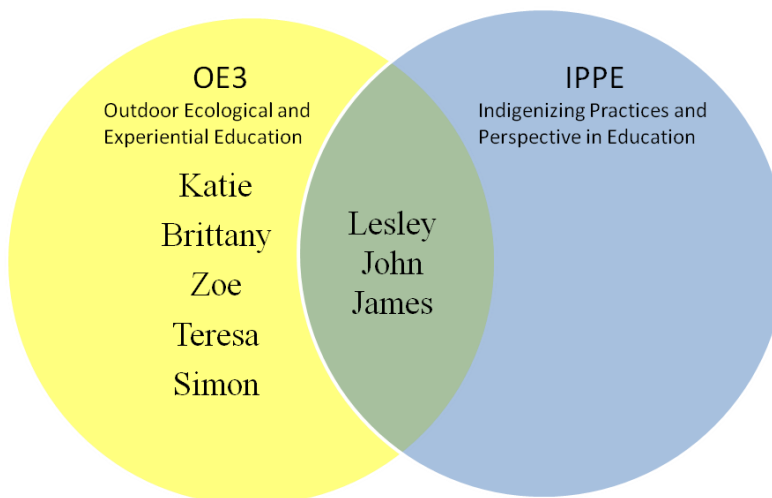


Figure 3. Venn Diagram showing pre-service teacher participants in relation to their class(es).

The other two participants were non-Indigenous practising educators. As has been previously mentioned, one participant was the teacher of the First Nations students and he was selected for this research study based on a recommendation from the principal. This educator, Adam, agreed to join this research project to further his own Land-based learning and he believed, by extension, that his students would benefit as well. The other practising educator was the owner/operator of the dogsledding company, Peter, and he agreed to the research out of interest in the project and a desire to become more culturally responsive with his clients. As mentioned above, both of these practising educators were given information letters and verbal explanations, and signed consent forms.

Through pre-service teacher observation, and follow-up interviews, I gathered information from the three pre-service teachers who were in both IPPE and OE3, 5 students in only OE3, the owner-operator of the dogsledding company, as well as the classroom teacher of the federal school students. All of these individuals were given information letters and consent

forms and I had full conversations to explain the forms verbally to them and to respond to any questions they may have had.

The events. This research project spanned two events. The first planned event (through the collaboration between Dr. Korteweg, the federal school staff and the principal) was a full-day program at a heritage park that involved approximately 25 pre-service teachers from the IPPE class, 25 pre-service teachers from the OE3 class (3 students who were in both classes and are participants in this research project), and about 50 students from a federal school. The three pre-service teachers who were research participants and members of both the IPPE class and the OE3 class did presentations to each class to prepare the rest of the pre-service teachers on what to expect from the field trip with a focus on the Land-based activities. The high school students participating in this experience were also briefed, by the principal and classroom teachers, about the field trip and the research project prior to arriving at the heritage park. I also participated in this field trip experience, acting as an observer of the pre-service teachers. The federal school students, IPPE and OE3 pre-service teachers, were organized into six mixed groups, resulting in groups that included 3-4 First Nations students, 2-3 IPPE candidates, and 2-3 OE3 candidates. The day began with the OE3 candidates facilitating ice-breaker activities for their groups, followed by a round-robin style day of activities that included snowshoeing, life in a wigwam, bannock making, dogsledding, Indigenous winter games, and Indigenous technologies.

The second planned research event (stemming from the ongoing collaborative relationships between Dr. Korteweg and the federal school) was a six-week program (one afternoon a week for six weeks) facilitated by a local dogsledding company that brought together three self-selected pre-service teachers from the IPPE and OE3 courses, First Nation students enrolled in a Grade 11/12 health and leadership course at the federal school, and their Grade

11/12 non-Indigenous teacher. On the first day of our dogsledding program, each person in attendance introduced themselves and why they were attending this experience. At that time, I made it clear that although I would be participating in the activities, I was also going to be observing the pre-service teachers to help me better understand their experience of participating in this type of Land-based activity and that this was a part of my Master of Education research project. Each week the pre-service teachers went to the dog yard and worked alongside the First Nations students as they ran through a series of activities, gaining more knowledge and understanding of the dogs and dogsleds. The dog musher ran this program so that the research participants (pre-service teachers) were in an apprenticeship-type role. Everyone was taught about the dogs, dog handling and mushing and the pre-service teachers were expected to help support the learning and engagement of the students. The non-Indigenous teacher of the First Nations students participated alongside his students learning all the same skills as his students. Every participant (pre-service teachers, First Nations students, and myself) chose a specific dog to work with more closely. We chose dogs based on characteristics that we saw in both ourselves (our own characters) and that we observed as the dog's character. For example, one pre-service teacher candidate identified himself as outgoing and picked a young dog who had a lot of energy but was still learning how to work in a team. This character trait was something that the pre-service teacher recognized as a trait that he needed to work on as well.

Over the six weeks of the program, more control and responsibility of the daily dog care and mushing activities were given to the First Nations students, resulting in a special culminating activity in the sixth week. Throughout this time, the pre-service teachers learned alongside the First Nations students, working together to move dogs around the yard, harnessing and putting on dog booties. To get three dog teams ready each week took a combined group effort. The

culminating activity took place at the federal school grounds with the First Nations students assuming the leadership role of primary drivers, while other students and teachers from the federal school as well as the neighbouring high school were offered dogsled rides. The pre-service teachers were in attendance at this culminating activity to again support and celebrate the First Nations students in their role as dog mushers. The federal school principal, school staff and students were all invited to participate and enjoy dogsledding in their school's back yard.

The process. The data is comprised of three sources: pre-service teacher observations, my own journal reflections of the experience, and individual semi-structured interviews. All of the interviews were audio-recorded. Each interview was semi-structured (Creswell, 2009), in that I entered into the interview with some guiding questions but tried to create an atmosphere that allowed the research participants to speak freely about their own experiences (see Appendix E). In conducting semi-structured interviews, the research participants could expand on areas they felt were important or bring up their own observations or explanations. This format also allowed for me, the researcher, to follow tangents or the participant's story-telling that I felt might help in getting a fuller understanding of their experiences, and/or to probe deeper into a research participant's story to gain a richer description of their perceptions (Creswell, 2009). Once the interviews were transcribed, I returned them to each of the pre-service and in-service educators to check for accuracy, additions and/or retractions.

During the field sites' research, I was a graduate assistant for the OE3 course; therefore, I had already begun to develop relationships with the pre-service teachers in this study. By participating fully in this research, I worked alongside the research participants both at the heritage park field trip as well as the six-week dogsledding program. I wanted to demonstrate and continue to cultivate respectful relationships (reciprocity, embodied engagement,

relationship-building in the group) with the pre-service teachers and the professional educators to allow for more open and honest dialogue during the research process. Reciprocity was an important component of the whole research process itself. In the case of the focus of my research study, the OE3 pre-service teachers benefitted by participating in the program at the heritage park where they gained knowledge of Indigenous history, Indigenous winter technologies, and explored ways to teach their future students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Particularly for the OE3 teacher candidates, by implementing icebreaker activities at the beginning of the day, these pre-service teachers were able to develop their leadership abilities and gain experience working towards building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. These are valuable experiences that they can use as future outdoor environmental educators and the OE3 students declared this value during their full class debriefing on the heritage park field trip.

For the second part of this research project, all the research participants stated how valuable the Land-based experience was for themselves personally. The teacher candidates from the OE3/IPPE program benefitted greatly by participating in a six-week dogsledding program, giving them a unique skill set as well as valuable leadership skills. Peter, the owner/operator of the dogsledding company, stated that he benefitted by gaining new understandings of indigenized education and reconciliation so that he would be more conscious of implementing these elements in future dogsledding programs. Adam, the teacher of the First Nations students, stated that he gained a valuable set of outdoor skills in relation to dogsledding as well more insight into his own personal journey towards reconciliation as a non-Indigenous Canadian. Adam also expressed how he saw this project benefitting the broader Indigenous community because he felt that his high school students had gained a valuable set of skills that would contribute to the completion of their high school credits and their perseverance, and that they had

had an opportunity to participate in outdoor experiential programming as part of formal schooling (Ontario curriculum) that actually reflected their culture. It has since become known to me that the partnership between this particular school and the dogsledding company has continued into this year (2015) as both the school and the dogsledding company felt they really benefitted from this Land-based program and their own relationships of trust and collaboration were strengthened through the research project (dogsled owner, personal communication, Feb 13, 2015).

Throughout the research process, I made observations of the pre-service teachers during these Land-based experiences. During both programs—the heritage park field trip and the dogsledding unit, I wrote field notes that included observations, feelings based upon my own experiences, and interpretations of key *in situ* events. Finally, I kept a personal journal about my own decolonizing and reconciliatory journey through all these experiences as a third data source. This interpretive data is subjective and an important source of qualitative data because it tracks my own shifting Euro-settler worldview, changes in my pedagogical orientation, and epistemological growth—factors that I have worked hard to document, acknowledge and critically reflect upon throughout the study.

For the data analysis procedures, I began by transcribing 18 audio-recorded interviews. In the transcripts, my research participants were given pseudonyms and identifying names of places or locations were removed in order to make the transcript data as anonymous as possible. My initial investigation of the data began during the transcription process while I listened and re-listened intently to the audio taped interviews interfaced with reading my field notes and reflexively questioning my researcher stance to facilitate the attention and thinking that was needed to both transcribe and make sense of the data (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

After finishing this phase of data transcription, a few themes had already emerged as they gained my attention repeatedly in the reading of the transcripts. These emergent themes included the following: authentic experience, relationship building, and challenging stereotypes. At this point in the data analysis, I returned to the research literature from the fields of Land-based education, decolonization studies and reconciliation research to triangulate these emerging themes with the work of other researchers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I found these themes or issues were clearly supported by the research of scholars such as Christian (2011), Dion (2007) and Root (2010). These themes also made me re-read closer and examine further the work of Indigenous scholars such as Friedel (2012), Lowan (2009), and Simpson (2011) in whose articles I could connect with themes of cultural awareness of Land, indigenizing education, and reconciliation. Through this process, my themes emerged both deductively and inductively.

The next phase of data analysis involved the qualitative coding software, Atlas.Ti. I first uploaded all the transcripts and labeled them into files and organized the data into participant groupings of three families: OE3 pre-service teachers, OE3 and IPPE pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. Then with Atlas, I could e-code the data in order to track and search emerging themes along with new, deeper meanings. Surprisingly, I quickly found that each theme was not brought up by every participant group; however, the themes of relationship building, cultural awareness of Land and reconciliation were consistent across all three groups of research participants. The themes of authentic experience and indigenizing were only evident or spoken to in the interviews by the pre-service teachers (compared to the in-service teachers) while challenging stereotypes was a theme that was only verbalized or apparent in the interviews of the

OE3 pre-service teachers. I have summarized the evidence of themes or the themes revealed, articulated or discussed from the different participant groups' interviews in Table 1 (below).

Table 1

The three participant groups and their associated themes.

	OE3	OE3 and IPPE	In-Service Teachers
Theme:	Authentic Experience	Authentic Experience	
	Relationship Building	Relationship Building	Relationship Building
	Challenging Stereotypes		
	Cultural Awareness of Land	Cultural Awareness of Land	Cultural Awareness of Land
	Reluctance to indigenize	Ready to indigenize	
	Reconciliation	Reconciliation	Reconciliation

Many researchers and scholars highlight the importance of reflexivity in their research, particularly in areas of Indigenous research, social justice, and environmental education (Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Reflexivity is the researcher's ability to examine their own role in the research process and how their experiences, worldviews, social positioning, and interpersonal interactions with the research participants shape their results (Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012).

Researchers critically reflect throughout the research process in order to understand their position within the research. A reflexive researcher is also a participant in the research process (Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Furthermore, reflexivity is an important part of interpretive research because it reveals the learning experienced by the researcher (Lowan-Trudeau, 2012).

Social research hinges on social relationships that the researcher and researched co-produce in social encounters. It is these encounters that a researcher must continually examine in order to best interpret the data gathered. By being reflexive, the researcher must remain open to

the world and different ways of knowing (Tuohy et al., 2013). Woven into all of my research is critical self-reflexivity on how Land-based activities have affected my perceptions of the natural environment or Land, as well as how they have affected my decolonizing journey, ethical positionality, and relationality with Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 4 - Discussion of Findings

The Research Participants

OE3 teacher candidates. Five of the people that I interviewed —Brittany, Zoe, Teresa, Katie and Simon—were pre-service teachers in the professional year of the Bachelor of Education program. The pre-service were all in the Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education (OE3) specialist course, which focuses on learning about the environment through active involvement outside the walls of the typical classroom (see Figure 3). The OE3 course “emphasizes learning how to organize and teach experiential programs based on an ecological framework” (Puk, 2014, para 1). Students learn about the natural world and the interrelationships that exist between the living and non-living world. These students were highly motivated and interested in learning ways to incorporate environmental education into their teaching practices. Katie, Teresa, and Zoe had very little experience working with Indigenous youth before their participation in these Land-based experiences. Simon had spent a few days working in a reserve community, volunteering with an athletic program, and Brittany had some Indigenous students in her first teaching placement the previous fall. For all of these students, the experience at the heritage park was their first time participating in Land-based activities alongside Indigenous youth. Connected to this group of students was Joyce, the instructor of the OE3 course. She had an interesting perspective on the experience at the heritage park because she participated in the activities with the pre-service teachers and was able to gain an overview of the experience from a class debrief, course assignments and individual conversations with multiple students. In this way, Joyce’s observations offer insight into the general feelings and understandings of the OE3 pre-service teachers.

IPPE teacher candidates. A second group of pre-service teachers were interviewed for this study: James, Lesley, and John, all in their professional year of the Bachelor of Education program, therefore their fifth year of post-secondary education. Previous to this professional year of teacher education, they had all graduated from the Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism degree program. This meant that they had been fully immersed in Western (Eurocentric) understandings and approaches to the natural environment. Like the first five teacher candidates, James, Lesley, and John were also students in the OE3 course. They all had a keen interest in exploring ways to incorporate outdoor, ecological, and experiential education into their teaching practices. These three pre-service teachers, however, were also in the Indigenizing Practices and Perspectives in Education (IPPE) course which encourages pre-service candidates to participate in active, collaborative, holistic, culturally-responsive learning and teaching in Indigenous education with northern Ontario teachers and classrooms (see Figure 3). Through modelling and active learning, the IPPE course seeks to re-imagine K-12 education in a way that honours, respects, and embraces Aboriginal cultures, peoples, and knowledge (Lakehead, 2014). This course includes 36 hours (0.5 credits) of informal placement with First Nations youth. Being enrolled in IPPE greatly impacted how these three OE3 students understood decolonization, reconciliation, and what it means to indigenize education. Their ability to make connections between an Indigenous worldview and environmental education was much greater than the five pre-service teacher candidates who were only taking the OE3 course.

Participation in the one-day experience at the heritage park was a requirement for all students enrolled in OE3 and IPPE, whereas the six-week dogsledding program was an alternative practicum component for only the three OE3-IPPE students as a requirement for the

IPPE course (part of the 36 hours). This informal placement suited James, Lesley, and John well because of their interest in outdoor environmental and experiential education.

It is impossible to separate the learning that happened during the in-class component of IPPE from the learning that took place during the dogsledding program, as these pieces were constantly informing each other. In the IPPE class, students were exposed to concepts and themes in indigenizing education, while at the heritage park and the dog yard the pre-service teachers experienced these concepts and themes playing out first hand. Their understanding of key concepts and themes was solidified by their participation in the Land-based practices working alongside First Nations youth. Of course, no journey is linear. For James, John, and Lesley, learning came from in-class and out-of-class experiences.

Practicing educators. The other two people in this study were Adam and Peter, professionals working in education. Adam is a teacher of First Nations youth. Peter is a dog musher who owns and operates a dogsledding business and dog yard and he facilitated the dogsledding portions of these experiences. Each of these research participants has unique understandings of Land-based activities because of their positions as professional educators and the approaches they have developed to educate their students or clients.

Adam, the teacher at the federal school who participated with his class in the dogsledding program, was also the liaison for the whole federal high school's participation in and coordination of the field trip to the heritage park. He was supported by the principal who recommended all classes/students to participate in the heritage park field trip and who endorsed the dogsledding program along with research study projects. Adam has more than eight years' teaching experience, most of it spent working in First Nation communities and with First Nations students. When I asked Adam to describe his teacher identity, he was reluctant to call himself an

outdoor educator and reframed it as “an indoor educator who likes to go outside.” Although Adam did not self-identify as an outdoor or environmental educator, he did state that he tries to incorporate Land-based practices into his teaching as a way to connect to his students and to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into the curriculum. Throughout the study, Adam’s understandings and impressions of the project were framed from his experiences as a teacher of First Nations students.

Peter is the owner and operator of a dogsledding company, dogsled kennel, and the facilitator of the dogsledding activity at the heritage park as well as the six-week dogsledding program. Peter also did not identify as an environmental or outdoor educator, although he has degrees in Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism; Geography; and Education, and is a certified Ontario teacher. Instead, Peter self-identified first as a musher, whose delivery of service includes educational and social experiences. Peter feels deeply connected to this place, Thunder Bay, as a community, and is very passionate about his professional work. He often refers to the time he spent in the Yukon developing his skills as a dog musher, the first place he became aware and interested in Indigenous culture and its connections to dogsledding as a vibrant and important part of the Yukon. Peter is a settler-Canadian but very aware of his socio-cultural position in dogsledding and works to find ways to include and honour Indigenous culture in his business. One very obvious way that Peter works to recognize dogsledding as Indigenous technology and practice is by naming some of his dogs in Ojibway, such as *Anemki* which translates as “Thunder.” Adam also helps his clients understand the important role that dogsledding played in the history of Thunder Bay, Northern Ontario, and the Northern Minnesota area, especially for the movement of goods, mail, and people. He feels honoured and indebted to Indigenous peoples who were willing to pass on information and skills to settler-

Canadians, practices that helped his current knowledge and expertise with dogsledding. Peter is highly aware of how colonization has led to the loss of traditional skills among Indigenous peoples, stating:

And to receive that [knowledge] now is an honour.... When I think that now I'm a musher because somebody entrusted somebody with a skill that led to this. And for me to be able to share that [back] because a whole group lost it. For me that is a bit of a reconciliation piece.

Adam and Peter offer a unique perspective to this study as they come from very different backgrounds and have taken different paths in their journeys of reconciliation, but are now both working to bring an Indigenous perspective to the forefront in order to educate Indigenous people and settler-Canadians.

Although the pre-service and in-service educators in this study came from various backgrounds and have distinct perspectives, their common thread is participation in a program focused on indigenized Land-based practices. Past experiences and knowledge have effects on their thoughts and feelings about these experiences. The focus of my study is to analyze the data for common and complementary themes that emerge from my participants' many and unique standpoints.

Data Analysis

The study's data will be discussed in three sections because of the varied background of the three groups of educators in the study and the two distinct events (full-day heritage park field trip and the six-week dogsledding program). The first section, entitled "Beginning Experiences: A Day at a Heritage Park," highlights the voices of the pre-service teachers in the OE3 course. Also included is the experience of the OE3 instructor who had a big-picture view of the heritage

park experience. The OE3 pre-service teachers had little to no experience participating in activities that were Indigenous-centric and also little to no experience working with Indigenous youth. This experience of participating in Land-based activities alongside First Nations youth provided many teacher candidates with a unique learning experience that led them to discuss themes of authentic experience, relationship building, challenging stereotypes, cultural awareness of the Land, what it means to indigenize education, and reconciliation.

The second section of this chapter and data analysis, “Deepening Experiences: Six Weeks of Dogsledding,” discusses in depth the experiences of the three OE3-IPPE pre-service teachers. The six-week (one afternoon/week) dogsledding program with a class of First Nations youth led these three pre-service teachers to discuss similar themes to the other pre-service teacher group (OE3 students) but in greater depth/breadth and with distinctly different understandings. Lesley, James, and John also spoke about authentic experience, relationship building, cultural awareness of the Land, indigenizing education, and reconciliation. However, they discussed deeper connections between their environmental learning and new learnings focused on Indigenous education.

Finally, the third section entitled, “Building Bridges: Connecting Pedagogy through Land-based Practices,” highlights the voices of Adam and Peter, the two professional educators who also took part in these programs and experiences, but whose professional roles—as a teacher of First Nations students and a dog musher, respectively—had their own unique perspectives. I chose to emphasize these two professional educators because they are examples of in-service practitioners and role-models of who these pre-service teachers may become if they choose to continue to embrace indigenized environmental education in their teaching.

Beginning Experiences: A Day at a Heritage Park

Participation in the Land-based experiences at the heritage park introduced pre-service teachers to an examination of ontologies and epistemologies that were very different from their own. For many of the OE3 pre-service teachers, this was their first experience interacting with Indigenous students. As mentioned in Chapter 3, all the OE3 pre-service teachers had a one-hour presentation introducing some basics about Indigenous education, including correct terminology and the importance of understanding the cultural identity of Indigenous youth. In the one-hour presentation, Roy Thomas' model (see Figure 1) was used to establish for the OE3 students a sense of their own cultural identity, and then they were consequently encouraged to think about the cultural identity of First Nations students who would be participating in activities at the heritage park alongside them. Following the day at the heritage park I interviewed Brittany, Zoe, Teresa, Simon, and Katie. In these interviews six themes, explored below, emerged.

Authentic experience. I hoped this research study would help move environmental educators along their journeys of decolonization towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by experiencing “Land as first teacher” (Styres, 2011). As an outcome from the research done by Root (2010), I knew that shared experiences with Aboriginal peoples are often a launching point for non-Indigenous people to unconsciously begin to decolonize. Not only is this first principle true in my own decolonizing journey, it was also true for the OE3 pre-service teacher participants. According to the OE3 pre-service teachers in this research project, however, engaging in a set of shared experiences with Indigenous students *only* helped them make some connections with First Nations students *when* the OE3 candidates perceived the experience to be authentic. Inauthentic experiences were typically identified by the pre-service teachers as

instances where they felt that some type of Indigenous knowledge was being appropriated by a settler-Canadian and then delivered or “played” as their own knowledge or story. One of the heritage park activities that many of the OE3 teacher candidates found inauthentic was the “life in a wigwam” session, one out of the seven sessions where the heritage park program staff used first-person interpretation to share stories and knowledge about traditional life of Anishinaabe people. Reflecting upon the OE3 teacher-candidates’ reaction to this one session, Joyce (OE3 instructor) commented:

The only tension I noticed, and that came up in the OE3 conversation, was with [heritage park] staff people who weren’t Indigenous [but were] communicating information about Indigenous people and their way of life. Just that challenge of living history museums where you have people who are being trained to say a certain bit of information because they study that information for the purpose of that job, as opposed to having integrated that into their life. So that was the one tension that came up.... So a number of the students were frustrated when there was a woman who they at least perceived as non-Aboriginal giving teachings in the wigwam.

The result of this perception of questionable authenticity was made clear by the teacher candidate James, who said, “I guess a couple of the interpreters being non-Indigenous and saying these stories... it was kind of disengaging almost.” Similarly, Teresa talked about feeling disappointed with some of the activities she participated in, saying:

It just felt very rehearsed; they weren’t passionate about what they were talking about. And they’re like, okay let’s go walk around, let’s come back, put the snowshoes on, take them off [said in a monotone voice]. It felt very kind of robotic.

Both Teresa and James felt that some of the activities that were instructed by settler-Canadians (or who they perceived to be non-Indigenous) were “contrived” because they believed that the information being shared was not a part of the interpreters’ own history, or their own story. Whether or not this was accurate, this perception made the pre-service teachers question the accuracy of the presented information as well as the validity of the experience to be teaching them something real and true.

Besides the pre-service teachers feeling disengaged in their own experience, and therefore unable to engage with the First Nations students, there were feelings of awkwardness or embarrassment at being with First Nations students and realizing that they were standing by while other people were potentially appropriating elements of First Nations culture. Brittany explained this, saying:

It felt a little less awkward to be with Indigenous students, at least having an Indigenous person explaining the history. Whereas when you have Indigenous students and you have a white person explaining it, it is a little more awkward.

Other pre-service teachers echoed Brittany’s feelings of discomfort, but from my observations many of them were unable to articulate this discomfort clearly. Instead it often came through as discomfort with how to indigenize their teaching practice (discussed later in this section).

Relationship building. As groups moved through the various Land-based activities at the heritage park, individual interactions began to take place through conversation and shared experiences. This getting to know one another happened in varying degrees throughout the participation in the Land-based activities, but as expected with a one-day-only event, the relationships that were built were friendly but not particularly deep. Participation in the Land-

based practices did help facilitate pre-service teachers perceived connections to Indigenous students. Simon spoke about this idea of making connections, saying:

I think some of the activities definitely helped [me] connecting with the students—the icebreakers and then the sports games [Indigenous winter sports]. The first station was good because we were all relaxing by the fire listening to stories [life in a wigwam], didn't really feel connected to the students. But when we were playing the sports games or doing dogsledding, even bannock making..., kind of made a connection. I think the physical activities are really what make a connection. Instead of just sitting there trying to have an awkward conversation.

For Simon, the one-on-one connection came most easily when he and the First Nations students were engaged experientially in Land-based activities. He described how playing snow snakes became really competitive with everyone practising before their turn, as well as teasing or egging each other on, creating a sense of camaraderie. Katie also found that the Land-based activities helped her connect with the First Nations students. From my observations, Katie spent a lot of time chatting with the students in her group. She engaged them in conversation while participating alongside them in the activities. Katie connected to the high school students because of their common experience of having travelled long distances to be in Thunder Bay. This conversation led Katie to talk to the students about her own 18-hour drive to Thunder Bay and her experiences being so far away from home. This was a very typical interaction that OE3 students had with the First Nations students in their groups as they initiated conversation. Sharing stories was foundational for the pre-service teachers to begin to connect with the First Nations students. Although Katie was able to start conversations with First Nations students in her group and this was helpful as a beginning interaction, she actually felt more connection when

the student/teacher roles were reversed, for example when the First Nations students took on leadership around the dogs. Zoe had a similar experience to Katie when a couple of First Nations students in her group began to share their knowledge and stories while making bannock. Zoe explained: “It was cool to hear what they’ve experienced.” Connections were made as stories and knowledge were exchanged back and forth between the non-Indigenous pre-service teachers and the First Nations students. However, there was still some hesitation and an understanding that real in-depth relationships could not be developed in a day, no matter what the activity they participated in. Brittany really felt like she had enjoyed the day and was really impressed when a student shook her hand at the end of the day to say thank you, but then commented that “it would have been nice to have a little more time to talk to them [First Nation students]”. Teresa felt similarly, having thoroughly enjoyed her day and felt that she had personally learned a lot about an Indigenous worldview and was able to start to make connections. But she said:

That was something I learned, as I learned more about their [First Nations] culture, they are more reserved. You know it takes a long time to build up that trust so I don’t think that was, like I was really going to get know them [First Nations students] in that one day.

From my observations and conversations throughout the experience, the pre-service teachers had enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with First Nations youth, but felt like it was not enough. Participation in the Land-based practices acted as a catalyst for interactions and connections that held the potential to turn into meaningful relationships; however, it would be unreasonable to expect this type of deep connection to form during a single day’s experience. Still the connections that formed did help the pre-service teachers reframe their understandings of the First Nations students so that they were no longer just a group of unknown others, but were

individuals with their own unique perspectives and knowledge to contribute. Joyce, the OE3 instructor, summarized this when she said that her students were surprised:

At how easy it was to communicate with the [First Nations] students and immediately get into fairly, I don't want to say deep conversation but meaningful, authentic, integrity filled conversation... They said if they asked a [First Nations] student a question, immediately they were right there with them, present in the conversation with them, not vacant, or absent or distracted... and in the conversation with them giving them an authentic response... I think the activities helped to break down barriers so that in those moments of space and relaxation, interaction can happen because there is a shared experience now to talk about.

The ability of the pre-service teachers to begin to make connections with First Nations youth was a highlight of this experience. With so many of them discussing the lack of time, I am encouraged to believe that his experience has resulted in these OE3 pre-service teachers having a desire to engage in other Land-based practices or other activities with Indigenous people so that they can continue to make connections and grow relationships like the ones that began at the heritage park.

Challenging stereotypes. As discussed in the previous section, the Land-based activities at the heritage park allowed rich opportunities for the pre-service teachers to interact with First Nations youth. This was valuable as each of the OE3 teacher candidates had the opportunity to engage in Land-based practices alongside First Nations youth that allowed for interactions to increase and connections to be made. As each of the five OE3 pre-service teachers spoke about their experience at the heritage park, it became clear that they had entered into this experience with preconceived ideas of who the First Nations students were, how they would act, behave, and

relate to those around them. Some of these stereotypes were positive but for the vast majority their biases were negative and with oppressive potential. However, based on the comments of the pre-service teachers, the experience at the heritage park began to challenge their previous biases about First Nations people. This section will demonstrate the shift of some of the pre-service teachers as they discussed their stereotyped ideas of what it would be like to work with First Nations students to how participation in Land-based practices with Indigenous students changed their understandings.

Katie entered into the experience at the heritage park with a lot of strongly held, negative opinions about working with First Nations students, despite having no experience working with them before. When she was asked if her perceptions of Indigenous people or students had changed at all, she shared what she had heard before about First Nations youth:

I heard that Aboriginal students get paid to go to school, so they show up to get their cheque. They are wild, they are crazy, they are [inaudible] crap, and the teachers are basically babysitting for six hours so they can collect a cheque. And they don't care about the curriculum, they don't care about the Western education systems, there is all of that residual hatred and rightfully so with the Residential Schools. And I thought that it would be a nightmare [of a day].

When Katie arrived at the heritage park she was apprehensive when she met her group. She said:

I've heard a lot of stories of people being on placement and the kids won't make eye contact at all, especially when it is someone of the opposite sex. And we had all boys in our group and it was all female leaders.

It is unclear exactly where and how Katie developed this stereotyped idea of First Nations students, however, working alongside the First Nations students while participating in various

Land-based practices at the heritage park seemed to help her build an entirely new understanding of First Nations students. This new understanding is not only positive but opened the door for her to positively contemplate working with Indigenous students in the future. When Katie was asked if anything surprised her about working with First Nations youth during the day at the heritage park, she replied:

It broke a lot of the myths that I had about the lack of eye contact, lack of cooperation, being very introverted and shy. Once we started playing the games... like I said it was surprising, it broke a lot of biases that I had I guess. And I don't want to say fear, but it wouldn't have been something... I would never have applied for a job with Indigenous students before, now I am fine with it.

Although Katie had some fairly extreme ideas of First Nations students, all of the OE3 pre-service teachers came into the experience with some assumptions. Zoe spoke about coming from southern Ontario and feeling as if she had no exposure to Indigenous people or content. Working alongside First Nations students while participating in Land-based practices had all been new learning for her, it seems that she, too, had been stuck in a “perfect stranger” stance until this experience (Dion, 2007). She explained how her perception changed saying that beforehand, “everyone's like oh typically with Aboriginal students they are shy or they won't look you in the eye and all that kind of stuff.” What Zoe heard about Indigenous students was not necessarily negative but it was a stereotype she had developed and believed due to her limited exposure to working with Indigenous students. This experience shifted Zoe's understanding because some of the students in her group did not fit this image she had in her mind. These students started to become individuals with unique characteristics instead of a uniform group.

Brittany had a little experience working with Indigenous students in her fall practicum, but unfortunately that experience only left her with negative ideas of working with Indigenous students. Brittany shared:

Well I had quite a few Indigenous students in my college biology class last semester during my placement. It was in [town], so it was Mohawk generally, students... and I don't know they always came late to class, they didn't really care. Trying to get them to hand things in was always a struggle, you'd have to stand at their desk and take the papers from them, and make them fill them out, and it was just such a... It was just so much work and it didn't need to be.

After a day of participating in Land-based practices alongside these students, Brittany's perceptions had begun to change as her entire group (including the First Nations students) were engaged, attentive and interested in the various activities. By working with First Nations students, in an indigenized Land-based setting as opposed to a Western classroom setting, Brittany gained a new, and more positive, understanding of the First Nations students.

As stereotypes were challenged, the OE3 pre-service teachers were able to begin to see the First Nations students as individuals, each with their own unique story, needs, opinions, and characteristics. They were no longer a homogenous group of First Nations youth that the pre-service teachers believed were quite, disinterested or "crazy," and therefore should be approached with apprehension. Rather, they were unique, curious, and engaged individuals.

Cultural awareness of Land. Like many settler-Canadians, myself included, prior to the day at the heritage park, the pre-service teachers' understanding of the Land revolved around conservation and protection (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; Newbery, 2012; Root, 2010). Most of the pre-service teachers were ignorant and naïve to the historical, political or cultural

significance of the Land. Potentially more frightening was their lack of awareness of this “blind spot” in their education. However, the pre-service teachers who participated in the heritage park experience articulated that their understanding of the Land grew over the course of the day. They learned some history of what life living on the Land would have looked like in the early 1800s, however, this understanding remained shallow and in an historical context. They were not yet able to embody this new information. Often when I asked “how has the experience of participating in Land-based activities in a historically Indigenous location with Indigenous students affected your understanding of the natural environment?” they would reply with a blanket statement, such as Katie’s response: “I understand their point of view, completely now.” But almost always later in the conversation these teacher candidates would fall back into old understandings of our natural world, failing to grasp the cultural meaning of the Land.

Based on her comments, Brittany’s understanding of the Land seemed to evolve the most. She began to understand that Land has a different meaning for many Indigenous people than it does for settler-Canadians, recognizing the dominant discourse surrounding the word Land in a Western worldview. She states:

I guess the difference between what we did there [at the heritage park] was, those were all functional things that they [Anishinaabe] used day to day. Like we [settler-Canadians] use the outdoors as recreation, we don’t use it for hunting, we don’t know how to snowshoe to go hunting or to travel from one place to another. We use it to stay in shape, and to look at the pretty trees.

However, she is still stuck in an environmental educator view of the Land when she states:

I think one of the important things is to get that thought into them [all students] that it [natural environment] is not just pretty, it is not just for recreation, but it is also where our

food comes from, that is where all our furniture comes from. We still do rely on it. We are just disconnected from our reliance. So we don't go hunting for our own food, in the snow through the trees, but our food still has to come from the land. Everything essentially comes from the land. It's just now... it's processed in factories instead of by ourselves. [Laughs] So I think it is important.

It seems that Brittany's understanding of the Land involves understanding our reliance on it for sustenance of life. There are glimmers of her awareness evolving toward the Land as she first recognizes what a Western understanding of Land is. But when pushed to elaborate on this new understanding, her ability to articulate the Land as culturally significant disappears and she moves back into an ecological discourse. Brittany is stuck in the physical and intellectual understanding of Land and is not able to see that for many Indigenous people, Land has emotional and spiritual meanings as well. Brittany's understanding of Land switches again when asked about how she might incorporate what she has learned in this experience in her teaching practice. Brittany says:

I would love to bring in Indigenous teachings into that kind of topic because they are the ones that have been caretakers of the Land and respected the Land throughout, you know. That was part of their culture that respect for the Land. That would be interesting to bring into the grand scheme of things, how they were the first ones here, and they were taking care of the Land and so many of their stories are about that, how they are taking care of the Land.

Brittany shifts in and out of awareness of the Land as a cultural entity. It is difficult for her to consistently articulate the cultural significance of the Land and she is not yet embodying this understanding, nonetheless there is some growth.

This tentative and limited understanding is evident in comments made by Zoe. She starts with a general statement, saying, “I think it [participation in Land-based practices] definitely has started to open up a new level of respect and understanding for it [natural environment].” She continues talking about how much she enjoyed looking at the different maps that included First Nations territories and explains:

I thought that was really interesting and I had never really thought about where I am from in that aspect. It has definitely opened up a new level or respect and I am actually really curious to learn more about it. I really want to learn more about history of the First Nation [treaty territory and PTO organization] and I’m also really interested in looking at all the different territories of southern Ontario.

By looking at the maps she seems to be understanding that the Land is not settler-land but in fact is First Nations Land and that is has been that way since settlers arrived. But then when asked a bit later about how dogsledding affected her understanding of the Land, she goes onto say:

It has made me appreciate, they [musher Peter and helpers] were talking a little about the mail service, how they would take it by dogsled eventually to a postal outlet where it would be flown off. I thought that was really interesting and using dogsledding as a main form of transportation would be very stressful.

Through this experience, Zoe has gained some new information, about what life would have been like in a historical sense, but she seems to still be stuck in a historical understanding of Indigenous people, where the Land was a part of the way they lived. She is not able to articulate the importance of Land in terms of being an integral part of an Indigenous worldview, and a contemporary issue.

Similar to Zoe, Katie starts with this grand statement of “I understand their point of view, completely now.” This statement alone shows her ignorance, believing that through a one-day experience focused on the history of the Anishinaabe of Northwestern Ontario she can understand an Anishinaabe worldview. Even more, by using the term *their*, she seems to be saying she understands the worldview of all Indigenous people. She continues on by saying, “I can’t even watch Pocahontas now. My friend was like ‘are you going to watch Pocahontas?’ and I was like ‘no, I know the ending, look around. We killed everything.’” Even her statement of “understanding completely” seems inconsistent with this last statement because her understanding of Pocahontas still appears to be through a colonial and environmental lens. Yet a few minutes later, when talking about how she might incorporate what she has learned into her teaching, she says:

I would make sure that I tied my teachings into theirs [First Nations]. Because I understand that they want to... they want to reclaim their connection with the Land. I mean to us it is a place to live, like especially being in a city, we don’t have the connection that they do. And so I can appreciate that perspective and I would teach to that perspective.

These contradicting statements and different understandings of Land seem to show that Katie is stumbling with this new knowledge and is perhaps unsure of how this new information may affect her personal worldview and/or her teaching practice. The instructor of the OE3 students, Joyce, heard a similar sentiment from her students where they talked about gaining a different understanding of Land but not really being able to articulate that understanding. Joyce recalled that:

a number of students said that they saw it [the Land] differently than they had before, because of the [First Nations] students being there. And particularly the stories the [First Nations] students were sharing. I've heard a number of people feel more connected to the Land because of being, my interpretation is, because of being near to and involved with interacting with people who are more connected to the Land.

Joyce relays the sentiment she heard from her students, but they do not go on to describe what that different understanding of Land or the natural world actually is.

The OE3 pre-service teachers struggled with their growing awareness. In one instant they seemed to understand the importance of Land through an Indigenous perspective and how that information needs to be passed on to their students. In other instances, their understanding of Land was still pointedly wrapped up in a lens of environmental education, designed by colonialism. This uncertainty is understandable as these OE3 pre-service teachers are beginning to explore the concepts of colonialism and decolonization and what these terms mean in relation to their understanding of themselves, those around them, and the educational system as a whole. Through the experience at the heritage park, they gained an initial awareness of Indigenous culture, history, and people, yet were still very early in their understanding of their settler-Canadian position. In general, these Land-based activities acted as a catalyst, pushing the pre-service teachers to begin to grapple with these questions and prepare them to begin on a journey of reconciliation.

Reluctance to indigenize. With their developing understanding of Indigenous students and the Land as a cultural entity, I was curious to see if the pre-service teachers planned to incorporate their new knowledge into future teaching. The OE3 pre-service teachers were asked how the experience at the heritage park might affect their teaching in the future. All five of the

OE3 students spoke about wanting to include Indigenous content but most of them did not feel comfortable including that information themselves. They did not believe they knew enough and they were afraid that they might appropriate Indigenous knowledge as their own. These feelings likely were connected to some of their feelings about some of the experiences at the heritage park being inauthentic. I perceived from our conversations that the teacher candidates were afraid that fellow teachers or even students might accuse them of cultural mis/appropriation if they attempted to include Indigenous perspectives in their teaching. These pre-service teachers did not want to be seen as frauds, the same way that they and some of their peers had perceived some of the interpretations and staff at the heritage park.

Zoe talked about feeling that she did not have enough knowledge to teach on Indigenous topics, saying: “I think I would need to get a little bit more, not even necessarily training but, just to do something like at the heritage park again, a little bit more before I feel like totally 100% comfortable.” Katie also expressed this feeling, saying “I would definitely want to do more research before teaching it. And get more experience.” Teresa said she was keen to learn more, but she still felt uncertain about how to take what she had learned and apply it to the classroom.

It [working with Indigenous students] is something I want to explore more; it is definitely something I think I still need more education and training in. Especially, more so in the classroom. I feel like we’ve done, we touched on it quite a bit in our OE3 class but it’s tough to make that transition to the classroom because you are kind of removed from that natural setting which I feel like can really bring out the best in those students.

In line with their peers, Simon and Brittany echoed this feeling of wanting to know more before taking on the work of indigenizing their teaching practice. There is a lot of fear and uncertainty in these teacher candidates. They are so afraid of making a mistake that they would rather not do

the work of indigenizing their teaching practice at all. Any suggestions the pre-service teachers had in regards to how to indigenize their teaching practice did not require them to be the one passing on the information; they looked to find other people or resources to do the speaking for them. Brittany suggested:

If I were going over a topic like that [Indigenous content] in class, or it was brought into a unit somehow, I would love to bring in an Elder to do that for them you know... which would feel more comfortable, would feel more authentic to everyone whether you were White, Indigenous, non-Indigenous. Or going somewhere like a heritage park where they are, that is what they do. They are trained in that area, and then they are on the Land and they are actually seeing the history.

Simon, being on a similar wavelength as Brittany, suggested:

In general we could just take a class to a heritage park or we could go to a heritage park to do specific things like we did, like a day of snowshoeing or a day of dogsledding, even a day of Aboriginal games. It just gives us more options that we can do with our students instead of just the general talk about it in the class.

These are very typical suggestions for the OE3 pre-service teachers who are just gaining an understanding of colonialism and decolonization. Their apprehension suggests a desire to maintain a type of perfect stranger stance, despite having gained some basic knowledge and experience (Dion, 2007). The pre-service teachers are working hard to maintain a neutral position in order to avoid the uncomfortable and difficult knowledge of our colonial past. They may not be able to claim innocence out of a deep ignorance, but instead of having to educate themselves and face colonialism, they are able to pass that responsibility to educate their students onto someone else. It seems to be an “at least I’m doing something stance.” Again they are

shifting out of ignorance but their steps are tentative and unsure, and so they look elsewhere for support.

Only Teresa, despite some of her apprehension, seemed to really understand how she can begin to indigenize her teaching practice even though she is a settler-Canadian and has limited knowledge of Indigenous culture, history and contemporary issues. She explained:

It was really interesting, and how you can't claim it [Indigenous knowledge and culture] as your own, you can say 'I learned this here, and this is what I know.' And you can invite other people to share what they know, and invite other people to share their experiences and you can contribute what you've experienced, and what you know as well. And there is nothing wrong with not being an expert, with not knowing everything.

You know you share what you can. It's like that with every subject.

It is interesting that Teresa had a very similar experience and yet for some reason she is less fearful and more aware of how she could begin to indigenize her teaching, despite not being an expert. She had no significant experience with Indigenous students prior to the day at the heritage park; still, she seems more ready to begin to take on this work. Joyce's comment regarding this experience gives some insight into how using the Land can help pre-service teachers gain a different understanding of the environment, which in turn can open the door for them to begin to incorporate an Indigenous perspective in their teaching. Joyce observed:

I think these activities can help to indigenize environmental education by increasing awareness and offering windows into other ways of knowing and experiencing that wouldn't be ordinarily accessed, through the cultural frame that most education is done through. So they are both broadening and deepening the scope of awareness and providing opportunity to engage experientially with the body, in community. So both the

format and the content can help to form new ways of understanding and relating to the natural world that are more akin to ways Indigenous people would relate. Creating the space for that experience for folks that haven't grown up with that cultural awareness. For most of the pre-service teachers that were interviewed, the experience at the heritage park created an opening into a new way knowing that, as Joyce suggests, may not have otherwise been accessed. A well led one-day experience may be enough for students to begin to think about what incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspective in the classroom might look like, but most teacher candidates were not able to go as far as visualizing enacting this themselves.

Reconciliation. When the OE3 pre-service teachers were asked about how reconciliation might be connected to their experience at the heritage park, most of them needed the word *reconciliation* to be explained. Reconciliation is as ambiguous a term for the pre-service teachers as it is for many scholars (see Chapter 2). I tried to explain that reconciliation was about realizing that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are often not on the same page right now, and reconciliation is about bringing us closer together so we can work and live with each other in a way that feels good for everyone. This simplification usually helped prompt interesting connections. Brittany had this to say about reconciliation:

For some reason it just seems, like it's, it's still not right between Indigenous and European people. Right. They [Indigenous people] still feel hurt and we're [settler-Canadians] still hiding things that happened. So maybe that is part of it, that it is still not like we're walking side by side, nation to nation kind of thing, right.... So I think it would be nice as an outdoor ed. teacher to encompass Indigenous teachings, respect for the Land within that, even for your non-Indigenous students.

This observation demonstrates that she is able to see the importance of education for the benefit of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Zoe helped connect this comment to the day at the heritage park. She says:

I think I just really started to develop a whole new understanding of the Land, culture, these students, where they are from but it's interesting that it's still looking at it historically but not necessarily bringing everyone back together and moving forward.

It is obvious that Zoe felt that what she learned at the heritage park helped her gain some awareness, but she realized that perhaps because this event took place at a historical site, her new understanding was still in a historical context which did not help her move towards reconciliation in a modern context. For reconciliation to happen, it is important that non-Indigenous educators recognize the strengths and struggles that First Nations students face and what role settler-Canadians hold in this relationship (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Tuck, 2009). This awareness, of their role as a white pre-service teacher, seemed to still be missing. Similar to their limited ability to indigenize their teaching practice, the day at the heritage park seemed to have brought the need for reconciliation into awareness for these the pre-service teachers. Once again, it was not enough to allow them to see how they could take action and have a personal role in this process.

Conclusion. Although this experience was only a single day, there was an obvious shift in understanding, bringing the pre-service teachers out of their previous cultivated ignorance as they began to gain awareness of First Nations people, culture and history (Godlewska, Moore & Bednasek, 2010). However, there is a second part to their responsibility that was not realized: becoming aware of their own positionality as white settler-Canadians. Interestingly, the OE3 pre-service teachers were able to engage in the experience in a way that allowed for positive interactions and they began to make connections with First Nations youth. As these connections

were made, the door opened for the pre-service teachers to challenge their stereotypes and replace them with new understanding of First Nations youth as unique individuals. Despite this, these pre-service teachers, clearly at the beginning stage of this journey, were not ready to take on advocate or ally roles with Indigenous students, as evidenced by their tentative understandings around the cultural importance of Land, their reluctance to indigenize their teaching practice, and uncertainty about the concept of reconciliation.

Deepening Experiences: Six Weeks of Dogsledding

Participation in the six-week dogsledding program brought together Lesley, James and John, three pre-service teachers in the OE3 and IPPE courses and some First Nations students. These three pre-service teachers already had the experience at the heritage park and this educational program was a chance for them to build on their previous learning and interactions. The themes authenticity, relationship building, cultural awareness of Land, indigenizing and reconciliation, that emerged during the the heritage park experience, came up again during the dogsledding project. However, the theme of stereotypes, that was discussed by the pre-service teachers who participated in the the heritage park experience, was not discussed by the three pre-service teachers who participated in the dogsledding program. For the other six themes understanding of each was extended or deepened in some way by this longer experience.

Authentic experience. Within the heritage park experience, authenticity emerged as a concern because of the nature of a living history museum where individuals are taking on characters to interpret the past. However, the OE3- IPPE pre-service teachers in the dogsledding program did not discuss authenticity in terms of appropriation as was the case during with the heritage park experience. Instead, they were concerned about the program being overly contrived because of the high number of settler-Canadians participating in this experience. In other words,

there were only six First Nations students who ended up participating in this program. Besides the First Nations students and the three pre-service teachers, there was another IPPE pre-service teacher present for volunteering (but who did not fit the criteria for participation in this study), along with Adam (teacher), Peter (dog musher), an instructor from the college who was co-teaching with Adam and assisting the students to earn a joint credit. This meant that on any given week, there were sometimes two more settler-Canadians than First Nations students in attendance.

The first week that everyone was out at the dog kennel, interactions between the pre-service teachers and the First Nations students were awkward and hesitant. The pre-service teachers were not yet sure of their roles and felt awkward about the interactions. These candidates then told me that they were very concerned that their presence created a “fish bowl effect” where they would be perceived as just observing the First Nations youth, instead of engaging with them. This observational stance is a practice that is encouraged for all teacher candidates in any placement experience by the Faculty of Education. The Bachelor of Education practice is intended as a lens for new teachers to quickly gain knowledge and understandings of their students and to better prepare them to teach. However, these teacher candidates were concerned that this observational stance would (re)create a colonial experience in their dogsledding program with the First Nation students.

This was excellent awareness on the part of the pre-service teacher candidates and it led to multiple emails and conversations between Peter, Dr. Korteweg, Adam (speaking with/for his students), the pre-service teachers, and me, trying to establish how we would approach this intercultural experiential program so that everyone felt included and engaged as a cooperative group. It was reaffirmed that the pre-service teachers would work alongside the First Nations

students and everyone would participate together in activities and working with the dogs. I also reminded everyone that my role was to participate in a way that allowed me to better understand the non-Indigenous teachers' journey, not the journey or experiences of the First Nations students. This helped everyone figure out their roles and levelled the playing field as a cooperative group so that everyone could comfortably share in the experience. Once this was established, authenticity was no longer questioned and everyone was able to participate in a more genuine, respectful way.

Relationship building. The pre-service teachers that participated in the six-week dogsledding program spoke about relationship building as a key theme in their experience. However, unlike the experience at the heritage park, where the interactions between the pre-service teachers and the First Nations students revolved around breaking down stereotypes and beginning interactions, these pre-service teachers spoke about how dogsledding affected their ability to build relationships in a way that allowed them to see the strengths of the First Nations students. James spoke about the benefit of having “both [Lakehead University and First Nations students] have this experience, I took my dog, you took yours kind of thing and the way that we worked alongside them [First Nations students] that way. I think it was important for us to have that shared experience.” The result of this shared experience was an increased comfort with one another and eased interactions. James noticed this happening and said, “I was just standing there and he [First Nations student] started talking to me. I was like oh this is sweet, I’ll just continue this conversation I don’t even have to start one, so it is perfect.” This was a surprising and positive moment for James because before the dogsledding program, whenever he had interacted with Indigenous students, he had had to be the one to initiate conversation and find

commonalities to talk about. After spending this time together working alongside one another, some of the First Nations students began initiating interactions with him.

John spoke about how important it is for him as a pre-service teacher to begin to build relationships and how this Land-based practice helped him begin to build those connections.

John said:

I got to see that [relationship building] a little bit [in] week three when we got to go out and I got to drive the sleds with them [the high school students]. I think it [dogsledding] enhances interaction. Where new roles are being developed, who was the teacher out there, who was the student? I think it was flipped back and forth between the LU [Lakehead University] and Indigenous students constantly. So it [dogsledding] is a lot more equal, open, level field for interaction right.

Through this dogsledding experience John related to the First Nations students in a very different way than he could have in the classroom. I also believe that a reciprocal relationship, like the one described above, where students become teachers and teachers become students is unique and often difficult to achieve in a typical classroom setting.

The six-week dogsledding program allowed for consistent and continuous interactions and the nature of the activity equalized or neutralized the roles that the pre-service teachers usually took on, thus allowing everyone involved to be both the teacher and the student at different times. This fluidity in relationship meant that power dynamics shifted throughout the experience and that created space for relationships to form based on understandings and respect as opposed to traditional student-teacher roles that typically involve power and control.

Cultural awareness of Land. Lesley, John, and James all grew up feeling connected to place through various programs such as scouting and summer camp. This connection to place

was deepened by attending Lakehead University's Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism program for their undergraduate degrees. These pre-service teachers were steeped in a Western understanding of the natural environment that includes the concepts of conservation, protection, and land use for "pristine" recreation (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012). However, through participation in dogsledding, working alongside First Nations students, these IPPE pre-service teachers had a major shift in their understanding of the natural environment. These shifts were evident in Lesley, James, and John as they discussed their understanding of the natural environment in a way that included new considerations for a cultural aspect as well as a new critical awareness of the Western understandings of place that they grew up with. James acknowledged:

I only saw it [the Land] from a recreational point of view. I never really saw it as anything more than that. And I just saw these experiences and activities being just as recreational activities, just for fun, for pushing our limits, but nothing really more than that.

In our final interview, however, his understanding of the natural environment shifted to really include a cultural understanding that includes Indigenous perspective:

Lately it [talking about the Land in terms of culture] has been coming up a lot... So reminding students that they are care takers of the Land and that the Fort William First Nation is the caretakers of this Land, and have always been. So just reminding them [students in general] that is where we are right now, I think that is really important. Like before you go out to have an experience such as this [dogsledding], because you are using this Land for your own enjoyment so why not just emphasize that this is... We are on Fort William Land and just keep that in mind, don't disrespect it.

James' understanding of Land expanded significantly through this experience and likely through the IPPE course curriculum. John's shift in understanding is similar to James in terms of his development. John said, looking back:

Six months ago [laughs] I would have said 'the Land and I, we go back' pretty much I would have said 'I know everything there is to know about the Land'. You know if you cut down a tree plant two and you are good to go. I would have said I travel the Land I drive all over it, I drove out to [town] and back this Christmas, you know that really gave me a connection with the Land. Things that I would have connected to the Land before were really just material experiences on Land, I guess.

Now John sees that even his vocabulary around the natural world has changed. He says:

But Land, environment, outdoors, forest, lake are all in the same category. I mean words are just symbols we give meaning to. So those symbols all connect to the same triggers in my mind. Like I just think of outside, lakes, oceans, beaches, trees right they are all in that category. Having gone through this class... I mean now sometimes when I write papers depending on the context I capitalize Land because it has that significance, because it may have a spiritual side to it, because it may have other components that are overlooked. But ultimately for me Land is spiritual and environment and outdoors is just an objective way of describing the inside versus the outside.

Lesley had some significant experiences with Indigenous communities growing up and felt very connected to the Land, yet still was missing a cultural understanding. However, in her last interview she articulated the difference between a Western understanding of Land and an Indigenous understanding of Land:

In Rec. [Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism] it is seen as this place to go out and play in, and just use and then you come back. And it is not part of where we live, it is just this other spot. And then working more with Indigenous people and seeing the view that it is not another place it is *the* place I guess is how to describe it. I don't really know how else to say it. It is just the spot, it is why we are alive. It is not for buying, it is not another place over there that you can just go and we are just going to go on a canoe trip on a river, it is where all life started from.

These three pre-service teachers experienced a major shift in understanding the natural environment from a place that is to be protected and preserved so that it can be used for recreational purposes, to an understanding of the natural environment that recognized the Land as traditional territory and an integral part of Indigenous epistemology and ontology. This shift signifies that James, John and Lesley have started to incorporate or embody an Indigenous perspective in their understanding of the natural world.

Ready to indigenize. The OE3 pre-service teachers who participated in the heritage park experience were reluctant to begin to indigenize their practice because they felt they did not have enough knowledge and they were afraid of appropriating Indigenous knowledge and culture. The group of IPPE teachers who participated in the six-week dogsledding program felt much more ready to begin to include Indigenous topics, culture, history and contemporary issues into their teaching. This does not mean they did not have some fear and apprehension, however, but they were ready to acknowledge those feelings and still begin to think about how to actively indigenize their future teaching practice. Lesley worked with First Nations students in her first placement and now had the Land-based experience under her belt. She reflected, "it takes a little while to be able to realize that and to be able to incorporate Indigenous stuff and feel like you are

doing it in a respectful manner.” She describes watching some of students respond to this indigenized experience and how this was a “light bulb” moment for her:

You hear all the time, how it is just little connections in your lessons and stuff that make a big difference, and you’re like ‘yeah, yeah, yeah, sure, like obviously, whatever’ but then it actually does, and it is cool when you see them appreciating those little connections. So you’re like ‘oh, it actually does work’.

Lesley talked about her own experience in school and how she found it easy to be successful in school because the education system was set up and designed for her as a settler-Canadian. She observed this to be true of her peers as well, and in our discussions felt that her peers in OE3 who were not participating in the dogsledding program did not understand what it means to indigenize in the way she did. She reflected:

For me school was always designed to work well for me because I’m that [settler-Canadian] background, right. So I feel like a lot of people in the IPPE class are just coming from the colonized Western side of things. People can tell us that all the time, in the IPPE class and you’re like yeah that makes sense, but then actually seeing it in action is a lot different. This whole experience has taught me... like you can see them light up when it’s a culturally responsive thing to them.

Clearly Lesley felt that participating in Land-based practices outside of the classroom gave her a perspective that some of her peers do not have, making it difficult for them to fully understand what it means to indigenize education.

James had no experience working with Indigenous people before this dogsledding experience and also had very little experience working with youth. Understandably he was nervous and unsure of what to expect. Over the six-week program he gained a lot of confidence

and was able to reflect on his first placement and begin to see ways he could have done things differently to be more culturally inclusive. James discussed how he would teach lessons differently, compared to how he taught them in his first placement:

I would probably introduce the Land a bit better, and say where we are right now in terms of Anishinaabe Land and talk about the Ojibway people that are around here, go into that a little bit. Not to centre out the Indigenous students in the class, just to emphasize that this is their Land and we should be appreciating it.... But yeah, it [Land-based practice] has given me a higher comfort level bringing Indigenous studies into like... like an Inuit study for classes like geography, history or social sciences, that sort of thing.

James is probably not as far along in his understanding of how to indigenize his teaching in comparison to Lesley, but considering where he started at the beginning of this experience, his growth is significant. John also had limited experience working with Indigenous people before this experience, but he had spent quite a bit of time working with youth. He elaborates:

I am still very much more comfortable talking about my OE3 teacher identity because I have developed that for 17 years in a sense. Like ever since I started being curious about the outdoors. I can honestly say that my Indigenous teacher identity developed starting in September, like it just wasn't something I considered.

John is now beginning to develop this teacher identity that includes incorporating Indigenous culture and people. He talked about helping students to understand that Land is more than something to conserve or recreate on. John described:

when teaching Indigenous or non-Indigenous [students] it is important to connect the things that happened on the Land that were still maybe not Land-based, so like Residential Schools and that context. And that is where I find I need to take, especially

teaching Indigenous students, I'm more of a learner still ongoing there as well. And I think everyone is, who is non-Indigenous.

All three of these pre-service teachers have come a long way in their understanding of Land from their first interview before any Land-based activities to the final interview after having experienced the day at the heritage park and six weeks of dogsledding with First Nations youth. Although John, James, and Lesley were still apprehensive, their new awareness fueled their desire to indigenize their teaching, allowing them to move through their discomfort. Seeing the benefits of an indigenized program first-hand, they became confident that Indigenous topics and culture will be highlighted in their future teaching practice and could articulate specific plans to carry out this work.

Reconciliation. The understanding that the pre-service teachers have about reconciliation after spending six weeks dogsledding with First Nations students is much more complex than that of the pre-service teachers who only participated in one day of Land-based activities. James, John, and Lesley all talked about how their increased awareness and stronger relationships to Indigenous people, culture, and history is the basis of reconciliation as a settler-Canadian. John talks about this saying:

I mean for me that was kind of what the whole process was [a journey of reconciliation]. It is new learning but also reconciliation and just understanding of the relationship between myself and Indigenous people. When I first meet them and their perspective of me and my perspective of them, and gaining just a little bit more understanding of where these people are coming from.

John's awareness increased because he understands more about Indigenous people, but also more about how Indigenous people might view him. The pre-service teachers also spoke about the

important role relationships play in reconciliation; there has to be some type of coming together where people relate on a human level in order for reconciliation to occur. Lesley talked about this, saying:

Now that I think about it for both myself and the Indigenous students out there because we were having a positive experience together and you're like 'oh, okay these people aren't that bad, they want to help us learn,' we are learning, just everyone is learning together kind of thing.

This positive experience is what took place during the dogsledding program for everyone involved. John actually extended this idea of relationship to consider community. He said: "just the idea of community [in this program] and I think community, I know community is a huge step to reconciliation. Removing the divisions of communities." For John, reconciliation goes beyond one-on-one relationships to include community-to-community relationships. From my observations, both these levels of relationship building were happening while out at the dog yard. Lesley drew an interesting comparison between the way relationships were built with the dogs and the way relationships were built between people. She elaborated on this by saying:

Even if you are uncomfortable with dogs and you are just out there, around them, hearing them and kind of interacting with them, you are probably going to become more comfortable with them. So the same thing kind of thing might go with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people being together in a positive space. Which like the kennel would make you feel more comfortable with each other because you realize oh these are just people too.

John agreed with this analogy and added his interpretation, stating:

I think that is a fantastic analogy. I completely agree with that. I mean having positive interactions with each other, by each other, I mean between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, you can only better what is existing I believe. So as long as you are providing some sort of positive experience you can build that relationship. And I believe it proves the other way around as well. Like Indigenous people who actually host a dog sled kennel or something like that and have non-Indigenous people come into their space as well.

From these snippets of conversation, it is clear that the IPPE pre-service teachers valued developing respectful relationships between individuals and communities as important aspects of reconciliation. Also, they understood that these relationships can be fostered and nurtured through shared positive experiences. At no time while we were at the dog yard did we discuss the issue of reconciliation, yet these connections were invoked for the pre-service teachers anyway. The teacher candidates' own discourse and new learnings show that by incorporating Land-based practices, reconciliation has the potential of happening more organically, and deeply.

Building bridges: Connecting pedagogy through Land-based practices. Each of these university students drew on what they learned in the OE3 and IPPE courses to inform how they would act and react in the dogsledding program. Over and over again, the three pre-service teachers would comment on something that happened while dogsledding that made them think of something they had learned in either OE3 or IPPE. The two courses, although distinct and separate, seemed to complement each other and provided these three pre-service teachers with a much richer experience because of it. I asked the students in their last interview if they saw a connection between IPPE and OE3. James shared an example of both courses referencing a

specific environmental issue, but examining the issue from two different perspectives. He explains:

So OE3 has talked a lot about the revolution thing, how there is a lot of environmental impacts going on especially towards the oceans. In IPPE we talk about, most recently we talked about the Ring of Fire and how this project is going on even though these people [First Nations communities] are saying no, same with the Enbridge pipeline in B.C. I think. And it is interesting to see the Land disputes in terms of these huge environmental terrible things. In OE3 we are seeing how we can bring awareness to the students and bring awareness to the community about how we can protest this or change this Ring of Fire or Enbridge pipeline so I guess I see the connection there.

James saw this connection and others emerging as he moved through both courses. The connections were apparent enough that he stated, “I’m going to be taking what I learned in this course [IPPE] and what I’ve learned in OE3 and sort of mesh them together hopefully and take it to there [second teaching placement].”

Lesley saw similar connections but began by reflecting that Indigenous education was not a part of her undergraduate education. She was surprised by this, and felt that while each course is unique, she is now able to bring together environmental education and Indigenous perspective to build stronger connections:

Having these interviews with you has shown me, I couldn’t believe that I didn’t really have any Indigenous stuff [content] in [undergraduate] outdoor rec [recreation courses] because OE3 and IPPE talk about so many of the same things but they don’t explicitly overlap. But then James, John and I who are in both the classes have all seen the positive connections between them and think that the classes go really well together... I don’t get

why there isn't a connection between the IPPE and the OE3 classes. Those ideas brought to both those classes because they seem like they are totally connected.

This connection between IPPE and OE3 was obvious to John as well. In fact he took this relationship further, arguing it is the Land that creates this connection because it is central to an Indigenous worldview as well as being at the very core of environmental education. John described the connections as obvious to him through the concept of Land:

And the Land-based value is probably the biggest thing that connects both those classes, just because outdoor ed. is ecological and you could look at IPPE being more sociological ... but it is the Land that is the big tying factor between those two things. Because of this year and [Joyce] and Lisa and the way they presented the materials from their courses and the experiences they provided, 'hey look at that both courses went to the heritage park.' Isn't that interesting! We both did Indigenous studies, or Indigenous technologies and life in wigwam, ethnobotany in both those classes. I wonder why that is, right? Well, because they are connected.

The Land, for James, is the common denominator between these two distinct courses. By listening to and learning from the Land, Indigenous and Western worldviews do not have to be seen as incommensurable. It is by seeing the Land as a commonality between these two worldviews that we can appreciate a "two-eyed seeing" or a "two-worlds approach" in environmental education (see Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; McKeon, 2012). According to the experiences of these three pre-service teachers, indigenizing environmental education is a logical step that can lead to greater understanding of both environmental and Indigenous issues. It is at this intersection that two-eyed seeing exists. In other words, many of the current theories in

environmental education, such as place-based education, can benefit by connecting to an Indigenous perspective in order to enrich and re-focus its core goals (McKeon, 2012).

Conclusion. Lesley, James, and John showed significant movement in their journeys of reconciliation. Through this longer six-week program, they were able to engage more fully in shared activities with the First Nation students, creating space for stronger relationships to be built. The prolonged time on the Land with First Nations students helped the three teacher candidates learn more about the meanings of Land from both a Western perspective and an Indigenous perspective. This increased contact with Indigenous people also helped them begin to understand how they might indigenize their own teaching and, as a result, work toward improved Indigenous—non-Indigenous relations.

Looking Forward: A View from in-service Professional Educators

Two unique educators and observers of the teacher candidates in this study were Peter and Adam. Peter is the owner and operator of the dogsledding company, while Adam is the teacher of the First Nations students who participated in the dogsledding program. Although these two educators did not self-identify as environmental educators in their professional practice, they are in fact carrying out indigenized environmental education. It is through them that we can glimpse the trajectory of the journey that some of the pre-service teachers might travel if they continue to learn about and engage in Indigenous culture, history, peoples and community while teaching environmental education. Listening to Peter and Adam's stories also provided a stronger understanding of the deeper impacts of indigenized environmental education on clients and students. These two educators work in unique settings with different groups of people, yet there are commonalities that have emerged from their indigenizing experiences.

Relationship building. As an experienced teacher of Indigenous students, Adam stated that in his career, when his First Nations students were engaged, they were more relaxed and open to relating to him as a teacher. With the Grade 11/12 class, Adam saw these students every day and noticed a significant difference in his ability to relate with these youth when participating in Land-based activities. He stated:

But that experience [dogsledding] provided a nice venue where we could get to know each other. I mean once you've flipped with, flipped a dogsled with a student...

I find that the relationship from student to teacher is really strengthened, it's really built after we've gone, and we come back. I think they [First Nations students] see me in a little bit of a different light, they understand who I am as a person, and because you know I let down my reins a little bit when we're outside of the school as well, and maybe I'm not so tightly wound as I might be around the school here. And we can relax you know, without worrying about whose in the building and whose looking over our shoulder, just kind of be our truer selves when we're outside.

Adam really appreciated the way these dogsledding experiences helped him connect to his students on a different level, one that probably could not happen in a conventional school setting. The role of any teacher, but in particular a teacher in a federal school, is always complex as teachers must address the many needs of their students. It seems that participation in Land-based practices can help build this relationship between a non-Indigenous teacher and Indigenous students in a way that demonstrates a clear acknowledgement for and respect of First Nations culture. Adam also noted that he saw similar connections being made between the pre-service teachers and the First Nations students.

Peter (the professional musher) also had a very unique perspective on relationships being built during the dogsledding program. He saw evidence of developing relationships between the pre-service teachers, the First Nations students and the dogs. He explained that:

When the partnership opportunity came along there [was] an opportunity now for those relationships to bloom for things to become a two-way relationship, and in a two-way relationship the experience is more powerful for both sides. For me to watch my dogs who are shy suddenly working with someone that they are comfortable with because they have had the time to develop a relationship and a sense of trust, instead of always a stranger—that is great. And for me to watch those students [pre-service teachers and high school] have dogs warm up to them, and all of a sudden that those students feel like they're accepted into this community, this dog community—to me that is why I do it.

The ability for his dogs to build relationships was as important to Peter as the students building relationships with one another. He saw the dogs and the people as a single community during this experience, where everyone was learning from one another, whether it was dogs or people. This aspect of relationship between people and dogs is unique; in this case it added another beautiful layer of relationship building in a non-threatening way. It also helped remind the pre-service teachers of how important connection to the more-than-human world is. In this case, the dogs were probably the most important part of our community because without them we would not have been able to move, let alone gain a unique skill set, building relationships along the way.

Cultural awareness of Land. By incorporating Land-based practices into his teaching Adam was able to support his students in seeing their cultural beliefs reflected in their education.

Of course this also connects to current environmental and Land rights issues happening locally.

Adam explained:

Land rights and Land issues are a big thing right now, protecting the waterways and protecting the Land. Um, it's good for myself as well as the students to view the Land, to view our natural resources, as something that's sacred that needs to be protected. I mean so often we're looking at mines and hydroelectric dams and things coming in for the upright, or for the immediate dollars aspect of it. It's hard to see that long-term impact of it, if we lose the Land, if we lose the water, we might not be able to do activities like these. And is that X amount of money in the next ten years going to pay for, going to really benefit? And is it a fair trade for losing that Land for the next X squared amount of year?

Adam feels that dogsledding helped him, as well as his students, feel a stronger connection to the Land, as something sacred that is worth protecting. This connection to the Land was not something that was explicitly taught, but instead was passed on through the experience itself and the way it was presented. Participation in Land-based education allowed for the Land to be the first teacher (Styres, 2011). In his role as dog musher, Peter sees himself as someone who helps facilitate the Land to be first teacher. Peter stated:

What I'm really hoping for people to leave with is to have a model of having a relationship with a place. And so I build relationships with the dogs, but I also want them to have this sense of dogsledding as an endemic activity to northwestern Ontario, we travel landscape that we interpret... What I try to role model is this understanding of history, of current aspects of place... Because I am also a geographer, you know by education, so creating a sense of place. We talk about the history of movement and this

region as a meeting place economically, fur trade, and then pre-European times it was a meeting place it was a coming together of multiple modes of transportation. Dogs were crucial to the development of these trade routes to the economy of the area. We talk about the current culture, and just even in our dog names we try to celebrate the histories and the current culture, and the people that make up this place. So my hope is to role model a lifestyle of being connected to a place.

Evidently, the work that Peter accomplishes when dogsledding allows the Land to speak for itself, and by helping his clients travel on the Land in a way that is more in tune with the natural pace of the environment, his clients gain an appreciation for this place.

Reconciliation. Adam himself is an advocate/ally for First Nations students and in this way he is enacting reconciliation. Although before this program he had not put much thought into his role in reconciliation, it was clear from the way he spoke and his actions that this is part of the way he educates. He stated:

The fact of the matter is whether you are teaching at a First Nations high school or you're teaching at a public school or a Catholic school, there are more and more Aboriginal kids in the class every year. And a lot [of the Aboriginal students] are directly removed from an isolated First Nation Reserve in Northern Ontario where they may not be at grade level.... And in my experience, from what I've seen, a lot [of Aboriginal students] kind of get swept under the carpet, get forgotten about. It's not because the teacher is racist or anything, it's just they don't know how to bridge that gap. They don't understand the students, they don't understand their needs as much as the students that they're more familiar with. So exposing the teacher candidates to Aboriginal learners I think helps prepare them for a wider array of learners that they are going to see in their future career.

He saw the settler pre-service teachers gaining valuable experience that will help them take on advocate and ally roles with their future First Nations students. In this understanding, the connection between responsibility, relationship and reconciliation is highlighted.

For Peter, reconciliation comes through the roots of dogsledding and the times that those roots as an Indigenous technology are celebrated. Peter talked specifically about a dogsled race called the Beargrease, named after a First Nations man (John Beargrease) who lived on the north shore of Lake Superior in Beaver Bay Minnesota and helped carry and deliver U.S. mail by dogsled between the towns and settlements along the North shore. Peter explained:

The one reason I love the Beargrease, for whatever other reasons, is that we talked about the reconciliation piece. It is a celebration of that time when that activity belonged to the Anishinaabe. And he [John Beargrease] contributed to the development of that community. As it is today, we have a non-Native community celebrating the life of an Anishinaabe man who did all these things for that community and to develop it, to be in partnership with that whole north shore. And that the race itself still ensures that we are celebrating that. The marathon mushers have to go down into Beaver Bay [Minnesota] that is where John Beargrease was from, that is where he is buried. At that site, they do a ceremony with one of his living ancestors.

From my lived experiences teaching with and observing these two educators, I saw daily contributions to reconciliation through their work. For example, for each week's dogsledding class, Peter offered his own coats, boots, and hats to the students so that they would not become cold and lose any enjoyment in dogsledding. Similarly, Adam got a purchase order from the school and took his students shopping to buy some winter clothing for the dogsledding so that the students could participate at a maximum (without hindrance of inadequate layers and lack of

warmth). Adam advocated for more physical education at the school by talking to administration about the importance of physical health as a part of a healthy, whole person. He also supported a double-credit course system that helps First Nations students recover credits if they do not make it through a whole semester away from their home communities. Adam's background is in Indigenous education while Peter's background is in environmental education, yet both Adam and Peter are acting as allies for the First Nations youth in the way they carry out their work every day. In this way, these two professional educators modeled what it looks like to enact reconciliation every day as part of their settler decolonization journey, no matter where you are from as a settler-Canadian.

Conclusion: An Overview of Research Participant Journeys

The three groups of educators in this study are demonstrating three different stages in their journeys towards reconciliation. It is understood that each individual is still on their own path; however, by exploring the themes of authentic experience, relationship building, cultural awareness of Land, readiness to indigenize education and reconciliation, patterns in this study can be observed and generalizations made in order to understand how the specially designed day at a heritage park and the six-week dogsledding program have influenced pre-service teachers as well as engaged in-service educators who already work with Indigenous youth.

The first group of OE3 pre-service teachers (after participating in the the heritage park Land-based day) discussed their enthusiasm for this type of teaching with all students, but primarily with Indigenous students, as a teaching method to improve intercultural understandings. However, the OE3 teachers also had concerns of authenticity in terms of the intercultural content of the day. Distinct from their OE3 pre-service peers, the IPPE teacher candidates were concerned with authenticity in terms of their own abilities to educate themselves in order to build meaningful relationships with First Nations youth. The IPPE pre-service

teachers worked through their fear and anxiety of Indigenous content knowledge, and what they as white settler-Canadians could and could not teach with authority as educators, to the point that this was no longer a great or pressing concern. The IPPE teachers' concern was focused on their own abilities to build authentic relationships with First Nations youth.

Participation in Land-based activities both at the heritage park and the dog yard helped to give all the pre-service educators a shared experience upon which to build future Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationships. The day at the heritage park allowed a situation for opening up to increased connections, while participation in dogsledding over six weeks enacted and realized IPPE pedagogies and facilitated deeper relationship building. At the heritage park, the door opened for pre-service teachers to be present to acknowledge First Nations identities and begin to challenge society's stereotypes, but time constraints put a limitation on how far relationships could develop. The six-week dogsledding program allowed for consistent and continuous interactions. The IPPE pre-service teachers were able to take on the role of teacher and student at different times in the dogsledding skills development. This fluidity in roles and authority to teach skills meant that power dynamics shifted throughout the experience. This created space for relationships to form based upon understandings and respect, as opposed to traditional student-teacher relationships in mainstream education which typically involve power and control.

The IPPE-OE3 pre-service teachers also experienced a major shift in their understandings of the environment, from places that are to be protected and preserved so they can be used for recreational purposes, to an understanding of the natural environment as Land or the traditional territories that are an integral part of Indigenous epistemology and ontology. This shift of IPPE non-Indigenous teacher stance was quite profound compared to the brief exposure to a new teacher stance by the OE3 pre-service teachers at the heritage park. The OE3 teacher candidates

stumbled into a new conceptualization of Land through a one-day exposure so they often remained attached to Euro-western understandings of the environment as place or wilderness. In contrast, the IPPE teachers—Lesley, John, and James—gained strong understandings that an Indigenous epistemology of Land is more than what is there physically, that it includes spirituality, history, language, ancestors and connections between the human and more-than-human world.

The struggle the OE3 pre-service teachers had with encountering these different, indigenized understandings of the natural world as Land was reflected in their reluctance to consider indigenizing their own teaching practice. Indigenizing education was a new concept for the OE3 pre-service teachers, as the experience at the heritage park was, for many, their first encounter with Indigenous epistemology and ontology and even working with Indigenous youth. They could see the importance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives and content into their teaching practice but were very reluctant to do that work on their own because they wanted to be respectful and not appropriate information that was not theirs to share. Though they participated in an indigenized program at the heritage park, the limited time did not allow for the learning to become embodied and personalized in the same way that it did for the IPPE pre-service teachers. The IPPE teachers were ready to garner the benefits of these two indigenized programs and gain insights to centre an Indigenous perspective in their environmental teaching practices, as a way to address colonialism and teach greater understandings of environmental issues.

Reconciliation was a new and ambiguous term for the OE3 teachers. Even though they could identify that “things are not right” between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canadian society, they could not identify any steps (restitution) that might lead to greater reconciliation. Interestingly, in some ways, these new teachers were unconsciously experiencing

education-as-reconciliation by moving away from their cultivated ignorance and increasing their awareness of Indigenous people, culture, and history, while also starting to make first-hand connections with Indigenous people (see Figure 4). The OE3 candidates moved out of ignorance and into awareness and were beginning to build relationships with First Nations youth.

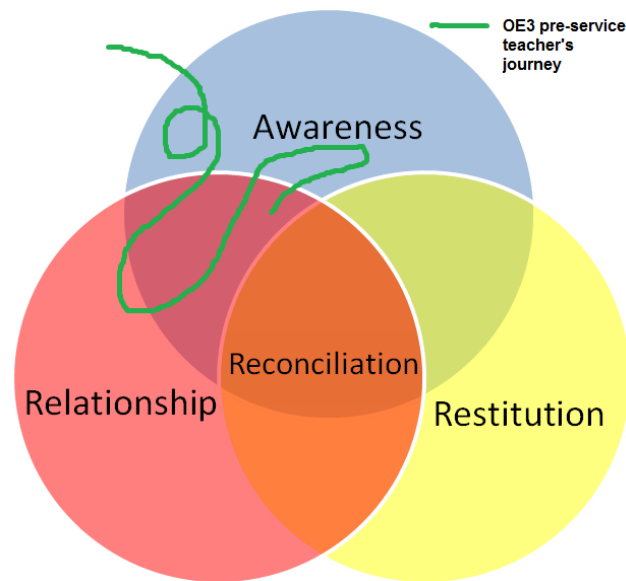


Figure 4. The OE3 pre-service teachers' journey of reconciliation after participating in the one day Land-based experience.

The IPPE pre-service teachers, on the other hand, were consciously working to experience teaching-as-reconciliation. They wanted to actively gain greater awareness of Indigenous people, culture, and history, as well as deconstruct their own privileges as settler-Canadians. And they were highly invested in building authentic relationships with First Nations youth, leading to greater awareness and a desire to do more restitution, specifically in regards to honouring and understanding the Land from a cultural perspective (see Figure 5). The IPPE teacher candidates moved back and forth between gaining awareness and building relationships with First Nations youth, while beginning to explore ideas of restitution.

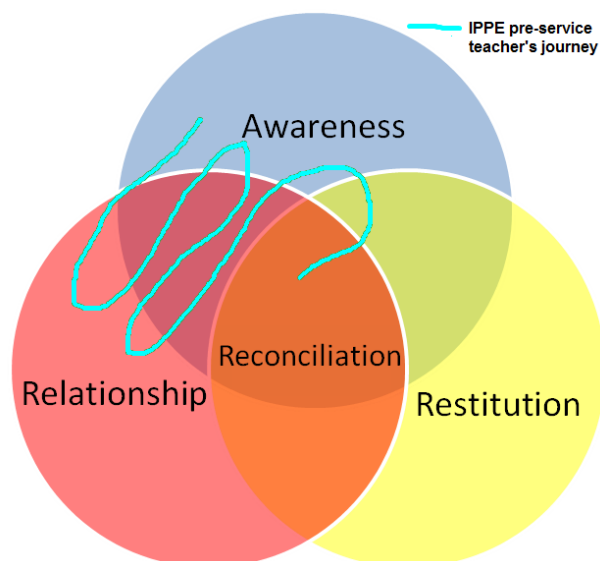


Figure 5. The OE3/IPPE pre-service teachers' journey of reconciliation after participating in the one day Land-based experience and the six-week dogsledding program.

Finally, during this research study, it became clear that Peter and Adam are already working as allies towards education-as-reconciliation with First Nations communities and Indigenous peoples. They were and are continually enacting reconciliation each day as they live and teach in the intersection of awareness, relationship and restitution (Figure 6).

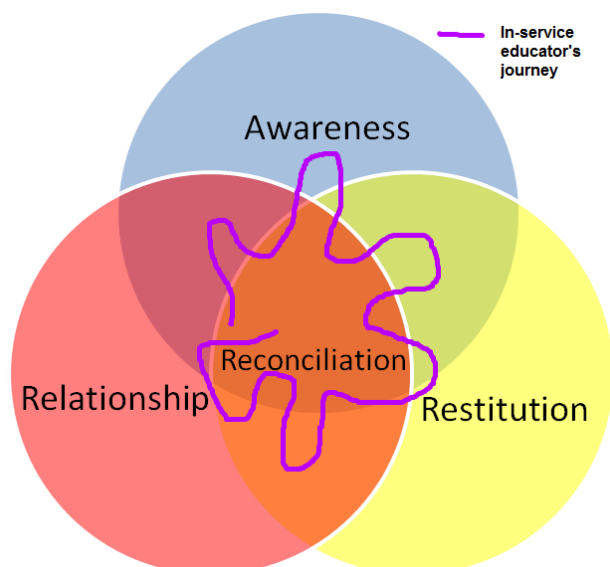


Figure 6. The in-service educators' journey of reconciliation after participating in the one day Land-based experience and the six-week dogsledding program.

The journey of each educator in this study was unique but an analysis of all these experiences—OE3 one-day exposure at the heritage park; IPPE six-week dogsledding; and two in-service educators' observations—all illustrate that the longer non-Indigenous educators can participate in Land-based activities with Indigenous youth and students, the greater the potential for deeper, more significant learning towards reconciliation-through-education.

Chapter 5 – Bringing the Journey Full Circle

In seeking to answer the primary research question of this study—*how can Land-based practices become an educational journey of reconciliation?*—I was consistently reminded that the journey of reconciliation is really a *journey towards reconciliation*. The journey or path towards reconciliation is winding and littered with roadblocks and potholes that can at times compel a non-Indigenous educator to take a couple steps forward, just to realize that they still need to take quite a few steps back. The journey involves awareness, relationships and restitution, while the process necessitates patience, persistence, and commitment.

For non-Indigenous settler-Canadians, to begin a journey towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples there must first be awareness that there is a journey to embark upon. This movement for settler-Canadians out of a state of comfortable avoidance or cultivated ignorance and into increased awareness has been discussed and analyzed by both Dion (2007) and Godlewska et al. (2010). This first stage of awareness out of a state of cultivated ignorance was exemplified by the OE3 pre-service teachers as they gained knowledge of the culture and history of Indigenous people, while experiencing activities with Indigenous youth at the heritage park. The second part of awareness is to gain increasing awareness of one's own positionality as a white settler-Canadian (Chambers, 2009). This type of personal identity awareness was not realized by the OE3 pre-service teachers but was actively explored by the IPPE pre-service teachers.

In this comparative study of the Land-based experiences, it was clear that time and a mental state of readiness for engagement aids in developing relationships (Root, 2010). Donald (2010) reminds us:

Despite our varied place-based cultures and knowledge systems, we live in the world together with each other and must constantly think and act with reference to these relationships. Any knowledge we gain about the world interweaves us more deeply with these relationships and gives us life. (p. 7)

The OE3 pre-service teachers just began to make connections with Indigenous students in a meaningful way while the IPPE pre-service teachers were fully invested in meaningful authentic relationships, and this became the focus of the six-week dogsledding experience for them.

Restitution is a third element or sphere of reconciliation and is concerned with actions that return power and freedom to Indigenous people, so that they may exercise their right to sovereignty and self determination (Alfred, 2002; Walcott, 2011). Peter and Adam exemplified restitution through indigenized education practices and acting as role models for the IPPE pre-service teachers who were becoming motivated to indigenize their own teaching in the present and future. The OE3 pre-service teachers, however, were unable to independently move in that direction in their journeys.

In this study, the two groups of pre-service teachers (OE3 and IPPE) demonstrated different paths and stages along the journey towards reconciliation. The OE3 pre-service teachers were packing their bags, opening the door and taking their first tentative step towards imagining environmental education practices as reconciliation. The IPPE pre-service teachers who participated in the six-week dogsledding program were beginning this journey in earnest. For the practicing educators, Adam and Peter, they were already enacting this journey of reconciliation on a daily basis as they consciously decolonized and indigenized their educational practices as a natural process of teaching, which they continually role-modeled for all the pre-service teachers in this study.

Recognizing Land as a Cultural Entity

One of the secondary questions in this study was *how can environmental educators experience Land-based activities to raise cultural awareness of the Land* (Styres et al., 2013) *that neo-colonialism continues to erase?* I began my study design with an understanding that neocolonialism continues in environmental education (see Chapter 1), but I tried to give the pre-service teachers an experience, no matter how small, that would open a door to begin a journey of identifying as a non-Indigenous environmental educator working towards reconciliation. Through my own experiences and discussed by Root (2010), time on the Land *with* Aboriginal people and acknowledging the Land of Indigenous people as *their* traditional territory is critically important for White outdoor environmental educators to then engage in decolonization, an act of gaining awareness of the history of colonization and the influence of neo-colonialism today (Donald, 2012; Graveline, 1998). For the OE3 pre-service teachers, they did experience time on the Land with Aboriginal people and not only began to decolonize themselves but also began to realize that there can be teaching towards reconciliation. It is clear that colonialism is a systemic condition that all of these pre-service teachers had been marinated in through successful schooling in a Eurocentric education system that presents the natural world, the environment, in terms of its scientific classifications and value as resources, conservation or recreation (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; McKeon, 2012).

Through a single-day experience of participating in Land-based activities with Indigenous youth, the five OE3 pre-service teachers were at times able to articulate the importance of Land not only in terms of its physical aspects but also its historical, emotional and spiritual effects (Battiste, 2005; Ermine, 2000; Styres, 2011). It became apparent that due to their years of immersed education in a system that privileges a Western epistemology, after only a

single-day experience, the OE3 teacher candidates had to first stumble into new awareness, unfamiliar with Indigenous-centric approaches or perspectives, and at times during the post-fieldtrip interviews, these teacher candidates reverted to old understandings of ecological place and environment that focused on Euro-Western epistemologies (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012; Newbery, 2012). It was clear that this intervention, meant to disrupt their Bachelor of Education teacher training through experiential education, could not yet change their understandings of the environment towards a conception Land. The cultivated ignorance of these pre-service teachers was developed over 17 years of formal schooling and although this heritage park experience caused some movement, it was only a slight nudge out of ignorance and into the beginning stage of lived awareness (Godlewska et al., 2010).

In contrast, for the IPPE pre-service teachers who participated in the six-week dogsledding program, the change in their cultural awareness of the Land from the beginning of the program to the end was quite profound. These pre-service teachers are now able to talk about their own journey of understanding and how they have come to the realization of the importance of Land in terms of an Indigenous worldview. They were able to identify why this information is important for all of us as treaty people to understand if we are to move towards reconciliation (Battiste, 2005; Cavanagh, 2005; Luke et al., 2013).

Actively Challenging Colonialism

The other secondary question that was asked in this study was *how can non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educators experience Land-based activities to challenge the colonialism that continues in outdoor environmental education?* The historic (and often contemporary) relationship between environmental education (Western science) and Indigenous peoples has been laden with racism, power imbalance, and oppression (Newbery, 2012). It is precisely these

forces of colonialism that the the heritage park experience and the six-week dogsledding program worked to challenge. Outdoor environmental educators like Cavanagh (2005), Lowan (2009), McKeon (2012), and Newbery (2012), advocate for environmental educators to engage and acknowledge Indigenous epistemologies of the Land in order to address the critical social and ecological issues we face today (Styres et al., 2013). It is the responsibility of non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educators to decolonize and indigenize education so that Canadian students become aware of Indigenous peoples' traditional territories, rights, histories and cultures in order to shift towards becoming allies (Cajete, 1994; McKeon 2012). This was demonstrated by Peter and Adam as practising in-service educators facilitating these Land-based experiences. By doing this work, non-Indigenous environmental educators can act as treaty partners sharing the same Land and working to challenge colonialism together (Simpson, 2002). Another way to counter the colonialism that exists is by creating "counter stories" to confront and dispel the dominant discourse in outdoor environmental education. Costello (2011) found that non-Indigenous teachers identified relationships with Aboriginal students, families and Elders as critically important to creating these stories for themselves.

In this study, the pre-service teachers who only participated in the heritage park program *stumbled* (see Korteweg et al., 2014) in their ability to challenge the colonialism that continues to exist in outdoor environmental education. This was evident as the OE3 participants continually went back to speaking about the Land in ecological terms and they felt unprepared and unsure of how to incorporate Indigenous perspective in to their teaching practice. In contrast, the pre-service teachers who had six weeks of engagement with First Nations youth and a 36-hour (0.5 credit) preparatory course for these types of teaching situations (IPPE) were able to envision themselves indigenizing their practice and working as advocates for First Nations students. This

longer, more intense dogsledding experience between the pre-service teachers and the First Nations youth allowed for more positive connections to be made and for relationships to develop. This in turn gave the three pre-service teachers more confidence to begin to challenge the colonialism that exists in outdoor environmental education today, when they had such a successful indigenized outdoor environmental education program centred on Indigenous youth. This finding is congruent with the research done by Luke et al. (2013) who found that “teachers with higher self-reported levels of knowledge about and engagement with Indigenous communities and cultures are more likely to report that they are teaching Indigenous topics and knowledges in the classroom” (p.15). As teachers include an Indigenous perspective in their teaching/curriculum, they are simultaneously challenging colonialism.

Reflecting Back

As a researcher participating in these Land-based experiences alongside the pre-service teachers, practising educators and First Nations youth, I occupied a space that was unique and at times tricky to navigate. I found myself getting caught up in my own experiential indigenized learning and reconciliatory journey to the point that I had to work hard to focus on observing the pre-service teacher participants as they travelled their own paths.

Throughout this study I have deepened and stretched my own understanding of teaching, environmental education, Indigenous people, history, and culture. Yet, I still feel like I am just scratching the surface. I think in many ways I have become more conscious of just how much I do *not* know in reconciliation and trying to improve the core relationship of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. In the beginning of this research project, I believed that the pre-service teachers and myself would have these Land-based experiences and *voila*, reconciliation would be achieved, at least on a personal level. I have come to realize, however, that for myself as well as

the educators (both pre-service and in-service) in this study, the journey towards reconciliation is actually never-ending and will continue to take on different forms and expressions as more awareness is gained and more relationships are built. I am continually challenged to examine what restitution might look like in my community, in my line of work, and in my life. By participating in these Land-based experiences myself, and through this process of researching and writing my thesis, my own journey has twisted and turned, bringing me to a place where I find myself even more committed to reconciliation than before. I look forward to where this journey takes me next.

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Appendix A: Information Summary Letter for Outdoor Educators

Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation?

An invitation to participate

About the Study

As a Masters of Education student at Lakehead University working towards a thesis, I (Michelle Clarke) am doing a study called Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation? This research is being supervised by Dr. Lisa Korteweg and will also contribute to her body of data for her joint research work with, Dr. Cynthia Nicol (UBC) entitled “Culturally-Responsive Urban-Aboriginal Teacher Education (CRUATE) Research Study”. The purpose of this research is to examine whether or not land based activities such as canoeing or dogsledding can help raise cultural awareness of the land that colonialism has erased. It will also explore if land based activities can help students and educators begin to challenge the colonialism that is present in outdoor education and perhaps help individuals begin their journeys of decolonization. Through participant observation during a land based activity and follow up interviews relevant data will be collected, coded, analyzed and summarized for research dissemination. Representations of the research will include a thesis and academic presentations.

You are invited to participate

As an outdoor educator you have a unique perspective and I would like to incorporate your experiences, thoughts and feelings into my study. Your participation in the study will consist of your participation in land-based (indigenized) activities with your students or clients and 1-2 interviews that may be audio- or video-recorded of approximately 1 hour.

Your participation is voluntary, you may refuse to participate in any part of the study, and you may withdraw from the study at any time, up until the anonymization and analysis of the data. Further, you may decline to answer any questions during the study. There are no foreseeable risks or harms to your participation. There are no direct benefits, other than any professional development that may occur through sharing of information about Indigenizing education. A summary of the research results may be obtained by contacting Michelle Clarke. Contact information is provided below.

All comments by participants are confidential and will only be transcribed or disseminated in anonymous form. Data from this study will be securely stored for five years at Lakehead University.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Michelle Clarke by email at or my supervisor Dr. Lisa Korteweg at 343-8174 or by email at lisa.korteweg@lakeheadu.ca. This research has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of this study and would like to speak to someone outside the research team, please contact the Research Ethics Board at 807-343-8283.

Appendix B: Information Summary Letter for the Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education Students

Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation?

An invitation to participate

About the Study

As a Masters of Education student at Lakehead University working towards a thesis, I (Michelle Clarke) am doing a study called Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation? This research is being supervised by Dr. Lisa Korteweg and will also contribute to her body of data for her joint research work with, Dr. Cynthia Nicol (UBC) entitled “Culturally-Responsive Urban-Aboriginal Teacher Education (CRUATE) Research Study”. The purpose of this research is to examine whether or not land based activities such as canoeing or dogsledding can help raise cultural awareness of the land that colonialism has erased. It will also explore if land based activities can help students and educators begin to challenge the colonialism that is present in outdoor education. Through participant observation during a land-based activity and follow up interviews relevant data will be collected and the results will be included in a thesis and academic presentations.

You are invited to participate

I invite you to participate in a research study where you will actively participate in a dogsledding and cultural immersion experience at a heritage park as a part of the ED 4284 OE3 course.

Your participation is voluntary and you may decline to answer any questions during the field trip study. There are no foreseeable risks or harms to your participation. There are no direct benefits, other than new information about Indigenizing education. A summary of the research results may be obtained by contacting Michelle Clarke. Contact information is provided below.

Your participation in the study will consist of 1) your participation and attention during a pre-briefing during one-two classes of OE3 time; 2) your participation in the dogsledding and other land-based activities offered at the heritage park on January 17, 2013 as a part of your ED 4283 OE3 class. In order to avoid a conflict of interest during this study, your OE3 instructor, Joyce, has agreed that I may give feedback to students in person or on assignments; however, I will not be responsible for grades or marking, especially of those students who agree to a one-to-one interview.

All comments by participants are confidential and will only be transcribed or disseminated in anonymous form. Data from this study will be securely stored for five years at Lakehead University and then destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Michelle Clarke by email at mclarke@lakeheadu.ca or my supervisor Dr. Lisa Korteweg at 343-8174 or by email at lisa.korteweg@lakeheadu.ca. This research has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of this study and would like to speak to someone outside the research team, please contact the Research Ethics Board at 807-343-8283.

Appendix C: Letter of Consent for Outdoor Educators

Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land-based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation?

My signature on this sheet indicates that I **agree** to participate in a study by Michelle Clarke and supervised by Dr. Lisa Korteweg at Lakehead University. The research is entitled “Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land-based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation?” It also indicates that I understand the following:

- I have read and understood the information letter for the study and I agree to participate.
- I understand the potential risks and/or benefits of the study, and what those are.
- I understand that I am a volunteer and can withdraw from the study at any time, up until the anonymization of the data (into a data bank) and data analysis.
- The data I provide will be securely stored at Lakehead University for five years and then destroyed.
- I understand that I can request a copy of the research findings from Michelle Clarke at mcclarke@lakeheadu.ca.
- I will remain anonymous or only identified by a pseudonym in publications, reports or through research dissemination.
- I understand that all my comments in the research sessions are confidential and will only be presented and transcribed in anonymous form.

If you as an OE3 student would be willing to participate in a one-to-one interview that may be audio- or video-recorded of approximately 1 hour to occur in the weeks following the field trip activity day at a heritage park, please indicate your interest to participate here by circling yes or no:

YES:

NO:

Participant's Name (please print)

Email Contact

Phone Contact

Student Number

Signature

Date

Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix D: Letter of Consent for Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education Students

Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land-based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation?

My signature on this sheet indicates that I **agree** to participate in a study by Michelle Clarke and supervised by Dr. Lisa Korteweg at Lakehead University. The research is entitled “Indigenizing Environmental Education: How can a canoe trip (and other land-based activities) be a journey towards reconciliation?”

It also indicates that I understand the following:

- I have read and understood the information letter for the study and I agree to participate.
- I understand the potential risks and/or benefits of the study, and what those are.
- I understand that I am a volunteer and can withdraw from the study at any time, up until the anonymization of the data (into a data bank) and data analysis.
- The data I provide will be securely stored at Lakehead University for five years and then destroyed.
- I understand that I can request a copy of the research findings from Michelle Clarke at mcclarke@lakeheadu.ca.
- I will remain anonymous or only identified by a pseudonym in publications, reports or through research dissemination.
- I understand that all my comments in the research sessions are confidential and will only be presented and transcribed in anonymous form.

Participant’s Name (please print)

Email Contact

Phone Contact

Signature

Date

Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Interview questions for OE3 students before Heritage park experience

(3 students registered in both OE3 and IPPE)

1. What experiences in your past have informed your perception of the natural environment (the land)?
2. What if anything from your professional year has informed your perception of the natural environment (the land)?
3. Can you describe any special places or memorable experiences on the land and what they mean to you? Why do those stand out?
4. Based on your answer in the previous question can you describe your perception of the natural environment (the land) in terms of how you view or understand it in general terms?
5. Do any of these places or experiences have a connection to Indigenous people, culture, history etc.? Can you explain them?
6. Can you describe how you talk and teach about the natural environment (the land) when explaining what it means to students? Do you think it will change with Indigenous students?
7. How do you feel about teaching Indigenous topics to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students? Why do you feel this way?
8. Do you think there are any specific indigenous topics in outdoor education? What are they?
9. * only if they answer 8 * What experiences have informed your perception about teaching Indigenous topics?

Interview questions for OE3 students after Heritage park experience

(3 students registered in IPPE and OE3 and 5 other OE3 students)

1. How does an experience like the one at the heritage park affect your comfort level with teaching Indigenous students? topics
2. How does an experience like the one at the heritage park affect your ability to teach Indigenous topics?
3. How does an experience like the one at the heritage park affect your perception of the natural environment (the land)?
4. How has this experience changed how you will discuss the natural environment (or land) with all students and/or Indigenous students?
5. How do you see experiences like this one supporting you in becoming the OE3 teacher that you want to be?
6. How did this experiential activity (field trip and dogsledding with an Indigenous group of students) have an impact on how you view/understand Indigenous peoples (and their contributions/technologies such as dogsledding)?
7. How did this dogsledding (Indigenous winter technologies) impact your views of the environment or Land?

8. If you have done dogsledding before please describe how the experience is similar or different when participating with a group of Non-Indigenous students versus a group of Indigenous students.

Interview questions for Instructor of OE3 course post heritage park experience

1. What was your comfort level with teaching Indigenous topics before participating in this land-based field trip?
2. How would you describe (any changes) in your perception or comfort level in teaching Indigenous topics (Land-based activities, Indigenous technologies/contributions, connections between outdoor-experiential approaches and indigenized pedagogies) after participating or leading in this type of land-based field trip/activities?
3. What did you observe or how did you see any evidence that the students' perceptions of the environment may have changed through a land based activity experience?
4. What did you observe or how did you see any evidence that the students' perceptions of Indigenous peoples, cultures or history changed through a land based activity experience?
5. What are some of the benefits and challenges you encountered when using land-based activities as a tool to teach about the environment and/or Indigenous issues? Please describe the way these benefits and challenges the same or different for non-Indigenous students versus Indigenous students?
6. Please describe how land-based activities such as the one we just participated in, can help Indigenize environmental education.
7. How has this experience or other land-based activities changed how you teach about the environment?

Interview Questions Pre-Service Teachers post dogsledding

- 1) How would you describe your experience working with the federal school students through this dogsledding project?
- 2) What did you learn about Indigenous students or how did it feel to work with these students (as compared to other outdoor education experiences) – each week? (prompt with high points, low points, easy/tricky incidents or interactions)
- 3) What were your interactions like with these students who you were mushing with on the dog-sled (what were your interactions/engagements like when you were working in the dog-yard, in the tent, etc..) -How did you communicate with the students? When do you think the students were more/less engaged and why? How did you learn to observe or respond to these students (other outdoor experiences)
- 4) How do you think the dogsledding and/or dogs affected your communication/interaction or engagement with the students (or vice versa – how did it affect/impact the students towards you?)
- 5) What do you think you have learned/ gained from this experience as an outdoor educator, as an IPPE teacher, as a non- Indigenous Canadian?

- 6) After this dogsledding project, how do you understand the idea of decolonization (for Indigenous youth...for non-Indigenous Canadians such as yourself)?
- 7) After this dogsledding project, how do you understand or think you have experienced ‘reconciliation’? How do you know this? Have you contributed anything to the process of reconciliation in Thunder Bay?
- 8) Did you have any experiences in this project that you are frustrated by or confused by or stumped by? What work/change/transformation do you think remains in Indigenous education, outdoor education, Aboriginal-Non-Aboriginal relationships...?
- 9) Has this experience affected how you think or, perceive, or talk about Indigenous youth?
- 10) After this project, when you hear peers/outdoor educators discuss nature/environment/outdoors etc. do you think about these constructs differently? Do you think there is a difference (a different mode/conceptualization/way of relating? When the term Land is used? How?
- 11) If you could do this program over again would you change anything?

Interview Questions for Teacher of federal school students

1. Briefly outline your teaching history (prior work experience)
2. How do you describe yourself (identity) as a teacher?
 - a. As a result of this project do you now identify as an outdoor educator?
3. Why was it important for you to participate in this project?
 - a. What were you hoping to get out of it for you and your students?
 - b. Why was it important to participate in the field trip to the heritage park?
4. Throughout the course of this study (land-based experiential activities) did you gain new knowledge or insight about your students? Please elaborate.
5. Has participating in this study had any effect on the relationship you have with the students in this course? If “yes”, please describe the nature of this change.
 - a. What role did land-based activities have in this change?
6. How were relationships between the federal school students and with the LU students fostered or developed during the course of the project?
 - a. Please consider the role of land-based activities.
7. Do you think you gained any new knowledge or skills that will assist you in implementing effective teaching strategies in the future? Please elaborate.
 - a. Would you consider integrating other land-based activities into your future teaching? Why?
8. What does reconciliation mean to you as a teacher?

- a. What do you think it means to your students?
 - b. Please describe any connections you feel exist between participation in the land-based activities and reconciliation.
9. How do land-based activities and/or dogsledding effect how you perceive and/or talk about the land? How does participation in land based activities and/or dogsledding effect how students perceive and talk about the land, amongst themselves and with you?
 10. What do you think was the most effective/helpful aspect of this project? What did you find challenging or frustrating?
 11. If you could add or change aspects of this project or curriculum, how would you alter it and why?

Interview Question for Dogsledding Operator/Musher

Warm Up Questions

1. How would self-describe yourself? (outdoor recreation specialist, outdoor educator, professional musher, all of these...)
2. How long have you considered yourself an... (outdoor recreation specialist, outdoor educator, musher etc.)
3. How long have you been running (or operating) your own business?
4. What drew you into this line of outdoor recreational work?
5. Who are your typical clients? (educators? Businesses? Indigenous peoples? Non-Indigenous ppl?)
6. What do you see as the main advantages/benefits that your clients getting out of participating in a dogsledding program?

Main Interview Questions

1. Can you describe this specialized program – the joint project with LU/Dr. Korteweg (and why you wanted to be part of it?)
2. What were you hoping to get out of this program? (for yourself, your company, your dogs, the students) Did you achieve any goals? New learnings? New ideas about delivery of these type of collaborative projects? New observations of working with primarily Indigenous youth?
3. What is it that you hoped or thought the LU students, teachers (AG, Confederation College Instructor, AB...) got out of this program?
4. In your experience...or your viewpoint, did you observe dogsledding as a tool to building relationships in this program? How yes/maybe/not really? Any particular moments that stand out for you?
5. In your regular programming do Indigenous topics come up in conversations or are they explicitly addressed as part of your programming? If so, in what way?
6. How would you describe or define the issue of reconciliation in Canada? Does reconciliation ever come to play/question in your dogsledding programs?

7. Do you think/ How does dogsledding effect your clients in terms of their awareness of reconciliation? Can you think of any particular interactions/trips/moments that were specifically related to reconciliation in our program or other programs that you've lead like this?
8. How has this joint program between yourself, the federal school and LU effected how you might design or run programs in the future?
9. What did you observe in regards to movement or a greater understanding in the students' perceptions of/relating to the environment (or the Land) through participation in dogsledding? Were these students different/same as other school/youth groups that you have worked with? What do you think would have happened if this had been a mixed group of students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous?
10. Do you think dogsledding could be understood as or framed as "indigenizing" outdoor recreation/education or environmental education? Do you think you are "Indigenizing" your approach to dogsledding or outdoor recreation/education?
11. What are some of the benefits and challenges you encounter when using dogsledding as a method to teach about the environment and/or Indigenous issues? Are these the same for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?
12. Has this program changed how you perceive/talk about or understand the outdoors/nature as Land?
13. If you were to run this program again next year what you keep/continue or emphasize? What would you do differently?