

TEACHER PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT PROMOTE
IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN
SASKATCHEWAN AND NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript dissertation explores the teacher practices that promoted improved educational outcomes for Indigenous, high school students. Three manuscripts present the findings of two case studies, that collectively represent a qualitative reporting of 14 teachers/administrators, that were mainly non-Indigenous, who affected positive educational improvements for over 700 students. One case study was at a school in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the other was in New Zealand. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observations.

In the first chapter, I share a narrative that introduces the reader to my positionality in the research. Chapter 2 provides an academic introduction and an overview of the two case studies. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are the manuscripts that have been published in peer-reviewed journals or have been accepted and are currently in press.

The first manuscript, *Teacher strategies that improve education outcomes for Indigenous students*, offers the findings from the New Zealand case study wherein the researcher questioned the participants about the strategies implemented to attain such a vast improvement in educational attainment levels documented by New Zealand's National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) within four years.

The next manuscript, Chapter 4, entitled, *A Canadian study of coming full circle to traditional Indigenous pedagogy: A pedagogy for the 21st century* is the Canadian study. The research questions focused on the strategies and pedagogies high school teachers implemented in the classroom that they perceive to have increased student engagement and educational achievement for their Indigenous students, and these align with Indigenous approaches as well as 21st Century Pedagogy?

The final manuscript, entitled *Professional development, culturally-responsive practices, and Indigenous student success: A comparative case-study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada*, draws on the findings from the two locations and present the effects of professional development on the improved academic outcomes for Indigenous students. Specifically questioning how did professional development initiatives evolve at these schools, how it enhanced the cultural responsiveness of educators within these schools and its impact on student engagement, attendance, and learning at these schools?

Chapter 6 provides my concluding thoughts and offers the major themes that emerged from the papers along with recommendations.

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I want to acknowledge Treaty 4 (1874) land and people; this is where I was born and the beautiful landscape that I called home in my childhood and for most of my adult life. I would also like to acknowledge Treaty 6 (1876) on which I am privileged to reside.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, posthumously, I express my gratitude for accepting Indigenous people into our home in a manner that represented a fusion of family at a time when others did not see them as equals. Dad, thank you for believing in me. Even though over twenty years have passed, I still think of you often and miss you. To my siblings, especially Marlene, thank you so much for being there to listen and offer support during turbulent times and to talk, as sisters do.

To the most important people in my world, I want to acknowledge and thank my children, Kyle and Sterling. You are my beacons of light; I take absolute pride to see what fine men you have become and your many successes so far! You supported me in this endeavour that has been a long journey. Thank you for the many joys that you have given me and the memories we have made together.

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To Sterling, Kyle, Jane and Erik; I love you to pieces: Especially to my sons – You are everything a son should be.

You're Everything a Son Should Be

*Throughout your life, I have seen how each and every step that you took
led you away from me and toward your independence.
Yet often, you didn't even notice that it was occurring.*

*The memories I have of you still stir in my heart.
Sometimes, they cause me to stop what I'm doing
and regret the quick passage of time.
I'm amazed that my little boy now looks out at me from a grown man's body.*

*As you move on to new adventures, I'll be there to support you and believe in you.
I'm so proud of all that you've accomplished;
you've become the type of man I always hoped you would be.
(I just wish it hadn't happened so fast!).*

---Barbara Cage

This work is dedicated to all the students that should have been treated more fairly and nurtured in their school experiences. You still can succeed. You can realize and reach the highest potential possible. *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* (Dr. Seuss, 1990).

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CHAPTER 1: A PROLOGUE: WHO AM I?

This dissertation begins with a personal narrative where I share with the reader who I am and the delineated path that has brought me to this point in my life and the research presented here. In the first chapter, I provide a wholistic introduction that reveals many aspects of my life and experiences: growing up as a farm girl, a young student, a parent, a post-secondary student, and a post-secondary instructor. My biography suggests that all are interwoven. I articulate my positionality in my research and share the story that frames my passion for this inquiry. Although largely autobiographical, this first chapter occasionally includes or alludes to academic terms that are elaborated on more fulsomely in subsequent chapters. This chapter is intended primarily to reveal my feelings and thoughts that have crystallized over the past decades of immersion into this discourse.

Chapter 2 shifts to an academic voice and provides an overview of the themes that will be defined in the three manuscripts presented in this dissertation. Chapter 2 also provides a brief historical background and statistical data which speak to the underlying inequalities in our society, which this research engages with. The research methodology, research purpose and questions, site selections, and participants are explained. This is followed by a description of the limitations and delimitations, and the significance of the study is explained. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are the manuscripts that have been printed in peer-reviewed journals or have been accepted and are currently in press. Chapter 6 provides my concluding thoughts and offers a reflection on my evolution as a researcher throughout my investigative journey. I will now share my story.

1.1 Quilting 101: The Construction of the Many Pieces

I present my story in this chapter using the metaphor of a quilt. A quilt is made up of different pieces of fabrics, colours, shades, and textures that are representative of my worldview. My family experiences have formed my worldview, in addition to my childhood school experiences, historical events and their impact, my reflections on those events, my school experiences as an adult student and parent, and my position in the teaching profession. As the quilt is stitched together, the intent is for the reader to understand who I am as a person and who

I am as a researcher, in order to appreciate the context of my writings, my positionality, and my passion for the research presented in this manuscript dissertation.

Each piece of the quilt is integral to the final product, as it provides purposefully chosen textures assembled to contrast and harmonize as it is stitched together using common threads to form a pattern. Often the fabric is prewashed and ironed to offer the best preparation for the quilt to be constructed. The patterns will make my quilt unique and will provide a foundation for the reader. The backing of the quilt is one large piece, and the border ties the front and back together. Chapter 6 will represent the backing of the quilt, the concluding chapter, that summarizes the manuscripts and distills the findings. What follows is the presentation of the many pieces of my quilt.

1.2 Many Shades of Prejudice

As a child and as an adult, I have experienced boundaries, limitations, judgments, and discrimination. Often these experiences were because of my colour or lack of colour, lack of education or too much education, acquisitions or lack of acquisitions, being female or not being male, or the socio-economic status of being considered too wealthy or not wealthy enough. This list is not exhaustive. The genesis of my research stems from my personal experiences, my story, which has shaped my opinions and the conclusion that there are many shades of prejudice that are not exclusive to any particular skin colour. And, what about privilege? Has my skin colour been an asset or a liability? The answer is yes to both; however, that story is more complicated. All these opinions and experiences will provide different pieces of fabric for my quilt.

My experiences and research have become a crucible to affect and impact change in the education system for Indigenous students. The reader will notice in the beginning portion of this chapter that the terms Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Peoples are used interchangeably. Other terms, such as *Whiteness*, *privilege*, and *others*, are associated with Critical Race Theory. I use these because they help me tell my story and establish my positionality. An in-depth discussion of the terminology appears in the next chapter, which also elaborates on ontological and epistemological aspects of the research.

1.3 White Woman Researching: White Woman Writing

White woman researching. White woman writing. Some people may ask why is a White woman writing about the First Peoples of Canada or racial injustice against Indigenous peoples found within educational institutions and the larger hegemonic society. My response is simple: we are all treaty people swimming in the same river of racial diversity, and everyone needs to come to consciousness about the world we live in. My focus here is primarily on the First Peoples of Canada, specifically Saskatchewan, and for comparative purposes, the First Peoples of New Zealand. As a treaty person, I have the obligation and the right to use my insights to advance the prospect of more equitable educational outcomes for young Indigenous peoples. Also, my privilege to be a researcher, and in my instance to be a White researcher, is intended to be a representation of solidarity. The remainder of this chapter will share what has inspired me to undertake this research to discover the teaching strategies to improve educational outcomes and bring social justice into the classrooms for Indigenous students. Being a White woman researching and writing is what I feel is my part to right the wrongs and contribute to reconciliation.

What follows is what comprises one of the quilt pieces. It is the foundation of my experiences and overarching interpretations of the society in which you and I live, my observations of white hierarchy, and how most people are unconscious of their skin colour, racism, and privilege. White complacency ignores the Others as if they are invisible, and at times White people are oblivious to the Others. For many White people, other people of colour exist on the periphery of their lives. Most White people have been born, just by chance, into a whitewashed apathetic society with a predetermined position of acceptance and luxury. In many instances, White people don't need to know much about the Others even if they are there, and social interactions may not exist or be minimal. Perhaps you might notice the Others while getting a cup of coffee or paying for a clothing purchase hardly acknowledging the other human being across the counter.

It is the same luxury of sustained ignorance about poverty, hunger, and homelessness that perpetuates its existence and allows it to thrive where we dare not look; there are neighbourhoods we prefer not to visit in our city. In our backyards is where it would be hard not to see the poverty, violence, abuse, and homelessness that is an everyday reality for the Others if we dared open our eyes and visit those neighbourhoods. The mentality is that "it is out there. I

can't see it; therefore, it does not exist. It is not our concern." For example, service clubs that I once belonged to would make concerted efforts to help the underprivileged in Third World countries while people in our towns and cities had no food to eat and no place to sleep.

Ignorance and indifference perpetuate the comfortable isolation that lulls people into contentment that all is well in the world. Being White is an antiseptic that maintains dominance while preventing the growth of understanding and empathy about socio-economic disparity and racism. An antiseptic prevents the disease from thriving; that said, the disease in this reality is the racism that underpins Whiteness and the privilege associated with being White. Whiteness requires exposure to a different antiseptic, a decolonizing antiseptic, in order to gain historical knowledge and empathy regarding the atrocities experienced by Indigenous peoples and the implications of those for current dynamics. It is my opinion that if a systemic transformation can occur, it must begin with all people, of all ages, learning the truth about our history, confronting the implications of that history for current inequities and engaging with the multiple reasons why all would benefit from improved intercultural relations. These opinions are strongly influenced by my reading of Critical Race Theory, which will be explained in Chapter 2 in more detail.

1.4 Who am I: Why Should a White Woman Care?

Defining who I am to the reader potentially exposes me to judgment and ridicule. But, this is my truth and my story; and the exercise has allowed me to prepare for the more extensive research that this dissertation presents. I admit that I did not know how to begin; how does one paint a self-portrait to tell my story as part of an academic paper. Nonetheless, I felt it necessary to position myself in my research. I will explain my experiences with Indigenous people and then my classroom experiences as a student, parent, and instructor. This section presents another portion of quilting fabric that will add to the colour and contrast of the quilt since it outlines my past that facilitated my first encounters and experiences with Indigenous peoples.

I can begin with a litany of descriptors that include White, non-Indigenous, female, low-to middle-class, from a humble agrarian background. In my life, especially in my youth, I have experienced many forms of abuse. At the time they occur, you find the means to endure and survive; however, they are not one time incidences but constantly recurring. I have experienced situations where one person wants to gain and maintain power over you or control over you. That is an abuse of power given the positionality of the abuser. As a young person, you are vulnerable

and often helpless. The effects of abuse are profound and long-lasting. As time passes, you find ways to avoid similar situations as a form of self-protection. For some people, they may go through life unscathed while others, such as myself, are affected by post-traumatic stress. My symptoms are varied and are situationally dependent. In the next section of this chapter, I will only share the memories of verbal and emotional abuse that I experienced in the classroom and its long-term effect on my life.

I was born in the late 1950s and lived in a small rural Manitoba community. I was the daughter of a farmer of Slavic descent. Both parents were born in Canada in 1918 and had experienced the Great Depression. Both did not learn to speak English until entering school. My father had a grade 8 education and my mother grade 6. For them and their families, helping on the farm took priority over education. I was never allowed to learn to speak Polish or Ukrainian. They only spoke their native language when I was not to know what they were talking about.

The cornerstones of my childhood were on a farm located on Treaty 4 territory: land that was negotiated and shared by the various Cree, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine tribes in 1874. My paternal grandparents acquired the farmland as homestead settlers from Poland only a couple of decades after the treaty signing. My family continues to occupy and actively farm the homestead, representing the fourth and soon to be the fifth generation of settler farmers on what previously was Indigenous land.

In the farmhouse that still stands today, I grew up with Indigenous people in my home. My parents regularly hired Indigenous men to help in the spring and fall with farming. We worked together, socialized together, and ate together. These men, although routinely employed as farmhands, were treated with the same congeniality as I saw offered to other people that visited my home, such as family, friends, and neighbours. I never witnessed anyone who entered our house to receive less or more based on who they were. All the people that visited were our guests and were treated generously. My mother regularly prepared a hearty meal and offered far more food than anyone could eat and usually encouraged everyone to eat more. The workers, Paul Frank and Lawrence Brass, and my family sat together at the table and enjoyed the home cooking and conversations. Later we watched some television together, and after a couple of hours of entertainment, everyone left for their rooms. This was a typical day in what I viewed as an average home.

Lawrence and Paul returned year after year. We all worked together when it came to prepare the land for seeding. Together we picked roots and stones in the spring, and they helped with the harvest in the fall. They were capable, competent, hard-working men. Even though they were seasonal employees, my exposure to Indigenous people was extremely positive, and my family treated them with equality and respect, affording them the same hospitality extended to neighbours, family, and friends. This part of my quilt is represented by bright fabric choices that I have found to be endearing, and the colours come alive.

During the time that I lived on the farm, the one-room schoolhouse closed, and when I started grade three, I was bused to town to attend school. It was a long ride that took nearly an hour to reach the town while picking up many other students along the way. This was my first experience in larger classrooms with more than thirty students of the same age and grade. The next piece of the quilt that I will share is my recollection of what grade school entailed in the 1960s and 1970s. I will share what was taught in school and later, my experiences as a student.

1.5 What I did and did not learn in Grade School: A Vintage Quilt Fabric

This section of the quilt will focus primarily on what I recall being taught while attending grade school. It was a long time ago since I graduated from high school and even longer ago that I was in grade school; however, the memories remain. This quilting fabric is vintage and represents what I did and did not learn in grade school. This fabric will represent a large portion of the quilt pieces as the impact has socialized me as well as many Canadian people, creating stereotypes and racist opinions of Indigenous peoples. The colour chosen will be a dark gray as it represents the dark side of education, and the adverse effects of excluding Indigenous peoples from history and how it has negatively affected Canadian society and peoples' opinions of Indigenous peoples.

In grade school, I was taught the typical classes in mathematics, sciences, and English. History, as I recall, focused on European history and the explorers that came to Canada. With certainty, there was virtually no content about Indigenous peoples, their way of life, or any historical mention of the First Peoples of Canada. This seemed normal and was considered an appropriate curriculum for its time. As I can reflect now within today's context, this was a typical Eurocentric curriculum filled with inclusions and valourizing of European history and

intentional exclusions and silencing of Indigenous history to create a specific narrative. How would a student know any other history if it was not taught in school?

To help me recall my educational experiences, I located my grade six spelling book, *The Canadian Speller* (Quance, 1950 – the former Dean of Education at the University of Saskatchewan), that provided numerous stories for each of the 36 spelling lessons. There was one story about the war of 1812-14, which made no mention of the First Nations and Métis people that were allied with the British. Another story about The Hudson's Bay Company only mentioned the Indigenous people (in the text called Indians) trapped and skinned the animals and, in the spring, went shopping for food and clothing in trade for the furs. I reviewed the entire content of the textbook, and the most comprehensive Indigenous story was *The Language of the Totem Pole*, where the spelling book explained that the pole tells the Indigenous history of a family and their ancestors through carving a cedar tree with animals or birds so the family will receive everlasting honour and power.

Students, for decades and more than a century, were taught versions of this hegemonic and non-inclusive narrative. Only White Europeans existed in our history and society. Only within the last couple of decades have most of Canadian society been exposed to a more inclusive curriculum. This is daunting in retrospect. For example, education in Saskatchewan, prior to 2007, largely provided students with selected historical knowledge with a focus on the European culture, omitting Indigenous history, ways of knowing, and perspectives. A Eurocentric curriculum reinforces White superiority and dominance in the form of censorship that presents White ideology on what is considered meaningful and relevant, and a clear statement of what is not important is ignored. Individuals in power select what is included and what is excluded. In 2007 treaty teachings were made mandatory for all school students in Saskatchewan, K-12 classes, and treaty teachings were incorporated into the curriculum. What follows is my experiences as a young student in school. These experiences were impactful and played an enormous role in my subsequent narrative and in how I position myself in this research.

1.5.1 Experiences as a Young Student

In my experience as a student, classrooms and academia were often unpleasant places to be given that they were prone to misuses of power. This fabric of the quilt represents the shared

experiences of students that did not have pleasant educational experiences where they felt they were humiliated, unfairly treated, and felt unsafe. This fabric shows hierarchies that exist within institutions, races, and genders. Another dimension of this quilt fabric adds a degree of sensitivity to how people are treated, and the long-lasting impact childhood experience that linger and shape their future. This fabric represents the exposure and fear created from unpleasant experiences in school. Most of the classrooms that I have sat in as a student were associated with power-laden relationships on multiple levels. The enduring memories of education were the dictatorship exercised by the teachers that held undisputed power and their comments that were often cruel and degrading. This frequently happened to other students and me. I recall the intense fear associated with the teacher posing a question to the class and then calling on a student to provide an answer to their question. Eye contact was avoided at all costs. Sadly, the student that provided the wrong answer was subjected to crass words and humiliation in front of the rest of the class. I would feel empathy for that student; however, at the same time, I was glad it was not me. One time I was not so lucky, and luck was the word that sent me reeling. I was in grade 7, and I chose to sit at the back of the room. It was with hope the teacher's eyesight was not very good, and they would not see me or call on me. My history teacher was a wiry, short, and slight man. He had an arrogant attitude and relished in his position of being a powerful teacher. One day I was the recipient of his wrath. A test was on the horizon, and he made a point of asking me, "how do you think you will do in the test." I made the mistake of saying, "I think I will do ok if I am lucky." Not the right thing to say! I was the brunt of quite a lengthy reprimand that made me feel like I wanted to melt into my chair and disappear. Obviously, there was no opportunity for a defense to my comment; however, I had thought and remain to think throughout my academic career that the student has no idea what questions could be on the test, how obvious or obscure the questions could be, or if the distribution of questions were fair to represent the material covered. From that concept, I would not study to know 100% of the content but closer to 125%, just in case. As with my classmates, who wanted to participate in class, knowing what the outcome would be? I should have just said, "ok." Those experiences are permanently imprinted into my memory.

It should be noted that I was not the only student that experienced ridicule. In my experience, the power of the teacher was too often presented as one of absolute disciplinary dictatorship and not as an ally. A teacher can control because of the bestowed power that was

vested in the role. I experienced less than caring teachers who more often knew words of degradation to humiliate me and other students in the classroom rather than words of encouragement.

Stereotyping and segregation existed among students at my school. A student's status was either elevated or diminished by other students' opinions wherein ranking was dependent on social status, physical appearance, parents, or where you lived. Among the students, a pecking order emerged and made the difference between being accepted or isolated. I came from a Slavic background with a less than English last name. That immediately seemed to put me at a disadvantage, and I was made fun of because of my name, and my initials were TB. I was tuberculosis, a dreadful disease. I admit that I wasn't as pretty as the other girls and I wore thick glasses. I was not as popular as the other girls, especially the town girls with businesspeople as parents. Farm girls were perceived to be of a lower status because of coming from a more impoverished socio-economic background, or that was what the message presented from the teachers and students either implied or stated. I wasn't allowed to participate in sports as living far from town created a barrier to get to games or to stay late after school to participate. In general, sports were not important for girls in my parent's opinion.

I recall some teachers had a deficit-thinking approach to farm students. In particular, it seemed that farm people were viewed as being of a lower status and deemed less capable of succeeding in school. In the 1970s, graduation rates were lower in agrarian regions; in part, because rural students, particularly the boys, were expected to help at seeding and harvest times and consequently missed a lot of instruction time. It was viewed by some families to be more important to have children help on the farm and generate income.

There is a dark side to education, and schools are not exclusively negative for one specific race, colour, or culture. Education institutions can be damaging to varying degrees as experienced by different students when exposed to different teachers. For me, the school was not a safe place to be, mainly because of the abusive teachers who dampened my spirit and damaged my self-esteem. I often entered a classroom with fear of what comment would be made to me, or that I might be ridiculed if I did not know the correct answer if called upon. This was the teaching style of the time, characterized by a heavy reliance on shame and humiliation. I lacked self-esteem and confidence because of some teachers' and classmates' actions. School can be a cruel place. During my school years, I experienced trauma and often felt vulnerable at the hands

of the hierarchy that exists in the school system. At varying times, I experienced stereotyping, exclusion, disadvantage, barriers, trauma, humiliation, and ridicule. But I am White! Although I have privilege by virtue of being *White*, being *White* did not exempt me from being treated with malice that left deep scars. Interestingly, it is a point to emphasize that in conversations with other adult learners, some much younger than myself, similar stories are told. It is not only my story, but the story of many learners who were impacted negatively by teachers' abusive behaviour. I can only speculate about how Indigenous students at that time were treated and how that made them feel.

1.5.2 Where are the Indigenous Students?

There were virtually no Indigenous students in my classes except for one girl in primary school. One vignette lingers from my grade 5 or 6 years while attending Duncan School, a three-story stone building. There was a field day towards the end of the school year, where the students would participate in various races and jumps to earn a red, blue, or white ribbon. The majority of the students were gathered in a large field beside the school. In the distance, I saw a small number of other students doing similar races at another part of the schoolyard. I wondered why they were not with the rest of the students. Later, I did catch a glimpse of a couple of Indigenous students leaving my classroom as we were entering to begin a class. I asked the teacher where they were going and why they were not with us in our classroom. The response, given in a lowered voice, explained that they were not to be in our class and that they were returning to their classroom in the basement of the school. Everyone in the school knew that the basement was forbidden territory. It was where the students with learning and physical disabilities, and the Indigenous students were housed and segregated from the other students. This seemed to imply Indigenous students were not capable of learning like the other students, and their isolation was for our protection and safety. They were sentenced to confinement to the basement.

As I conclude writing about my grade school memories, I made a point of finding my graduation yearbook. Now, aware of the truth in our history, I can see how *White* the pages were. As I thumb through the yearbook pages for all the grades 10, 11, and 12 students, I saw a small sprinkling of Indigenous students. I do recall, on occasion, the whispers in the hallway among the students if someone was speculated to be a *half breed*. At the time that I was attending school, it never occurred to me to wonder and ask, "Where were the Indigenous

children? There were pieces of fabric missing. This lack of quilt fabric represents the obliviousness that White people with White privilege have been taught not to see Others as they were both invisible and removed from White society.

Several decades passed, following my high school graduation, before I entered post-secondary school. In the mid-80s, I took on the role of a farmer's wife and then a mother to two sons. The next section shares my experiences when I returned to post-secondary school and learning the truth about Canadian history.

1.6 After Grade School

I had left the farm after graduating from high school and moved to the city. I tried university but found it to be an augmented version of grade school and again felt stress and trauma. I left within a couple of months. I felt like a failure: someone who cannot complete what they start. I was forced to decide upon a career and attended a business school to learn secretarial skills. While living in the city of Saskatoon in the late 1970s, I found the attitudes of men and places of employment to be more progressive, and women were offered more opportunities. After a decade, I found myself back in the same town, marrying a farmer in the early-80s. Upon returning home to a small farm town, the differences in conceptions regarding gender and women's place in a male-dominated society were depressing. I experienced degradation, sexual harassment, and rude behaviour because I was a woman. The workplace was a very unkind place for a woman, especially if staff were predominantly men.

Farm women, in an earlier era, once they were married, were expected to attend to the children, garden, cook and clean, and focus on domestic chores. If a married woman was working, it was to supplement the farming income in addition to all the other expectations previously listed. After the birth of my eldest son, I had aspired to earn a General Social Work Certificate through Renison College and the University of Waterloo, taking classes via correspondence. I remember my brother and his wife coming over in the evening for coffee and promptly, once the pleasantries were over, I was reprimanded by my brother. He clarified where my focus needed to be, and it was made clear that education was not what I was expected to be entertaining as it would distract from the more essential tasks of supporting my husband's farming and looking after my son. My life and options were constrained by the patriarchal times

when gender roles were firmly defined, and more traditional expectations limited many females' aspirations to do and be more.

1.7 Baptism by Tears: Learning the Truth

The post-secondary part of my story represents another portion of my quilt. These pieces of the quilt came quite a long time after my high school completion as I did not enter higher education to obtain a formal bachelor's degree until I was in my 40s and while I was going through a divorce. As you read on, you will understand why the fabric for this part of the quilt is neither pleasing to look at nor a comfortable texture. It is, however, the reality of this part of the quilt that has provided me with the capacity for compassion and caring.

While going through a divorce, it was the opportunity to embrace learning, albeit through distance learning. It was also a safe environment that would allow me to escape the memories of earlier school experiences. In 2002, I became an adult learner and set out to complete my Bachelor of Arts in Social Development Studies while I was a single mother to two sons. The way I was treated when I returned to the small rural town was unpleasant, and many times, I felt that I was considered to be a *dumb blonde* and set out to gain higher education to prove otherwise.

I succeeded in my coursework and enjoyed the content of my classes. It wasn't easy to study and do assignments while being a single mother. I would get up very early and stay up late, taking multiple classes at a time to expedite the completion of my degree. I had to set alarms to remind me to wake up my children for school and another alarm to remind me to pick them up from school. My final term to acquire my bachelor's degree, I was taking six classes and one Master's degree class for a total of seven classes (the one Master's course was a pre-requisite for all the remaining courses, and I did not want to waste an entire term taking only one course). I was on my way to achieving my goals.

My rude awakening came when I took a class in Anthropology, Native Studies. Professor Jean Becker, a self-identified Indigenous woman, provided a collection of readings, audiotapes, videotapes, and excerpts from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). As a child and for most of my adult life, I was oblivious to the atrocities experienced by the Indigenous peoples in our country and unaware of more than a century of assimilation. I came to realize what my Whiteness represented. I read the truth of the actions of other White people, often as

self-proclaimed Christians, to save and improve the Indigenous peoples to be more like the White people. The measures and restrictions imposed on other humans, the Indigenous peoples, and their children appeared horrific to me. As I became aware through further readings, I acknowledged that had these actions been experienced by White people, it would have been deemed criminal. But, because these actions afflicted Indigenous people, it was considered to be acceptable according to White standards.

In the course material, I remember listening to Elders on the audiotapes, watching the videos about the survivors of residential schools, and reading excerpts from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996) and crying. My desk became my altar, and my tears baptized me into the harsh reality of Whiteness at the expense of the Others. This time in my life is still vivid. At first, I felt horror at what White people had done to the Indigenous peoples, and then anger mixed with embarrassment to know that White people, my people were guilty of such atrocities.

I had completed my undergraduate degree in the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences with this awakening as a result of taking the Anthropology class and then began my master's degree in education. Learning the truth was pivotal to where and how I would proceed in my awakening journey, following a path that I needed to take. My master's degree was in Distance Adult Education, and I took every opportunity to delve deeper into Indigenous history and read papers and books from Indigenous scholars. Every assignment that could be applied to Indigenous students and adult learners was embraced. I wanted to satisfy a thirst for knowledge about the cultural genocide that was occurring, although my earlier education led me to believe Canada was a just and a free country.

It was difficult not to compare the atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples to the Nazi Holocaust and the intended genocide of the Jews. I studied the cruelty and abominations associated with World War II and the cultural cleansing initiated by the Nazis to eliminate what was deemed to be a substandard culture from existence and how it compared to activities in Canada. World War II war crimes were brought to justice at the Nuremberg trials, and in some cases even later, after the United Nations officially recognized the crimes of genocide to be punishable under international law.

From comparisons and definitions, it appeared that the White people of Canada had committed national crimes of assimilation and genocide against our First Peoples: children were

forcibly removed from their parents to attend residential schools. They were forbidden to speak their languages and subjected to physical, emotional, sexual, and mental abuses. Many perished. Indigenous children were also forcibly removed from their parents and fostered to live with parents that were not Indigenous. In many cases, the children experienced bodily harm, trauma, and stress. Also, many Indigenous women were sterilized during childbirth without consent.

Indigenous people have experienced life conditions that are deplorable and destructive, and it clearly appears that Canada is guilty of genocide. Lester B. Pearson signed the United Nations resolution endorsing acts of genocide to be punishable according to international law without reservation on November 28, 1949, unlike other countries that requested an exemption from punishment. In so signing the United Nations agreement without reservation, Canada surely condoned all actions taken against Indigenous peoples as acceptable and did not see any parallels to genocide (United Nations Treaty Series, Volume 78, p. 280).

My thirst to gain a better understanding of the truths of Canada was to discover the truth of political, social powers created centuries ago in favour of White people that continue today and manipulations that entrenched a society that condoned racism at any cost. How could anyone consider taking away young children from their parents and treat them so inhumanely, abuse them, starve them, and shame them of their dignity? Would White parents accept this? The political powers created centuries ago, in favour of Whiteness, continue today. The newspapers are littered with injustice in the legal system, foster care, politics, and education systems.

This is what I view as apartheid towards Indigenous peoples. In an earlier published document, I shared my views on apartheid as it relates to our society and the working poor (Papp, 2012). We are familiar with the term as it relates to South Africa; however, racial segregation and discrimination in the form of political, social, financial, justice, economic, and educational inequality have diminished the healthy development of many of the Indigenous peoples of Canada by the dominant White society. Politically dominating efforts, specifically through educational institutions such as residential schools, sanctioned racial segregation. Although residential schools are no longer in existence, many of the underpinning remnants of assimilation remain in existence. Indigenous students are the least serviced by the educational institutions at all grade levels and post-secondary institutions. Statistics do imply some improvements; however, the numbers are far from equal. This has resulted in intergenerational poverty, stress, trauma, and inequitable learning outcomes for Indigenous students. Today we are

faced with the consequences of the colonization efforts: Indigenous peoples experience inequalities in social justice, education, public resources, employment, and health. This is apartheid. I posit that apartheid exists in Canada.

My experiences as a youth with Indigenous peoples stood in stark contrast with the experiences that many Indigenous people, at some point in their life, experienced at the hands of White people. My reality was fundamentally changed, and from the values of my past and a newly-awakened sense of injustice, a vision began to emerge to guide the rest of my life. I decided that my quest for the present and the future is to do my part, no matter how small, to right the wrongs of the past, to give back to the Indigenous peoples by finding ways to facilitate social justice to the education system. So, I became a White woman writing and researching as an ally for reconciliation long before the terms ally and reconciliation was officially coined and brought forward to Canada through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). Ironically, through the education system and by taking one class in Native Studies, I learned the truth about education and Canada's darkest history. It has been called a National Crime by Dr. P.H. Bryce in 1922 while providing a review of the health conditions of Indigenous people from 1904 to 1922 to the Canadian government, and John Milloy's account of the Canadian government and the residential school system, 1879 to 1986, a book of the same name published in 1999. This part of the quilt is certainly not the prettiest and the most heart-wrenching for me to learn. It did have a profound impact on my life.

1.8 Colourism: The Many Shades of Prejudice and Racism

This part of the quilt is equally less pretty as my experience of exclusion based on my colour helped me empathize with what many others would feel or have experienced: a sense of not belonging, unwanted, and dismissed based on their race and colour. This part of the quilt heightened my sensitivity to how others would feel and adds another fabric that brings a harsh texture to the quilt.

Once my Master's degree was completed in 2005, I was determined to continue my education towards a Ph.D. I approached an Indigenous scholar to discuss my aspirations and endorse my quest to address the racial inequities in education. She responded with the following question: "What right does a White person have to address Indigenous people's issues?" What I had hoped would be a positive and engaging conversation, and words of encouragement resulted

instead in a long and sobering lecture. I was reprimanded to mind my own business because I was the wrong colour: White. Although I had met and spoke with other Indigenous scholars, this was my first experience with an Indigenous person that expressed such strong opinions to a White person about being White. I was offering to be an ally and address the challenges Indigenous students were experiencing. It made perfect sense to me that if White people caused the problems, then White people should collaborate with Indigenous people to fix the problem. But I was now being told that my skin colour trumped my intent.

My earlier experiences with Indigenous people and other Indigenous scholars did not prepare me for such a negative response — an experience I would now describe as exclusion and discrimination based on race and colour. I had stepped outside the White boundaries, and this Indigenous person felt I had no right to enter the margins of education for Indigenous peoples. My intentions were viewed, by this person, as only a place meant for Indigenous people. Deflated, I entered a time of incubation that lasted almost seven years, where I simmered with a feeling that I had lost my purpose. At this time, my quilt was put on hold. Sometimes when trying to move forward and be creative, the pieces don't fall into place, and frustration suspended the making of the quilt. The gestation period allowed me to reassess the quilt I started to make. My intentions and my passions were still alive, but I questioned if this was a place for a White woman that cared about education for Indigenous students. But time did not stand still, and many changes began to occur on the worldwide stage.

1.9 History in the Making: More Colours for the Quilt

During my period of incubation, several movements emerged locally and globally. This brought about a resurgence in energy and bright and vibrant fabric represented the national and international events that were being added to the quilt. Although I had not committed at this time to move forward into the area that I was told I do belong, these events trickled into my subconscious and held prominence in the making of this quilt.

One of the most notable events was The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2007) that was adopted by a majority vote. The four countries that voted against were Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States; countries noted to be the dominant colonizers of Indigenous peoples. Canada, almost a decade later, officially adopted the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples in May 2016 (Fontaine, 2016).

Following the revelations of systematic abuse in residential schools, a formal government apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper was made on Wednesday, June 11, 2008, to the former students of residential school. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed that same year; stories were shared by the survivors of the residential schools, and Principles of Reconciliation and Calls to Action were released in 2015. The Idle No More movement, founded by three Indigenous women and one non-Indigenous ally, quickly gained momentum in December 2012, raising awareness across Canada and recognition on the world stage. These national and international events reinforced the optimism that the fabric represented, especially for a White woman that wanted to be a part of the reconciliation process and joining as an ally with Indigenous peoples.

These events helped reignite the spark to continue this journey in 2012. It reinforced my belief that we are in it together, and we should work together in solidarity with a unified stance. In particular, the Idle No More movement represented Indigenous and non-Indigenous women working together in a coalition for the same cause. The next part of the quilt provides the reader with a 360-degree. It adds to my experiences as a young student to explain further my experiences in the education systems to complete the backstory, including my experiences as a parent.

1.10 A 360-degree experience: From Student to Parent to an Adult learner to Instructor

This section provides the reader with a 360-degree view of my experiences within the education system, adding to my earlier experiences as a young student. The quilt now weaves together my subsequent encounters as a parent when my children attended school, my experiences as a post-secondary learner, and finally, my experiences with students as an instructor. This section of the prologue provides the concluding fabric pieces of the quilt that will be stitched together, representing the completion of the storytelling of who I am.

1.10.1 School Experiences as a Parent

The fabric chosen for this part of the quilt juxtaposes my experiences with those of my children. The material also offers the differences between a small-town school that was cohesive because my children were in a French Immersion program and the isolation and indifference of a large city school. As a parent in the same small rural community, the teachers of my children

were regularly visible and were part of the community. Informal conversations in the vegetable aisle at the Co-op store were a frequent occurrence. We formed a partnership that was productive and nurturing for my children and the other children in the classroom. The relationships formed between the teachers, my children, and myself as a parent were vastly different from being a student. By comparison, the experience was very positive and enriching for my children. The achievement levels for grades were high, and the sense of extended family was comforting and supportive. Particularly with my children being in a French Immersion program. The students were an extended family. They were together from kindergarten until entering high school. Students knew each other as siblings and were close to everyone's parents. Particularly in the earlier school years, everyone was invited to birthday parties. Parents knew all the teachers, and the relationships were generally positive and supportive.

The school shared the French Immersion space with the English program. It was not uncommon for my children to tell me about how the English students would make fun of the French Immersion students and called them Frogs. They were demeaned and called stupid because they could speak, read, and write another language. Just as I experienced, hierarchies form at an early age among students. If you were different from the majority, such as learning another language, that was a validated reason to be humiliated and segregated from other students.

After a divorce and a move to Saskatoon in 2005, my youngest son faced the harsh reality of change that presented another very different encounter with formal education. As a parent, I did not feel the familiar welcoming partnership that I had previously become accustomed to with teachers. The new city schoolteachers did not welcome a parent-teacher relationship. The school environment felt isolated. The open-door policy was replaced with a closed-door policy that was decorated with a façade of welcome. At a parent-teacher interview, one teacher reported that my son needed to be more outgoing. Really? The problem was the student, not the teacher. My question was directed at what the teacher was doing to encourage him to feel more comfortable or to be encouraged. Most students begin each school year wondering who their teacher will be and asking questions such as “will the teacher like me?”, “will they help me?” “will I be able to understand?” My son was no different. The answer to those questions is the difference between a good and a not so good semester and in some cases, it is a game of chance. In high school, he completed his requirements without incident, but as an island.

The post-secondary school offered a new experience; he excelled in the area that he loved - computer technology. After the first few days of school, I witnessed a metamorphosis as he flourished socially, emotionally, and intellectually. He was in a safe environment with like-minded people and gifted instructors who shared his interests, leading to positive school experience.

1.10.2 My Post-Secondary Experiences as an Adult Learner

I add to my quilt a brighter fabric to represent my experiences as a post-secondary adult learner. I build courage through my online learning experiences, and I had slowly built confidence through positive relational pedagogy and relationships formed between teacher and students, as well as other students within a safe learning environment. It is sad to say, but the words and the feelings experienced in the classroom from half a century ago still resonate even today. The adverse experiences that I encountered linger after all these years, and it was those memories that kept me away from entering a classroom for over 40 years until I began my Ph.D. journey.

I attained all my previous degrees through my ability to hide behind a computer screen. No one would be able to see my face if I was ever again to be humiliated or see the tears from the hurtful words. Being able to hide behind the computer screen provided me with safety; however, my experiences as a distant learner were uplifting. The positive comments from the instructors and fellow students provided an enjoyable experience and a desire to acquire more education. I excelled. Not only did I excel in my grades, but also the experience helped me build confidence in the learning environment by being able to share my opinions creativity and have my contributions received with respect. In 2012, I finally gathered the courage to step foot into a classroom as a student attending my first graduate class at the University of Saskatchewan with Dr. Patrick Renihan as my professor, and later, he became my mentor.

1.10.3 Experiences as an Instructor

I never forgot the way that I was treated as a student, especially when I began teaching adults, some of whom had experienced the same negative education experiences - ridicule, humiliation, and lack of support- as I did. The fabric for this part of the quilt is somewhat similar

to my experiences as a young student. With empathy, I can bring hope and brightness to my students. I bring my students compassion and genuine care to help them succeed.

I have been privileged to design and deliver learning material to Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre (STSC) students. I would describe many of the students as vulnerable, non-traditional adult learners who desired a second chance in life. Some of my students had been incarcerated; most had not completed grade 12, and some had never worked. I could guess that most did not have a positive learning experience in a public school, based on their colour and other markers of difference, and had experienced racism and discrimination.

The students begin the program fearful and lacking confidence, expecting more of the same negative experiences they had in grade school. The fearfulness could be seen on their faces. They watched intently, almost like they were holding their breath waiting for the gauntlet to fall. They often seemed surprised to hear positive words and praise. The role that I took as an instructor was to encourage them, support them, and believe in them. For most, this was the first time they experienced a positive school atmosphere. Slowly, the wall of fear dropped as they felt they were affirmed; they were in a safe learning environment.

In this situation, the effectiveness of the school and program stemmed from a very different context, and success was measured very differently. For these adult students, success was to learn a new trade skill in 12 weeks, go to a job interview, and to complete a two-week job placement. I distinctly remember one Indigenous woman. She was stunning, beautiful with dark hair, and the bluest eyes. One day she asked to speak with me in private. We gathered in a quiet part of the shop, and she explained her concern about not being able to put together a resume because she had spent much of her life in prison. She desperately wanted to turn her life around, and getting a job was paramount to achieving her goal. I asked questions about her experiences, and she revealed that she spent her time sewing in prison, and I could sense a weight was lifting. She described a job that she had successfully mastered and worked well with her supervisor and others. We worked together to build her resume, and she went on to successfully complete learning a new trade, attended a job interview, and began a work-placement program. What an overwhelming joy I felt and continue to feel when I see I made a difference in someone's life within a few weeks.

As I gather all the different fabrics pieces together for my quilt, which have been purposefully selected, I take one final reflection on the teaching profession from the various positions that I have occupied and the contexts that I have experienced.

1.10.4 Reflections on the Teaching Profession

As I reflect on my school experiences, I can attest to the need to feel safe in the classroom, to be offered encouragement and kind words instead of ridicule and degradation in front of your classmates. I believe that students need a caring environment and positive teachers that demonstrate a genuine interest in their students. In particular, the critical drivers to transformation and change in the classrooms for Indigenous students are the teachers that care and respect their students while creating an equitable and safe learning environment. Not all teachers are bad, but a few teachers did touch my life in very negative ways. I am sure they did not realize what impact they had on the delicate beginnings of their tender pupils. Surely, if they knew that their spoken words would remain a vivid memory of humiliation nearly 50 years after the fact, then maybe they would have approached their profession and daily interaction with students with more exceptional care and deliberation. The teaching profession should be embraced with care and approached with compassion for their students.

My role is to be the professional leader and the catalyst of change by showing that I genuinely care for my students. I recognize the impact that I have on the people around me. As an educator in a post-secondary institution and second chance trades training, I witness the scars of student's earlier education imprinted by negative memories of classroom experiences. The vulnerable adult students that I have taught at the trades centre maybe would have had a different path if their earlier school experiences were more positive. I often wondered where I would be today if my earlier experiences were more positive and encouraging. Suffice to say, I am exactly where I should be; making a difference.

Children and students of all ages should be treated with respect and fairness. The primary goal of the teacher is to help the student discover and reach their potential, realizing the outcome will not be the same for every student. The ultimate goal is to give students the foundation to become citizens of a community, meaningfully contributing by being gainfully employed, feeling pride in their achievements, and developing the moral fiber to support and care for their children and others around them.

Perhaps teachers in training should be offered a course in Positive Memories 101 or Caring for my Students 121, followed by a modified Hippocratic Oath to pledge they will practice ethical behaviour. A review of the Weill Cornell Medical College Hippocratic Oath (2005) provides guidance that might be adopted by the educational field and may be called the Socratic or Platonic Oath. I have selected and transcribed some key statements, substituting medical terms where appropriate to educational terms, as shown bolded below.

I do solemnly vow, to that which I value and hold most dear:

That I will honor the Profession of **Education**, be just and generous to its members, and help sustain them in their service to humanity;

That I will recognize the limits of my knowledge and pursue lifelong learning to better care for **my students**;

That I will seek the counsel of others when they are more expert so as to fulfill my obligation to those who are entrusted to my care;

That I will not withdraw from my **students** in their time of need;

That I will lead my life and practice my art with integrity and honor, using my power wisely.

That into whatever **school** house I shall enter, it shall be for the good of the **student**;

That above all else I will serve the highest interests of my **students** through the practice of my art;

That I will be an advocate for **students** in need and strive for justice in the care of the **student**

I now turn to my calling, promising to preserve its finest traditions, with the reward of a long experience in the joy of **teaching**.

I make this vow freely and upon my honor.

(Cornell Chronicle, 2005 – modified)

I make this vow freely and upon my honour. I will help my student take small steps towards making what seems impossible to become I M possible.

1.11 Stitching the Pieces Together

It is time to gather the different pieces of fabric and stitch my quilt together. This narrative has presented my life experiences that have influenced and shaped my research and, hopefully, has provided an explanation of why I am a White woman researching and a White woman writing. Quilts once represented a family's heritage as the fabric came from repurposed clothing that was once worn by various family members. They became heirlooms that told many stories. The different materials that make up this quilt came from many uncomfortable

experiences that have deeply affected my positionality as a post-secondary instructor and as a researcher. This quilt represents why I have chosen to engage in this inquiry and my positionality as a researcher. The different components of this quilt epitomize my early childhood experiences with Indigenous people, my family's respect for Indigenous people, a reflection of the education system as a young student, parent, post-secondary student and an instructor.

From my earliest experiences as a child with Indigenous people in my home, I am grateful to have had a family that offered work and worked together with their hired hands, provided fair pay, and treated their workers with dignity and respect. The same hospitality was extended to the Indigenous men, Paul and Lawrence, that were offered to neighbours, friends, and family that came on occasion to visit. The relationships and experiences with my family and the Indigenous men that I witnessed were genuine. This was my normal, and I knew nothing different. My expectation was that these positive relationships existed everywhere.

On reflection, a sense of equality was demonstrated at a time when Indigenous people were barely considered citizens, and assimilation was alive and well. When I was born, Indigenous people were not deemed to be Canadian citizens and were not allowed to vote until 1960. Residential schools, of which I knew nothing, were still in existence until my oldest child was born in 1986, and the last residential school closed in 1996.

Chronologically, the next pieces of the quilt, as a young student, had a profound impact. As a student, my negative experiences remain indelible even though they happened decades ago. The school was power-dominated and not a safe place to be and often feared as a location to experience humiliation and ridicule. During my school experiences, I experienced barriers, exclusion, disadvantage, segregation, and stereotyping within the school by some teachers and students. Teachers were often emotionally and verbally abusive without regard to a student's self-esteem. And, teachers exercised power bestowed upon them by virtue of their role. Hierarchies also existed between students within the communal environment wherein some were considered less than, and others were more than based on their socioeconomic or cultural background.

I can now reflect on another section of my quilt that portrays how the education system was effectively colonizing people then and now. At the time, I never noticed how White the classrooms were. The Indigenous students were to be kept invisible, and as I later found, they were cast to the basement and viewed as deficient in their capability to learn with the rest of the

students. The curriculum was also very White. There was virtually no Indigenous content implying that the only people that counted were white people, and no one else existed or mattered. The power of the education system presented selective curriculum that perpetuated an invisible system that favoured White privilege, which taught students to be oblivious to Others and to be blinded by our Whiteness.

My experiences as a post-secondary student provide another texture to the fabrics used in my quilt as it provided me with a positive experience in the educational system. Most of my education was gained through distance learning. I craved for knowledge, but only found the courage hiding behind a computer screen, and soon realized that not all classrooms were degrading. Instructors created a safe learning environment that was conducive to participating, and students were encouraged to share their opinions. What I was not prepared for was what I learned about racism, power, privilege, and Whiteness and what atrocities were experienced by Indigenous people. I had believed all people shared the same type of relationship with Indigenous people as I had experienced as the norm. I was very wrong. Through many tears I learned what my Whiteness meant in Canada, a country I was proud to call a free and just nation. My world was shattered. I finally stepped into a classroom in 2012 with a certain degree of confidence and began my Ph.D. journey.

At this point, I gather the fabrics of all my past experiences. The chapter represents a culmination stitching them together to form a quilt and this manuscript dissertation. As a student, I was exposed to unpleasant situations, which has offered me an opportunity to reflect and gain empathy for other students that had experienced similar experiences of degradation, humiliation, or ridicule. After learning about how Indigenous people had been treated, particularly in schools, I found my place and purpose. Friere (1970/2003) presented conscientização or conscientization, which offers an explanation of my evolution. Through conscientização, my reflection on my experiences, critical thinking, and becoming aware of conditions experienced by others, I felt moved and challenged to action. I felt a commitment to address the problematic situations that I had experienced, and students now experience in the school system, specifically, for Indigenous students.

Conscientization is critical to my research; in fact, it is the rationale for my study and inspires me to look for hopeful outcomes through my research. Hence, I am a White Woman researching and writing searching for teaching strategies and best practices for improving

educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Like the phoenix that rises from the ashes, my passion was rekindled to continue my education and do my part in healing the pain of the past and bringing social justice to the classroom for Indigenous students. My position is that of an ally, an advocate, a friend, and a partner in education and research. This is my small contribution to reconciliation by offering something to right the wrongs of the past, honour other ways of knowing, and to make the classroom a safe and friendly place for students to learn. I will continue to follow the guidance of the Indigenous community, Indigenous leaders and researchers, and wisdom offered to me from the Elders as we all work together as partners.

With this foundation and charted course of academic discourse, I begin the journey of sharing with you this research endeavour. The front of my quilt is complete and stitched together. The manuscripts presented will become the borders and the padding, and the final chapter will become the backing of my quilt that will bring all the pieces together.

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CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION – TEACHER PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESSES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

The tone shifts in this chapter from personal and conversational to an academic voice and sets the stage for the following chapters. This chapter represents a fusion of the literature review and methodology sections found in traditional dissertations, and it begins by explicating terminology to assist readers in navigating through the subsequent sections. The intent is to provide a common understanding of the meaning or meanings of specific terms through a discussion of biases that exist and the potential implications of certain terminology. Next, critical background information is provided, including a review of nearly 50 years of the policy, research, and recommendations to improve the living conditions and education of Indigenous peoples. Statistical data are presented on Saskatchewan education achievement improvements from 2006 to 2019, supporting the need for this research to advise policy and inform decision making in education. The impact of poverty and its effect on education levels, graduation rates, and the ongoing social injustice struggles experienced by Indigenous students are reported. Readers are then challenged to reflect on the broader inequalities that exist in our society, followed by a discussion regarding the perceptions and attitudes of educators and an overview of Canadian public opinion on Indigenous Peoples.

The three manuscripts, which comprise Chapters 3, 4, and 5, were published in three different peer-reviewed journals, which had various word restrictions. The second part of this chapter will provide a comprehensive discussion of the research design and the data collection and analysis methods employed. Researcher worldview and theoretical lenses are described as it applies to ontology and epistemology. The research questions, site selections, and participants are described, the coding process and the limitations and delimitations of the research are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the significance of this study and an outline of the structure of the manuscript dissertation.

2.1 Terminology

Different researchers in different countries use various terminologies, and for the benefit of the reader, clarification is required to provide coherence in this linguistic diversity. What follows are definitions to clarify the intended meaning of the terminology used within this dissertation.

2.1.1 Wholistic

The term wholistic is preferred over the word holistic. The rationale is based on the root words: whole and hole. The word *whole* is considered to be complete and the entirety or all of something and all-encompassing. Whereas, connotatively, a hole is thought to imply that something is missing or flawed. The term wholistic, when used in Indigenous terms, refers to the whole person and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions as “all aspects of human life are fundamentally interconnected” (Pewewardy, 1998, p. 33) as depicted through the medicine wheel or the sacred circle. Couture (2011) explained the circle was centered and quartered to signify wholeness, inclusiveness, balance, and harmony with all nature. The model is circular to represent all quadrants of the human being.

2.1.2 Education

Education and schooling have clear and distinct purposes. One definition of education is that it “is the process by which knowledge, values, language, culture, and skills are transmitted from one generation to the next: empowerment that enables individuals to pursue choices and opportunities” (Steeves, Carr-Stewart, & Marshall, 2010, p. 19). The Canadian Council on Learning (2009) has endorsed a learning model that identifies learning as [w]holistic and a lifelong process, from a child and continuing throughout adult life, that includes knowledge coming from formal schooling as well as informal learning through social relationships with family and community. A more traditional educational system can provide members of a community education that explains “who they are, who their people are, and how they relate to other peoples and to the physical world about them” (Miller, 1996, p. 15).

2.1.3. First Peoples, Aboriginal, and Indigenous

According to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), “*Indigenous peoples* is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants.” Often the term *Aboriginal peoples* are also used. “The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people – Indians [more commonly referred to as First Nation], Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs” (CIRNAC, 2017).

The term Indigenous Peoples emerged in the 1970s from the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood that recognized that there are real differences between the different groups of Indigenous peoples and their cultures (Tuhiwai Smith, 2008). The term Indigenous is also used on the world stage to identify people that are descendants “. . . of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement, or other means” (United Nations, 2012). The different titles and terms will be referenced as they appear in the original text and discussions; the words Indigenous, Aboriginal, or First People of Canada will be used interchangeably.

It should be noted that the words: Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Peoples of Canada are not homogenous and does not imply that all peoples are the same or offer a generic one-size-fits-all description of who they are. It is acknowledged that they have different languages, cultures, clans, beliefs, and values and have identified with tribal or linguistic names and possess different legal rights.

The next section provides a discussion of educational terminologies, such as student success.

2.1.4 Student Success

The terminology of student success can be defined as both an abstract and a quantifiable term and can be assigned multiple meanings, such as graduation rates or feelings of accomplishment. These measurements are the crux of this research and the evidence that is sought. The terms success and equitable outcomes can take many forms (Tunison, 2007). The Canadian Council for Learning (2007, 2009) provides three wholistic lifelong learning models,

one each for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. The Canadian Council for Learning (2009) report cited the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (2005):

It is important . . . to establish a variety of indicators of success and tools of measurement, beyond performance on standardized tests. One size does not fit all; there are many kinds of learners, many kinds of learning, and many ways of demonstrating our accomplishments. Without better research and data, we don't know where we are going, where we want to go, and if we are getting there. (p. 10)

Such indicators of success and measurement of equitable outcomes can be intangible and go beyond grades from standardized tests; they can also take on different meanings from the students', parents' teachers', and administration perspectives. For students, it can mean getting to school, grasping concepts that were difficult in the past, feeling self-esteem, feeling pride in who they are, belonging to a group, or fitting in. Also, increased self-esteem and self-efficacy displayed by the student to willingly engage in the classroom material because the student feels confident to speak aloud, not fearing ridicule could indicate success. Others affirm that there are more critical factors than merely "checking off boxes" and the bigger success picture can include the healing from past educational experiences, experiencing personal development and pride, and becoming a role model for their families (MacKinnon, 2013). Success does not always equate to employment, and the examples provided are intrinsic.

From a teacher's perspective, success can mean students being present in the classroom, collaborating with them and other students, understanding the course material and completing the requirements to gain a credit. From an administrator's perspective, student success can have a very different meaning: offering services and support, providing a welcoming school environment, offering professional development for staff, and providing students with quality staff who are caring and culturally responsive.

Indigenous students identified the desire to graduate, get good marks, and achieve a future degree in addition to being prepared and spiritually mature to experience a purposeful and fulfilling life (Claypool & Preston, 2014). Students have expressed that a connection with their culture, history, and language are paramount. Success could appear in the form of improved interest in school, engagement, and motivation to learn through participation that includes enthusiasm during the learning process resulting in persistence in the school system until graduation (Hattie, 2009, 2012; Lipka, Sharp, Brenner, Yanez, & Sharp, 2005; Papp, 2016).

Kirkness (1998) in her article *Our Peoples' education: Cut the shackles; Cut the Crap; Cut the Mustard* answered the question of how education will know it is successful and stated:

You will know when you have achieved your goal of quality education when your children are enjoying the challenge of school/learning, when their self-esteem and self-confidence are evident, when your children are proud of who they are, when their links with the older generations are made. (p. 15)

The education system uses grade levels, course credits, and numbers to measure success and achievement. Students are required to receive specific grades to earn course credits, and a qualifying number of courses must be completed as a requirement to graduate at the high school level in both the Canadian and New Zealand contexts. Part of the originality of this research is the combination of success markers that became evident during data collection. Success included accomplishing Eurocentric measurements, such as course credits and increased graduation rates. Also, teacher participants identified the students' measure of success included their feeling of pride in being Indigenous and learning about their culture, history, and language, in addition to succeeding in school by obtaining course credits and graduating. The Eurocentric measures of success and the Indigenous student's cultural and wholistic successes were supportive of each other rather than in opposition.

This research presents the perceptions the teachers shared regarding their students' accomplishments, and what success looked like in their classrooms. The terminologies and definitions provided can be used as a starting point; however, the research findings presented in the three manuscripts that follow offer complementary and expanded conceptions of success based on the perceptions of the teachers and the quotes provided. In some cases, what is deemed success represents a combination of mainstream and Indigenous metrics of success.

2.2 Bias and Terminology

This dissertation acknowledges the pathology present in the educational culture. Specifically, the examination of the terminology used pertaining to Indigenous students or any student other than White. The use of terminology is biased and validates an accepted hegemonic status quo that continually judges and compares the Western world and *others*. Other terms include 'achievement gaps' comparing Indigenous to White students. The message of the terminology is that anything non-Western or not mainstream should strive to be more Western because anything less is substandard. Furthermore, the methods of capturing the statistics use

Western methodologies that are not congruent with students from different cultural backgrounds (Miller, 2018).

An example of comparative labelling is the presentation of statistical data regularly collected by Statistics Canada to show differential levels of educational achievement between non-Indigenous and Indigenous students. For example, Statistics Canada, when presenting graduation rates, uses the binary terms of non-Indigenous graduation rates compared to Indigenous graduation rates. It is essential to recognize that the propensity to measure and compare within education is a colonialist approach, especially when presenting statistical data for educational achievement levels, demonstrating colonial values and perspectives. Hampton (1995) posits that Western schools impose power that affirms White values and knowledge under the assumption that White standards are superior as “they assume that they possess the one true yardstick” (p. 37) and anything else is substandard by comparison. This mentality is pervasive throughout our culture and specifically in the educational, organizational culture.

The buzz words frequently used to describe the disparity in educational attainment levels are *achievement gaps*. Labels such as this are found in many documents when discussing educational issues but are also viewed as a language that “might also contribute to the very problems they seek to solve” (Carey, 2014, p. 442) without regard for social and cultural contributors to the educational outcomes reported. The effects of poverty have a far-reaching impact on educational outcomes, self-esteem, and perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Silver, 2013). In many cases, children that come from poverty have fewer resources and opportunities. A further discussion of poverty is forthcoming. Researchers question if the onus to achieve should be placed on the learners or the education system that does not offer the opportunity, means, and methods to succeed? Mainstream education is provided to Indigenous students as potentially a means to break out of the poverty cycle (MacDonald, 2013). Battiste (2004) questioned if education can be the doctor if it is still the disease!

After reflection, achievement gap terminology should be changed to more positive terms that do not present Indigenous students as at fault for not achieving at comparable levels as their non-Indigenous peers. Terms such as “opportunity gaps” (Kamberelis & Dimitrias, 2011, p. 553) wherein the blame is placed with the educational institution and its teachers for not providing more opportunities to succeed, or other contributing factors would be preferable. Kamberelis and Dimitrias (2011) and Battiste (2004) speculated if the measurement of education levels is

approached as an opportunity, the lack of achievement is more accurately measured as a deficit in providing education for the youth that creates opportunities. The opportunity gap is a lens that explains that output differences, the Indigenous educational attainment levels, are the direct effect of the input differences provided by the educators or the circumstances. The inputs can include teaching bias, underfunding, poverty, teacher quality, assessments, school environment, Eurocentric curriculum, and the intergenerational effects of residential schools (Mayor & Suarez, 2019; Steeves et al., 2010). Orłowski and Cottrell (2019) documented the "systematic assaults on Indigenous epistemologies, languages, and cultures that occurred within schools and implicate[d] these schools in the production and reproduction of deeply embedded intergenerational educational disadvantage" (p. 6). In arguing that schools have failed Indigenous students rather than vice versa, they reframed "current Indigenous educational disparities as an educational debt rather than an achievement gap and document[ed] the multiple ways in which that educational debt continues to socially and economically exclude Indigenous peoples, especially through the racialization of poverty" (p. 6).

Other researchers challenge using the term *dropout* rates. As dropout rates among Indigenous students statistically are nearly double compared to non-Indigenous students, remaining in school can often be seen as evidence of the success of the assimilation strategies (Goulet, 2001; MacDonald, 2013; Robertson, 2003; Silver, Mallett, Greene & Simard, 2002). Robertson (2003) presented this opinion in an extreme form by arguing that:

Until both the curriculum and those who teach it 'become more Aboriginal,' schools will retain only those Aboriginal students willing to renounce their culture and their communities in favor of a diploma. Seen in this light, rejecting school is an act of collective resistance, not cultural failure. (p. 552)

Robertson and other researchers have equated Indigenous students dropping out of school as a form of resisting assimilation to Westernized education (MacDonald, 2013; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002). Nonetheless, dropping out of school is representative of failure within mainstream definitions, which in turn leads to deficit thinking, such that the Indigenous students need to be fixed or are perceived as unable to learn. The deficit thinking is similar to the mentality that was held by the architects of residential schools. Silver et al. (2002) explained the dropout issue is:

Framing the issue as being Aboriginal students' failures in school leads inexorably to 'deficit' thinking – i.e., that Aboriginal students have a deficit, that the problem is the

Aboriginal students. What follows is that it is the Aboriginal students who need ‘fixing,’ and this inevitably leads back to the thinking that drove the residential schools. . . (p. 30)

In many cases, the dichotomous labelling within reports and statistical data paints a contentious picture of unchallenged conceptions of the problems within the educational institutions. For example, students are categorized (performing/underperforming; achieving/underachieving; proficient/nonproficient; Indigenous/non-Indigenous). Unproductive labelling and biased terminology are found to be problematic and place judgment on the students and situations that they define. What follows is critical background information from a review of nearly 50 years of the policy, research, and recommendations to improve the living conditions and education of Indigenous peoples.

2.3 Change is Elusive and Frustratingly Slow

Change in Indigenous educational outcomes and the accompanying life circumstances appears to be elusive. Progress is occurring but at a frustratingly slow pace. Traditional Indigenous education systems that evolved over millennia were disrupted by the arrival of European powers who used education as a vehicle for colonization and assimilation. The Canadian government needed to solve the *Indian problem* with the motto of “kill the Indian in him and save the man” (Milloy, 1999, p. 27) by alienating Indigenous families to eliminate their culture and languages. This led to the mandate of residential schools and the focus to assimilate Indigenous people to be less *savage* and more *civilized*, like the *superior* European culture (Milloy, 1999). Milloy stated that the residential schools began in 1879, and the last residential school, Gordon Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan, closed in 1996. The catalyst for residential schools was from a study conducted by Nicholas Davin on the industrial schools in the United States. Milloy further explained at that time residential schools were viewed as a means to pacify the Riel Rebellion activities, a valuable tool of control. Indigenous children were utilized as hostages that were “given to the whites and [the Indigenous people] would hesitate to commit any hostile acts that might endanger their children’s well-being” (Milloy, 1999, p. 32). During the time of the residential schools, children experienced verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Milloy, 1999). Residential schooling was reported to be substandard, and much of the day was spent doing various chores preparing youth “to occupy the lowest socio-economic echelons of Canadian society” (Barman, 1986 as cited in Friedel, 2010, p. 173).

Over time, the segregated residential school led to the eventual integration of Indigenous students into public schools as a result of revisions to the Indian Act in 1951 and further recommendations provided in the Hawthorn Report (1966). It must be recognized that many of the current educational issues experienced by Indigenous people are the result of the intergenerational trauma and effects of residential schools.

What continued into the educational institutions after the closing of residential schools was racism, segregation, inequality, and discrimination while maintaining Eurocentric patriarchal traditions. Paulo Freire offered a pedagogy to liberate illiterate people in the Third World; however, his philosophy applies to every place where class, race, and gender exist as a means to oppress people. Through often unconscious or conscious omissions, censorship, and careful selections, there exists the oppressors and the oppressed. Freire (1970, 2003) explained the results of oppression were self-hatred and:

Self deprivation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. (p. 63)

Indigenous people often experienced the same self-deprivation because they have all been victims of colonization and racism, as explained by Freire.

Although most residential schools have been closed for more than three decades, the dominant paradigm of education still follows colonized methods and the dominant Eurocentric curriculum. Education and schools follow society's industrial model with its primary objective to produce skilled workers, or better stated, obedient works through the education system that simulates factory production lines (Morin, 1998). Learners gather at a precise location and time to replicate the general workforce. All learners pass through the same process for the same purpose to be socialized as good workers for the elite to maintain power and flourish.

In response to the devastations of residential school, colonization, and racism, a cultural revitalization began to create a positive sense of identity, revitalize Indigenous languages, and celebrate ceremony. The catalyst for self-determination was the threat to treaties and Indigenous special status posed by *The White Paper* of 1969 during Prime Minister P. E. Trudeau's term, which recommended drastic changes to the Indian Act. Indigenous responses to *The White Paper* “became the single most powerful catalyst of the Indian nationalist movement, launching it into a

determined force for nativism – a reaffirmation of a unique cultural heritage and identity” (Weaver, 1981, p. 171 as cited in St. Denis, 2007).

The differential education achievement levels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students were noted since the 1940s by government officials and remained constant until the National Indian Brotherhood, led by George Manuel, presented a policy paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education* (1972) that outlined the principles and goals of Indigenous education for Indigenous peoples. The Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE) goals were wholistic, spanning the lifetime of Indigenous peoples with programs for nursery, grade school, vocational, adult education, and post-secondary education (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972). Many of these recommendations were introduced earlier in the *Red Paper* in response to the *White Paper* in 1970. Nearly fifty years have elapsed since these principles were articulated, and the federal government endorsed Indian Control of Indian Education with limited evidence of changes for the benefit of the Indigenous people. Improvements are happening, although more slowly than initially hoped.

Pidgeon, Munoz, Kirkness, and Archibald (2013) reflect on the past forty years since ICIE was endorsed with a mixed review. Improvements were noted in teacher education and preparation for meeting the needs of Indigenous students. Although the ICIE was clear in outlining its principles and requests, “the federal government remains indifferent to its responsibility” (Pidgeon et al., 2013, p. 15) and claims a social responsibility, not a legal obligation. Pidgeon et al. stated, “the federal government’s move to decrease responsibility is another example of the tensions between two worldviews and two sovereign nations, attempting to speak together but with the government only hearing, seeing, and interpreting issues from their perspective” (p. 16). In their article, Kirkness expressed disappointment that graduation rates are still low and identified grades eight and nine as the main bottleneck for Indigenous students. Kirkness explained that the curriculum and pedagogy, as currently experienced by Indigenous students in what she calls the colonial education system, is the reason for the lower educational outcomes. She expressed a need to focus on the trades to provide employment opportunities for people on reserves and school funding at par with provincial schools. The catalyst document ICIE did not achieve as much traction as anticipated. Kirkness was part of the initial discussions of the ICIE and recalled resistance to develop the policy by the Federal government at the time as a means of maintaining the status quo. Pigeon et al. (2013) explained, “the ongoing power

differences of relations between the federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments” (p. 29) maintain tensions and ongoing colonial practices.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996), set forth many recommendations in a wide variety of areas for the improvement of education for Indigenous students. Although sincere efforts were recognized in various initiatives, RCAP noted that still “too many youth do not complete high school, they do not have skills for employment, and they do not have the language and cultural knowledge of their people” (Volume 3, p. 434). According to RCAP, Indigenous youth in public schools “frequently encounter racist attitudes and behaviors that undermine their self-esteem” (Volume 5, p. 485). Over twenty years have passed since these prudent recommendations were offered, with minimal changes for the benefit of the Indigenous people.

Most recently, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed in 2008 as a result of the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. The survivors of the residential schools were empowered to share their stories about education in residential schools. Education through residential schools was a means to assimilate Indigenous peoples. Since education was the tool to oppress Indigenous people, and the means to utilize the education curriculum to miseducate people for many years by omitting Indigenous people and their knowledge, it is of paramount importance that education is the key to reconciliation (Circles for Reconciliation, 2020). Senator Murray Sinclair, chair of the TRC, reported:

Mainstream Canadians see the dysfunction of Aboriginal communities, but they have no idea how that happened, what caused it, or how government contributed to that reality through residential schools and the policies and laws in place during their existence. Our education system, through omission or commission, has failed to do that and misunderstanding, ignorance, and racism has resulted on the one hand, and shame, humiliation, a lack of self-respect and anger has occurred, on the other. (Circles for Reconciliation, 2020, para. 21)

The Principles of Reconciliation and Calls to Action were released in 2015, and education was among the primary Calls to Action. The federal government was to prioritize funding to address the improvement of educational attainment levels and success rates within one generation and provide adequate funding for Indigenous students seeking post-secondary education. In addition, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report (2015) presented Calls to Action specific to education for reconciliation. Item #62 calls upon governments in collaboration with Survivors, and Indigenous peoples to provide “age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools,

Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada" (2015, p. 331). Action #63 calls for the "developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools" (2015, p. 331). Call to Action #7 to "eliminate educational and employment gaps", # 10 ii to improve education attainment levels and success rates (p. 320-321) and #63, item ii. relates specifically to this research in the "sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history." Although this research began before the release of the TRC report, this research delved into becoming informed about the culturally responsive curriculum and Caucasian teachers becoming aware of their potential biases and a role in assisting Indigenous students in succeeding in education. Both RCAP and TRC have provided insight into what Indigenous peoples see as challenges and barriers within the existing educational systems in Canada, and also outline a range of solutions.

2.4 Statistics: Narrowing or Widening the Gap?

As earlier mentioned in the Terminology section of this chapter, success can take on many different definitions. Marie Battiste, stated, "I have aimed my research and discursive arrow not at teachers or their methods, but largely at the federal and provincial systems and the policy choices and the inequities coming from them" (2013, p. 14). Benchmarks such as graduation rates are utilized by government, school divisions and their schools, parents, and students. Another Indigenous scholar, Verna Kirkness (1998), identified that the "3Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic" were the focus of Canadian public education that excluded traditional Indigenous education (p. 12). Although a change in the Canadian educational system is occurring slowly and improvements are statistically noted as *closing the gap*, other academics argue that educational policies are resulting in "widening the void rather than closing the gap" (Cherubini, Hodson, Manley-Casimir & Muir, p. 329, 2010). According to the Canadian 2016 census, more than 1.67 million Canadians identify themselves as Indigenous, and Indigenous peoples are the fastest-growing population in Canada, growing by 42.5% between 2006 and 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016). The National Household Survey (2011), indicated that there are educational gains; however, comparing Indigenous populations aged 25 to 64 with less than high school between 2006 to 2011 saw an increase from 189,395 to 236,770 (Gordon & White, 2014). Within the same age group (Indigenous populations aged 25 to 64), 33.5% of the total

Indigenous population in 2011 had no certificate, diploma, or degree (Kelly-Scott, 2016). Indigenous students made gains in postsecondary education, improving from 7.7% in 2006, to 10.9% in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017).

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education in 2017 reported that “more students are graduating from high school in Saskatchewan, but the rate for Indigenous students remains more than 20 percentage points lower than the province’s long-term goal” (CBC, 2017) representing a graduate rate increase from 41.9 percent in 2015-16 to 43.2 percent in 2016-17. More recently, a Star Phoenix report indicated that high school graduation rates were continuing to rise for Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan, the Deputy Minister of Education, Rob Currie, reporting that graduation rates for Indigenous students have increased by 58 percent (Levy, 2019). In 2011, 42% of Saskatchewan Indigenous people aged 25 to 64 had a certificate, diploma, or degree from a trade school, college or university, compared to 60% among non-Indigenous people (Kelly-Scott, 2016). The Canadian numbers were 48.4% compared to 64.7% (NHS, 2011). The latest report card on Saskatchewan education improvements are echoed in the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Plan for 2018-19 wherein achieving goals set to “reduce the difference in Grade 12 graduation rates between First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and non-Indigenous students in the Prekindergarten to Grade 12 system by 50% by 2020” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018, p. 7). To achieve this goal, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education has been collaborating since 2014 with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners, school divisions, and Indigenous education authorities through the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) tracking progress and gaining momentum through the provincial initiative *Following Their Voices* (www.followingtheirvoices.ca).

Other researchers are concerned with the types of assessments used to measure academic success for Indigenous people that are not culturally appropriate (Claypool & Preston, 2011; Cottrell & Orlowski, 2013; Johnston & Claypool, 2010; Miller, 2018; Papp, 2020). Calver (2015) expressed concerns that extrapolate the effects of lower education attainment for Indigenous peoples and the impact this will have on the Canadian economy. University of Saskatchewan economist Eric Howe predicted Indigenous populations reaching a majority in Saskatchewan in a few decades (2006) and more recently suggested that achieving equitable outcomes for Indigenous learners would boost Saskatchewan’s economy by \$90 billion (Warick, 2016). The question remains: How will educational improvements and reconciliation between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people occur to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students? The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), Chief Bobby Cameron, and Eric Howe agreed that the provincial government must safeguard existing programs and bring together industry, the federal government, and First Nation leaders to invest in Indigenous education and job training. More recently, in 2019, Chief Cameron and Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation president, Patrick Maze, collaborated to petition for the provincial and federal governments to immediately increase investment and a commitment to address the Indigenous graduation gap (Modjeski, 2019).

Pioneering Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have laid out various recommendations documenting what can help Indigenous students succeed in school (Battiste, 2010, 2012, 2013; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, 2009; Cherubini, 2014; Cottrell & Hardie, 2019; Demmert, 2011; Kanu, 2002, 2006, 2011; Papp, 2016, 2020; Pelletier, Cottrell, & Hardie, 2013; Pete & Longman, 2013). Research also notes that the majority of teachers remain white and female, perpetuating a disconnect between a predominantly Caucasian teaching profession and increasingly diverse student populations. Teachers' efficacy can be dependent on their perceptions of the capacity of Indigenous students to learn. In some cases, they subscribe to deficit theorizing that places blame on the students (Pelletier et al., 2013). The voices of the Indigenous students convey evidence of racism and inequality, and schools have long been noted as tools for political maintenance of the status quo (Berryman et al., 2014; Pete & Longman, 2013). Hegemonic interests have changed little over the centuries. As with the residential schools, they have been utilized as a means of assimilation and colonization. Researchers viewed residential schools as the precursor to intergenerational marginalization, racism, and poverty. They stated, "the legacies of colonialism are ubiquitous and tenacious. The trauma of colonization and the residential school system remains embedded in the lives of Indigenous Peoples through direct experience and intergenerational transmission" (Sasakamoose, Bellegarde, Sutherland, Pete, McKay-McNabb, 2017). The residual impact of colonization is intergenerational poverty, and the effects of poverty are far-reaching, as described in the next section.

2.5 Impact of Poverty

The Conference Board of Canada (2014) reported that one in seven Canadian children live in poverty. Canadian child poverty ranks 15 out of 17 among other peer countries, only surpassed by Italy and the United States. Macdonald and Wilson (2013) reported that Indigenous children in Canada are 2.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to live in poverty. Saskatchewan has the third-highest provincial child poverty in Canada, and one-third of these children live in situations wherein their families are full-time and full-year employed (Cottrell and Orlowski, 2013; Douglas & Gingrich, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2013;). Gingrich (2016) reported on the 175,015 Saskatchewan self-identified Indigenous persons in the 2016 Census, 36% were considered living in poverty compared to 9% of non-Indigenous persons.

Academic research has unambiguously established the negative impact of colonization and residential schools on Indigenous people of Canada, including the intergenerational and cumulative effects of poverty (Barnes, Josefowitz, & Cole, 2006; Battiste, 2010, 2012, 2013; Cottrell & Orlowski, 2013; Ermine, 2007; McQuaid, Bombay, McInnis, Humeny, Matheson, & Arniman, 2017; Nelson & Wilson, 2017; Orlowski & Cottrell, 2015; Sasakamoose et al., 2017; Silver, 2013). Indigenous children in Canada are more likely to come from low-income families. In Canada, 41% and Saskatchewan 51% of Indigenous children under the age of 6 come from low-income families (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010). Howe (2006) has predicted an Indigenous majority population in Saskatchewan within a few decades, and if lower education levels persist, poverty will also persist or increase, exponentially straining taxpayers. Cottrell and Orlowski (2013) posit that poverty is racialized in Saskatchewan. According to Plante & Sharp (2014), in 2010, the cost of poverty in Saskatchewan was \$3.8 billion.

Given the significant disparities in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in Saskatchewan, there is a need to address the contextual socioeconomic factors that affect educational outcomes (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2015). Richards (2014) explained that achievement levels do not tell the whole story and stated, “it is, of course, unfair to place the entire burden on low education outcomes on schools. The socioeconomic conditions of children’s families matter, the resources available to schools matter” (p. 3). Researchers have documented that segregated and marginalized students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds experience disparities that affect their overall education. The disparities include unsatisfactory school performance, school absence, lower reading levels, significant health concerns, as well as

long-term impact that could lead to learning and behaviour disorders (Bartlett, 2015; Barton & Coley, 2009; Burger, 2010; Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Carrion & Wong, 2012; Milteer & Ginsburg, 2012; Preston, Cottrell, Pelletier, & Pearce, 2012; Shields, 2004; Shields & Mohan, 2008; Stanford University Education, 2011; The Conference Board of Canada, 2014). Children living in poverty are disadvantaged. Lower educational levels are the outcome (Mayor & Suarez, 2019), including the deficit-thinking of teachers regarding their students' ability to learn, the intergenerational effects of residential schools, and the scars that parents still carry. In some urban or inner-city communities, the needs of children will vary sharply compared to suburban communities. Some basic needs, such as food and school supplies, may not be available to children coming from impoverished homes. Research is clear that children from disadvantaged families have fewer academic skills, less developed social skills, their school readiness is lower, and these children experience difficulties in school (Burger, 2010; Howe, 2000; Niles, Byers, & Kruegar, 2007; Preston et al., 2012).

The vicious cycle of low education levels for Indigenous peoples confines them to unemployment or low-paying employment that results in ongoing poverty or the working poor (Carr-Stewart, 2003). Stagnant minimum wages and inflated living costs make it difficult to make ends meet, and this results in more Indigenous children growing up in poverty. Mayor and Suarez (2019), in their review of numerous studies, established that socioeconomic status (SES) “is significant in determining the magnitude and direction of educational opportunity gaps” (p. 56). The lower the SES, the lower the achievement levels for students. It has been established that higher education levels equate to higher income levels (Sharpe, Arsenault, Lapointe, & Cowan, 2009; Steeves et al., 2010).

Poverty is not a lifestyle choice or culture. It is a multifaceted web caused not only by a shortage of income, but a consequence of colonization and marginalization experienced intergenerationally by Indigenous people. Living in poverty is to survive the “racial and economic caste systems” (Hammond, 2015) through coping mechanisms identified by behaviours that include addictions, violence, suicide, low education levels, high unemployment, high incarceration, physical, and emotional abuse (Barnes, et al., 2006; Brokenleg, 2012; Carrion & Wong, 2012; Hallett, Chandler, & Lalonde, 2007; Hammond, 2015; McQuaid et al., 2017; Sasakamoose et al., 2017; Silver, 2013).

2.6 So what?

The lower graduation rates of Indigenous students are a source of critical concern in Canada, and specifically in the Saskatchewan context. If Indigenous people will represent a majority of the population in Saskatchewan within a few decades, and the graduation rates remain at lower levels, the implications for the provincial economy will be disastrous. There is evidence that a student's success in school also is an indicator of success in life generally into adulthood. The coping mechanism previously mentioned distresses the students' mental state and ability to learn, and ultimately, they struggle to succeed in school. These challenges are further linked to emotional and behavioural disorders and the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon (Bartlett, 2015; Gebhard, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Ogundele, 2018; Preston, Carr-Stewart, & Bruno, 2012; Stanford University Education, 2011). The school-to-prison pipeline is alive and well as evidenced by incarceration rates for both Indigenous men and women that are estimated to be ten times higher than non-Indigenous adults (Gebhard, 2012; Government of Canada, 2013) in the Canadian context and increasing significantly in other parts of the world because of racial inequalities and impoverished youth (Barnes & Motz, 2018; Mallett, 2017; McCarter, 2017). At the Saskatchewan Penitentiary, 63.9% of the inmates were Indigenous, while the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon counted 55.7% of the patients were Indigenous (Government of Canada, 2013). The factors contributing to the over-representation of Indigenous people in correctional facilities include the lingering effects of the residential school system, child welfare system, cultural identity struggles, poverty, dropout rates, and negative school experiences.

Research has told us a great deal about what schools can do to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students, but the missing piece seems to be how? What does this look like in a classroom? This research was undertaken to provide a glimpse of how teachers, through their classroom practices, contribute to successful outcomes for Indigenous students. This glimpse was provided by talking to teachers and seeking their voices. The changes that were incurred in the school, and in particular, the attitudes of the teachers, witnessed how their change in attitude affected the larger context of the students within their schools. For this reason, what needs to be considered first are the attitudes and perceptions of non-Indigenous peoples about Indigenous peoples of Canada. The next section will present the opinions of non-Indigenous

peoples of Canada based on studies that gathered information on attitudes and perceptions outside and inside the classrooms.

2.7 Attitudes and perceptions

Recent research noted that over the past few decades, non-Indigenous people had gained a heightened awareness of Indigenous history and culture and knowledge of treaty rights (Environics Institute, 2016), providing an overview of the public opinion of non-Indigenous people about Indigenous peoples in Canada. The survey questionnaire and interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of the general knowledge and attitudes regarding Indigenous peoples. The level of knowledge varied; however, there was some awareness regarding residential schools, and one-quarter of respondents reported that “their impressions are now more positive than before because of what they have learned” (p. 3). This report also indicated that “non-Aboriginal awareness of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its conclusions are surprisingly low” (p. 3). The public also expressed that challenges experienced by Indigenous peoples were on par with other marginalized groups such as Blacks or Muslims. The report concluded, “there is also ambivalence in public attitudes about the significance of the current challenges facing Aboriginal peoples” (p. 3). Furthermore, the majority of non-Indigenous people do not claim to benefit from the discrimination and “believe that Aboriginal peoples have an unhealthy sense of entitlement” (p. 47). This study claimed that the sampling and results are accurate to the general population to “within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples” (p. 2).

In Saskatchewan, treaty teachings in public schools have been embraced by the Ministry of Education, and treaty teaching kits have been prepared for the schools’ teachers to support reconciliation. A report indicated, “government officials said Saskatchewan was the first province to make treaty education mandatory for all students” (Piller, 2018). The treaty kits are to provide educational assistance for creating lesson plans and accessing resources. The Saskatchewan treaty commissioner, Mary Culbertson, believes the teaching guide could potentially change a generation’s mindset about Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing resulting in positive changes and reconciliation; however, more teachings at the grade school level needs to happen. Alternatively, a more neo-liberal approach was taken by the past

Saskatchewan Education Minister, Bronwyn Eyre, in which she “suggested there might be too much ‘infusion’ of First Nations history in school curriculum” (Graham, 2017).

With regards to Saskatchewan educators, a recent study entitled *Attitudes and perceptions of Saskatchewan educators and non-educators towards the importance of First Nations and Métis [FNM] Achievement* (Pete & Longman, 2013) conducted a province-wide online survey focused on Saskatchewan educators. Participation was low, and this was interpreted as a “lack of interest and commitment to FNM education on the part of some mainstream educators” (p. 10). St. Denis (2010), in a *Study of Aboriginal teachers’ professional knowledge and experience in Canadian schools*, reported non-Indigenous teachers “used multicultural policies to dismiss and discount the value of Aboriginal content” (p. 35). St. Denis indicated the participants rationalized the non-Indigenous support as stemming from systemic challenges to include Indigenous content into the curriculum caused by a combination of lack of funding, lack of administrative support, and a lack of value placed on Indigenous content. Pete & Longman (2013), on the contrary, viewed such claims as “an easy out to fully meeting the professional obligations for inclusion and participation in one’s professional development” (p. 85). By both accounts, the attitudes and perceptions can be explained as a lack of interest. St. Denis (2010) noted “a prerequisite for change to occur [in the school system] is the acknowledgment of the problem, but according to many participants, the lack or slow integration of Aboriginal content and perspectives was still not recognized as a problem worthy of attention” (p. 35). More recently, Orłowski and Cottrell (2015) reported that student applicants into the teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan had benefitted from the treaty teachings that had been implemented in Saskatchewan since 2007 and were better prepared to work with Indigenous students.

In general, these studies and reports suggest that all teachers, particularly those with Indigenous students, should confront their attitudes and perceptions of Indigenous peoples and address the *elephant in the classroom*. As teachers, we should be committed to equitable opportunities for all students. If so, why are the outcomes not equal for all students? Do teachers invest in all students equally? Do all students come to school from the same home, background, parents, experiences? Based on the statistics provided earlier of academic achievement, especially when Indigenous peoples are compared to non-Indigenous people, the differences are staggering. The answer to the questions just asked is a resounding **NO!** It may be time to look at

the elephant in the classroom and consider different strategies and attitudes that will help all students excel in the school.

2.8 Creating a Caring, Compassionate, and Nurturing Education Environment

Research has indicated that teacher attitude toward their students and stereotyping ethnic groups, gender, socio-economic status, and colour can essentially set the stage for students to not succeed in school. Teachers can create a self-fulfilling prophecy for their students, where whatever the teacher believes to be the capacity of the student will be proven by the student (Riley & Ungerleider, 2012). Specifically, if Indigenous students do not succeed in school, the deficit thinking attitude contributes to the failure, and the student cannot learn (Silver et al., 2002). Also, Eurocentric practices and pedagogy marginalize Indigenous students, and educational attainment levels are lower than non-Indigenous students as a result (Cherubini, 2014; Silver, 2013). MacKinnon (2013) affirms that one of the most important factors that can contribute to a better learning environment is to provide healing from past negative educational experiences to build pride.

To create an educational climate that enhances a positive environment begins with care and trust (Allen, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Papp, 2016, 2020). Students will thrive when they feel supported and are approached with a positive attitude (Gay, 2010; Papp, 2016, 2020). Other literature has identified a respectful and parent-student relationship will also have positive effects on student learning outcomes (Papp, 2016). Hammond (2015) stated, “at the core of positive relationships is trust. Caring is the way that we can generate trust that builds relationships. We have to not only care *about* students in a general sense but also actively care *for* them in a physical and emotional sense” (p. 73). Care then can be identified as verbal and non-verbal. Once a relationship has been built on the engaging practice of caring, Gay (2010) stated that care “positively affects one’s well-being” (p. 48). Hattie’s (2012) meta-analysis provided evidence of a strong correlation between students’ academic performance and a positive teacher-student relationship.

2.8 Another Prologue: Before the Research

Before research can begin for the partial completion of a Doctorate in Philosophy, a proposal must be submitted to a committee for approval. The research proposal defense was

delayed six months due to unforeseen administrative challenges. The delay resulted in the inability to conduct the research in Saskatoon, SK, within a reasonable timeframe. The intention was to defend the research proposal in the early part of the year, obtain ethics approval, and begin the Canadian component of the interviews in the late spring before the conclusion of the academic year. When the committee finally approved the research in June, and the research ethics application was approved, the school year had concluded. The academic school year runs from September to June, and this delayed the commencement of the research until the following school year.

In October, I approached the selected Saskatoon high school and the divisional administration. I found the principal was new, and most of the teachers that initially were teaching at the school had transferred to other schools in the division. Most of the teachers that were currently teaching at the school were new and so did not fit the criteria set for the research. Participants for this research were to have taught at the school for a minimum of one to two academic years. This criterion was set so the teachers would have a good understanding of the school mechanics, its culture, the students, and a working knowledge of all the players and support services that potentially have contributed to the students' success at the school.

Since the administrative staff had also changed, and although the school division had approved this research proposal, the principal was not able to support this research. Throughout one academic year, and the six-month delay, the research situation changed drastically. The superintendent of the school offered support by contacting the teachers who had transferred to other schools and requesting their participation on my behalf. For confidentiality reasons, I did not know their names or their contact information and was poised to wait and hope for a response.

I had only one response at this critical point for this research. I hoped that this one willing person would create a snowball effect, meaning one participant would introduce me to other key participants to fulfill the research requirements. I required a reasonable number of participants to saturate the findings through interviews. I proceeded with the faith that the teachers who were passionate about their students' success would come forward, and they would want their story told. I found that one willing candidate did snowball into more and more respondents, and what was a challenging beginning turned into a large and cooperative group of seven participants.

The New Zealand component of this research was conducted independently and through a different research ethics approval. The research in New Zealand occurred first. Access to the school was guarded, as was the case in the Saskatoon school, where gaining permission was at the discretion of the *gatekeepers*. It was through a serendipitous series of events and connections that I gained access on a Friday evening to a meeting in Saskatoon on the next day, Saturday morning. I had the opportunity to meet Mere Berryman, an iconic New Zealand researcher, and educator. The meeting, held at the Saskatoon Public School Board office, was to advise interested Ministry of Education officials, school boards, and researchers about the Te Kotahitanga project from New Zealand and become the foundational meeting to conduct research in Saskatchewan and report *Seeking Their Voices* in 2014. The report presented the findings from interviewing engaged and non-engaged students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and set forth recommendations.

Further invitations to meetings eventually allowed me the opportunity to speak to Dr. Berryman about researching in New Zealand at the school that had gained international recognition for improving the achievement levels of Indigenous students within approximately four years. These meetings laid the groundwork for the Saskatchewan research, modelled according to the Te Kotahitanga New Zealand research, giving way to the provincial initiative and education sector strategic plan (ESSP) *Following Their Voices*. As they say, and the rest is history. It does make me think that the stars do align, and like the tumblers of a lock, when in the correct position, the key will open the door. The second half of this chapter will culminate with an in-depth discussion of the research methodologies that were utilized.

2.9 Research Design and Methodology

2.9.1 Introduction

Research design and research methodology are occasionally used interchangeably; however, they are distinct in meaning (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2005). Research design can be synonymous with a blueprint or a roadmap for the research and, more specifically, “refers to the plan used to examine the question of interest” (p. 22) or how the study will be conducted. The research design further connects to the theoretical paradigms, methods of inquiry, and collection. Research methodology refers to “the principles, procedures, and practices that govern research”

(p. 22) or the details of how the data will be collected and the data analyzed. It should be noted that even within dominant works related to research, such as E. Babbie, E. O'Sullivan, and J. Creswell, these representative works present similarities and differences between the scholars' approaches regarding definitions and steps in research design, and varying perspectives on research methods, and research methodology. For the purpose of this research, the approach offered by Creswell (2008) will be adopted as it proposes a framework for design that offers three main considerations: philosophical worldviews, research methods, and strategies of inquiry. According to Creswell, the three types of research designs are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. This research adopted the qualitative research design. The potential strategies of inquiry for a qualitative research design include approaches such as narrative research, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory studies, and case studies. The remainder of this section will discuss in more detail the strategy of inquiry (methodology), the case study approach, and the methods incorporated at each case site. The philosophical worldviews are discussed as related to the social constructivist approach and the critical race theory lens as it applies to the forthcoming papers and this section concludes with a discussion of Indigenous methodology.

2.9.2 Research Design: The Qualitative Case Study

A qualitative research design was selected and the strategy for inquiry or methodology chosen was a case study (Stake, 2005) that was implemented for each location, permitting the exploration of data sources at two discrete sites. This allowed for a detailed and in-depth examination of each case that, according to Stake (1995), would “maximize[d] what we can learn” (p. 4). Stake noted that “often an unusual case helps illustrate matters we overlook in typical cases” (p. 4). A case study is recommended to focus on a specific natural setting or situation where assertions are made from a small database (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) further defines a case study as being a bounded system that is characteristically defined as [w]holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathic (p. 47, 48) providing a deep and rich understanding of the context. Furthermore, case studies align with constructivism recognizing that the participants “construct their understandings from experience” (p. 99) providing multiple perspectives of those involved in the case study.

Utilizing the guidance of Dr. Stake (1995), the approaches used were intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case studies. He explained an intrinsic approach identifies the case as dominant to gain a better understanding of that specific case. Stake (1995) stated, “with intrinsic case study, there is little interest in generalizing to the species; the abiding interest is in the particular case, yet there too the case researcher examines a part or the whole, seeking to understand what the specimen is, how the specimen works” (pp. 36-37). This means the researcher has an intrinsic interest in the unique situation of the case. An instrumental case study approach focuses on a specific issue, situation, or phenomenon to provide the researcher with deeper insight and “we start and end with issues [being] dominant” (Stake, 1995, p. 16). He further states that “issue statements will sometimes appear as *cause and effect* relationships” (emphasis in original, p. 18). When more than one case is to be studied this is called a collective case study. Dr. Stake provided this explanation of collective case study:

I use the term “collective” or “multiple” case study when I gather several single cases together (several schools or several teachers) to study some commonality or generality across them. I may be interested greatly in some of the cases but instead of doing several individual case studies, I have chosen to do a single collective case study that has some grand theme or theory or phenomenon in all of the cases, perhaps in rather different ways. Each of the single cases has its unique issues but at least one issue is shared by all the cases. (personal correspondence Dr. R. E. Stake, June 23, 2020)

In the manuscripts that follow all three types of case studies were utilized. Stake (2005) stated, “there is no hard and fast line distinguishing intrinsic from instrumental, but rather a zone of combined purpose” (p. 445). The two case studies, from two different international contexts, allowed for the collection of robust documentation and analysis providing the basis for the third comparative document on professional development that was a collective case study.

2.9.3 Research Methods

At the New Zealand location, I was a partial participant and had the privilege to spend time at the school, assisting students with their classwork. This role helped me establish a rapport with the participants, gain a sense of the school dynamics and the classroom culture, and witness teacher-student and student-student interactions. I was invited to attend a variety of school meetings and witnessed comradery and genuine care among staff for their students to succeed (see Papp, 2016). I kept a journal of the activities and observations in the classroom. After approximately one week, I asked permission to begin the interview process. In Saskatchewan,

the situation was very different, as explained in the earlier section, *Another Prologue: Before the Research*. Since only one participant was still teaching at the school, I did go to the school and observed the activities and the teacher-student interactions.

At each location, one semi-structured interview was held that lasted from one to two hours in length, with seven participants at each location. More details are provided under the *Participation* section. At the New Zealand location, since I had spent time in the classroom with the teacher and students, I was also able to probe by asking additional questions to gain a better understanding of what I had witnessed in the classroom interactions, which added richness to the findings. The interviews were recorded with two devices, and I personally transcribed the recordings. The typed transcription was provided to each participant as a member check to assure that I had transcribed correctly, and the opinions were presented accurately. The questions that were asked at both locations are in Appendix A. The transcripts were then coded and recoded to identify the key concepts that emerged.

2.9.4 Paradigm: Worldview of Constructivism

A research paradigm identifies the underlying beliefs or assumptions held that guide the research. They are broad principles that create the framework for the research. For this research, a constructivist worldview was selected. Constructivist design “focuses on the perspectives, feelings, and beliefs of the participants” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 237) revealing rich experiences and depth in an “attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Underlying assumptions informing the constructivist paradigm are that “knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process and that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience as much as possible from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1998, p. 221). This was achieved by first viewing the interactions in the classrooms and, through the interview process, was able to garner a better understanding of what I witnessed with the point of view of the participants.

The element of ontology within the constructivist worldview reveals the nature of reality to be the acceptance of multiple socially constructed realities, and the manuscripts presented here offer a variety of quotes from the participants. Creswell (2014) explained the constructivist approach to qualitative research is a perspective that endorses different views and interpretations

that will be varied, where participants will provide subjective meaning to his or her experiences. These interpretations and experiences do not happen in isolation but through interactions with others, providing for the term social constructivism (Creswell, 2014).

Epistemology addresses how we come to have knowledge and our thinking or knowing. How we know something is based on and tied to ontology, the nature of a participant's reality, and the multiple realities are illustrated through direct quotes from the participants, further exemplifying what is real and what can be interpreted as their reality. In the New Zealand context, I was able to spend full days in the classrooms with the participants and their students and witness the relationships between the teacher and his or her student. Data was collected through observation and interviews at the school site. I was involved in collaborating with the participants within the context in which they operate, bringing multiple perspectives together, interpreting, and providing reflexivity to the process. In Saskatchewan, I was on one occasion in the classroom with the teacher and her students. From an epistemological standpoint, I was able to understand the nature of how the participants' knowledge was created.

The axiology, according to Wilson (2008), "is the ethics or morals that guide the search for knowledge and judge which information is worthy of searching for. One's view of the ontology will be reflected in what knowledge is worth seeking in order to better understand reality" (p. 34). The ethics of the knowledge gained further is scrutinized by how that knowledge will be gained and, ultimately, how that knowledge will be used. Also, there is the potential for biases that I may bring to this research and its interpretations. The section on *Reflexivity* provides an in-depth discussion and greater detail.

2.9.5 Theoretical Lens: Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) explains the Indigenous people's experiences of race and racism are deeply rooted through actions of the dominant society through power, and privilege, and "... They [race and racism] also are ingrained and deeply embedded in the policies, practices, procedures, and institutionalized systems of teacher education" (Milner, 2008, p. 332). Milner encouraged researchers to uncover the effects that race and racism have on the realities of teacher education and, ultimately, in the classrooms where typically issues of power play out. The purpose of CRT is to confront injustices, and it generally underpins research seeking to animate more equitable outcomes in diverse contexts to advance social justice. The

constructivist approach probes and scrutinizes the data and “locates the research process and product in historical, social, and situational conditions” (Charmaz, 2017, p. 34) which is particularly well aligned with critical inquiry and reform “that seeks to expose, oppose, and redress forms of oppression, inequality, and injustice” (p. 35). Furthermore, critical theory and constructivism allow for a mutual consensus to be established through interaction with the subject participants. Wilson (2008) affirms:

In both critical theory and constructivism, knowledge in itself is not seen as the ultimate goal, rather the goal is the change that this knowledge may help to bring about: Both paradigms share the axiology that research is not seen as worthy or ethical if it does not help to improve the reality of the research participants. (p. 37)

In both case studies, the students of these teacher participants had typically faced stereotyping, racism, and negative school experiences at other schools, and the intentional changes at both schools improved the students’ educational outcomes.

In this research, the teachers were the catalysts that brought about a transformation through their change in attitudes, actions, and teaching practices that addressed the racism previously experienced by their students, which allowed their students to succeed. The changes in teaching practices, classroom relations, and cultural celebrations connected with the Indigenous students' desire to experience positive education experiences that resulted in increased success. The relationships improved the students’ agency, and the subsequent student successes were a result of the synergy created between the teachers and their students, resulting in improved educational outcomes.

2.9.6 Indigenous Methodologies

This research has been undertaken to assist in improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students by discovering what teaching practices and strategies were most effective. Teacher participants were not required to be Indigenous; however, the case sites were selected because they were serving predominantly Indigenous student populations. The research design and methodology, as previously explained in this chapter, although defined as Western by terminology, also resonates with certain Indigenous research approaches, and this section will draw out some similarities.

I am not Indigenous, but I respectfully have considered the meaning of Indigenous research and how it is defined. An Indigenous scholar, Weber-Pillwax, explained that

undertaking Indigenous research firstly must be for the benefit of the community and stated, “the research methods have to mesh with the community and service the community” (2001, p. 168). Furthermore, she asserted, “I cannot be involved in research and scholarly discourse unless I know that such work will lead to some change *out there* in that community” (p. 169). As the first chapter of this dissertation has described, my position is to be a collaborator and an ally to try to make a difference and explore practices for improvements in educational outcomes for Indigenous peoples. First and foremost, the motive for this research journey was to share and give back.

At the beginning of this research, it was imperative to communicate my reasons and rationale with the gatekeepers to access the schools. In both cases, these people were Indigenous. I had the privilege to seek advice and ask for direction in preparation for conducting this research in both New Zealand and Saskatchewan. Dr. Mere Berryman was instrumental in arranging the study conducted in New Zealand, and the study was endorsed as being potentially beneficial for Indigenous students. Accordingly, the research was agreed to be purposeful for the Indigenous community and its students. My intention was to give back to the Indigenous peoples and their communities (Acoose, Blunderfield, Dell, & Desjarlais, 2009; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Wilson, 2001, 2008).

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) recommends that scientific research be reported back to Indigenous communities to share knowledge, which is based on the principle of reciprocity and feedback. Upon completion, the findings were reviewed and discussed with the aforementioned Indigenous leaders, with the hope that the results would provide practical guidance for the school division, Indigenous communities, and all teachers of Indigenous students. Kovach (2010) stated:

In re-examining relationships that serve knowledge, Indigenous inquiry calls forth the inherent stewardship responsibilities. In both its procedure and consequences, Indigenous inquiry asks researchers to demonstrate how research gives back to the individual and collective good. (p. 174)

The same stewardship aligns with the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) (FNIGC, 2020). More specifically, knowledge gathered was for the community, group, or in my case, the school and school division and the broader community, and we shared and managed the process through initial discussions. Furthermore, access to the information and initial data collected at each location were provided, and permission was requested to move forward with completing the manuscripts contained in this dissertation.

Before submission to the peer-reviewed journals, the protocol followed was to provide them with a copy of the document before submission and request their approval (FNIGC, 2020).

The qualitative research design, a Western terminology, emulates the narrative approach, which allowed participants to share their stories with me. According to Kovach (2010):

Indigenous methodologies can be situated within the qualitative landscape because they encompass characteristics congruent with other relational qualitative approaches (e.g., feminist methodologies, participatory action research) that in the research design value both process and content. This matters because it provides a common ground for Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to understand each other. (p. 25)

By selecting a qualitative research design, it is self-reflective for each participant and honours each participant's voice, and the philosophy honours multiple truths. Qualitative research is viewed as "congruent with a research approach that seeks *nisitohtamowin* (a Cree word for understanding) or 'self-in-relation'" (Graveline, 1998, p. 57 as cited in Kovach, 2010).

Another Western paradigm that was selected for this research was constructivism. Constructivism was chosen to value the participants' lived experiences and the multiple realities that they were to share. According to Wilson, Indigenous ontology aligns with constructivism. Wilson (2008) further explained that within "an Indigenous ontology there may be multiple realities, as in the constructivist research paradigm. The difference is that, rather than the truth being something that is "out there" or external, reality is the relationship that one has with the truth" (p. 73). Knowledge is based on relationships between things (Wilson, 2008). Further, Wilson (2001) stated, "storytelling and methods like personal narratives also fit the [Indigenous] epistemology because when you are relating a personal narrative, you are getting into a relationship with someone" (p. 178). Constructivist epistemology also represents a relationship between the researcher and the participants as the participants share their personal narratives in the interview process for the creation of new knowledge.

Furthermore, Indigenous methodology revolves around relational accountability: respect, reciprocity, and responsibility, according to Weber-Pillax (2001). Throughout my research, relational accountability guided the research process as I sought to build respectful relationships through the methods chosen, the relationship between the research participants and me with our diverse roles and responsibilities contributing to knowledge creation through sharing. Wilson (2008) identified that the two paramount components of an Indigenous research paradigm are relationality and relational accountability, and he presented a combination of personal narratives

alongside formal academic style in his book *Research is Ceremony*. I hope, similarly, that my first chapter offered the reader an opportunity to be a participant in my research journey as I shared my narrative and explained how that positioned me in relation to the research.

Employing Indigenous methodology often is contrary to university expectations. I have recognized that even Indigenous scholars have occasionally pursued a trade-off to align Indigenous research methods with the requirements of the academy (Wilson, 2008). According to Wilson (2008), writing down knowledge makes it concrete and unchangeable, implying the evolution of an idea or concept cannot happen. Research conducted by members of a university, specifically the University of Saskatchewan, must adhere to the Tri-Council Policy. Researchers must conform to ethical standards when human participants are involved by maintaining privacy and confidentiality, assuring the participants are not identifiable and utilizing anonymized presentation of information that protects the participant through a pseudonym. In contrast to university Research Ethics procedures with a concern for protecting the identity of participants, the Indigenous research paradigm holds that:

The participants did not want anonymity because they understood that the information imparted, or story offered, would lose its power without knowledge of the teller. The entire notion of relational accountability would have been lost had I not honoured the co-researchers by using their names. (Wilson, 2008, p. 130)

Although Western-style methodologies maintain anonymity, Indigenous methodology maintains respect, and the participant is honoured, and each participant's voice is honoured in a non-hierarchical approach by demonstrating respect and collaboration. The narratives or stories of qualitative research are congruent with the Indigenous worldview. Also, the choice of the coding style implemented when conducting this research honours the participants. The coding style *in vivo*, along with axial and comparative coding was used. In particular, *in vivo* is a verbatim coding that honours the participants' voices and is considered an Indigenous approach to research (Saldana, 2013). Saldana stated that *in vivo* coding represents researchers' attempts to "honor [to] the participant's voice . . . By coding with their actual words" (p. 91).

Furthermore, Western-style methods perpetuate a hierarchical worldview and have been described as adversarial in nature, specifically in higher learning institutions. This approach is foreign to Indigenous students and Indigenous methodology. Meyer, an Indigenous Hawaiian scholar, has explained that students in higher education are expected to find fault with other scholarly work and are challenged:

To question, argue, challenge, critically critique and use these adjectives in their dialogue about the work of others. The assumption is that if one can find fault with others, then one's own work will look better. There must be a winner and a loser. (Wilson, 2008, p. 57)

Western institutional approaches require a binary; otherwise, it is seen as anti-intellectual.

The following section will present the research purpose, research questions, and the details regarding site selection and participants. This part of the chapter will conclude with a discussion on reflexivity.

2.10 Research Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of the strategies that teachers have animated in their classrooms and which teachers have perceived to be successful in facilitating Indigenous students to attend school, remain in school, and persevere in graduating from high school.

The central research question directing this study for the first two papers was: What strategies have high school teachers implemented in the classroom and school that they perceive to have resulted in student engagement and improved educational achievement for their Indigenous students? Secondly, how did the pedagogies implemented in the classroom align with Indigenous approaches and 21st Century Pedagogy? The final paper that compares professional development in Saskatchewan and New Zealand took the answers to the first two papers and presented a comparative manuscript that focused on the following three main questions: How did teacher professional learning initiatives evolve at these schools? In what ways did teacher professional learning opportunities enhance the cultural responsiveness of educators within these schools? How did enhanced teachers' cultural responsiveness impact student engagement, attendance, and learning at these schools?

2.10.1 Site Selection

The sampling strategies employed for this study were based on prior information gained by the researcher about the schools' evidence-based outcomes through relationships with school leaders in Saskatchewan and New Zealand. In Saskatchewan, a previous project at the school in which I participated, garnered me with the knowledge of the school's dramatic improvements in

the quantitative measurements of improvements in school attendance, course credit achievements, and increased graduation rates. Further discussion with the division leader, led to a mutual agreement that research should be conducted at that site to document what attributed to the successes experienced. The New Zealand site was requested due to my involvement with the foundational meetings with the Ministry of Education in Saskatchewan to conduct research in Saskatchewan, similar to earlier research conducted in New Zealand that led to the Te Kotahitanga project and the development of the Effective Teacher Profile. At these meetings, I gained knowledge of the success experienced at the New Zealand school and knowledge of the international recognition received as a result of the implementation of the Effective Teacher Profile and the Te Kotahitanga philosophy. Later, at another meeting held in Saskatoon, I had a discussion with Dr. Berryman and the principal of the New Zealand school and was granted access to the site to conduct research.

The site selection was guided by identifying locations that the researcher could collect data to answer the research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested that “examples of sampling by case type are extreme-case, intensive-case, typical-case, unique-case, reputational-case, critical-case, and concept/theory-based sampling” (p. 327). The criterion used in the sites selected was to identify cases where Indigenous students were achieving quantifiable school success by way of credit completion. The sampling strategies employed to choose these schools were classified as an extreme case, unique case, and reputational case site selection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The schools were “extreme cases” based on the outstanding successes in grade improvements, course credits, and the dramatic increase in graduation rates. For the same reasons, the schools were considered “unique cases” by comparison to most other schools in Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand, where non-Indigenous students’ typically enjoyed greater success than their Indigenous counterparts.

The two schools selected were unique in that the changes implemented in classrooms and throughout the schools resulted in their Indigenous students experiencing exceptional educational success (based on credit attainment and persistence to graduation) within a few years. Statistics empirically endorsed the impacts of the administration’s and teachers’ approaches on student outcomes. Commonalities between Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand, and many other international contexts with similar Indigenous histories, demographic trajectories, educational inequities, and post-colonial tensions (See Papp & Cottrell, 2020) ensure that the implications of

these studies are potentially broad and significant. The significance of this research will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

2.10.2 Participation

In both case studies, the teacher participants were required to have taught at the school a minimum of one to two years. These criteria allowed the participants to have a good understanding of the school culture, the student supports, and for the participants to have participated in the professional development offered. A recently recruited teacher participant would not provide a rich interview with only a couple of month's experiences at the school. By having a couple of years of wholistic experience at the school, the participants would have witnessed the significantly improved learning outcomes for their students. Also, there was no requirement for the participants to be Indigenous or non-Indigenous as the focus was not on the teacher's racial identity but on teacher strategies. In both instances, the participants were a combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants.

Participant selection for the New Zealand case study was purposeful and convenience based. There were seven participants, five of whom were teachers, and three of the five held roles as both a teacher and administrator. They participated in one semi-structured interview that lasted approximately one hour. Also, one participant was a resource teacher of learning and behavior, and another participant was a restorative facilitator. The variety of positions held in the school offered a multiplicity of perspectives, which added depth, breadth, and richness to the data and insights that emerged. One of New Zealand case's seven participants self-identified as Indigenous. The participants' experience in the teaching profession ranged from 10 years to over 32 years, and the staff had worked together for a minimum of five years. As a result, the participants had participated in and experienced a transition from a school characterized dismal educational outcomes to a very different situation described by much more positive results.

Participant selection in Canada began with frustration as previously explained in the *Another Prologue: Before the Research*. Significant turnover at the Saskatchewan site meant that very few of the current staff met the criteria of having taught at the school for one to two years, while most former staff members had left the school and were teaching at different locations. Snowball sampling was utilized, and one respondent came forward at the beginning, followed by my request to be put in touch with other participants from the school and so on.

Snowball sampling eventually yielded six additional respondents who met the selection criteria and were willing to participate in the research. In Saskatchewan, Canada, seven participants participated in semi-structured interviews. All the interviews identified the division administrator as a critical piece to the changes and improvements at the Saskatchewan school, and I requested the division administrator be included as a research participant. Of the remaining six, two individuals were both school administrators and teachers, and four were classroom teachers. Two were female, five were male, and three had teaching experience ranging from 8 to 15 years, while the remaining had teaching experience that ranged from 23 to 30 years. Two teachers and the division leader self-identified as Indigenous peoples. The teacher participants taught together at the school ranging from four to six years and witnessed significant improvements in credit completion, attendance, and graduation rates, similar to the one already described in New Zealand (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015; Papp, 2016).

2.10.3 Reflexivity

The nature of qualitative research is an interpersonal interaction between the researcher and the participants of the study. In this process, the researcher must be aware of personal bias and the potential judgments that may influence the outcomes of the data collected. Since qualitative research requires human interaction, reflexivity or self-scrutiny must be exercised. Charmaz (2017, 2020) stresses that those people conducting research put reflexivity into practice. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined:

Reflexivity is a broad concept that includes rigorous examination of one's personal and theoretical commitments to see how they serve as resources for selecting a qualitative approach, framing the research problem, generating particular data, relating to participants, and developing specific interpretations. (p. 332)

They further explained that the reflexive screens begin with self-awareness and examination of how culture, age, gender, social status, education levels, and values would affect the interpretation of the data collection.

Reflexivity is a meta-analysis of the positionality of the researcher within the research process. Cox (2012) recommended researchers “to assess how their personal experiences and social position(s) shape their inquiry – from the framing of the research problem and the posing of questions to gathering and interpreting data (Findlay, 2002 as cited in Cox, 2012, p. 132).

Reflexivity is critical in establishing the validity of the research. In many cases, the researcher must reflect on their identity and assumptions from a personal and professional perspective.

Chapter 1 represented a reflective exercise. Reflexivity required me to look at my past life experiences while I examine the research problem. A part of the reflexivity is to reflect on the use and misuse of power and how it had affected me as a student and also “recognizing one’s position in the professional hierarchy, as this interlocks with other hierarchies such as those of disability, class, and race” (Chapman, 2010, p. 734). Reflexivity allows me to connect parts of my life to the experiences of others. Charmaz (2020) further recommended “paying attention to language helps researchers to position the data in their cultural context, and hence enrich the resulting analysis” (p. 170).

As a non-Indigenous researcher, I have explained my positionality and my investment in this research in the preceding chapter. It is my responsibility as a researcher to examine critically the educational institution, of which I belong, and other educational institutions, and how they perpetuate and reinforce power and privilege, often invisible, that comes with being White. Other White researchers have identified this as a challenge (Burleigh & Burm, 2013; Burm & Burleigh, 2017; McIntosh, 1988).

2.11 Research Ethics

The application to conduct research in New Zealand was approved in 2014 by the Behavioral Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan. The application to conduct research in Saskatoon, SK, Canada, was approved in 2015 by the Behavioral Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan. Approval was received from the superintendent at the appropriate school division level, principal of the school, and teacher participants. Teacher participants were assured of their anonymity, and pseudonyms replaced their names. The school names were also replaced by fictitious names, and any comments that might potentially identify the location of this research or the identities of the participants were intentionally removed. For the benefit of the reader, what follows is a guide to the delimitations and limitations of this dissertation.

2.12 Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations are controlled by the researcher and are to establish the boundaries of the research and to narrow the scope of the study (Creswell, 2003; Mauch & Park, 2003). Mauch and Park (2003) stated “delimitations are integral parts of the design because they set parameters; they tell the reader what will be included, what will be left out, and why” (p. 115). Delimitations are applied to manage the scope of the research.

Firstly, the research focused on one case study in Saskatchewan and one case study in New Zealand. These schools had been identified to have experienced above-average success empirically quantified by increased student attendance rates, increased course credit achievement, and increased graduation rates over a 2010 to 2014 timeframe (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015; Papp, 2016). At the Saskatchewan school, as explained in the Prologue to this chapter, many teachers had left the school, and the snowball sampling technique was the only method to reach the potential participants. Teacher participants came forward and volunteered their time to be interviewed and share their experiences in the classroom. In the New Zealand school, the teacher participants were purposefully sampled to collect data and were selected based on their reputation of student grade improvement and increased achievement levels. Many teachers were willing to participate in the research; however, not all teachers that were willing to participate were interviewed as saturation was reached in the data.

Secondly, the perspectives of the teachers were the focus of the study, and no students or families of the students were interviewed. The rationale for limiting participation to the teachers was to fill a gap in the research literature wherein teachers’ perspectives and insights were not as widely documented as were the voices of the Indigenous children. Also, the focus on teachers facilitated a shift in the literature from theorized “best practices” to real-life strategies that contributed to improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students in real-life classrooms.

Thirdly, the study delimited the participants to be teachers of the same school for a period of time of at least one year. The participants at the Saskatchewan, Canada school, and New Zealand school taught together from 2010 to 2014. Finally, the research was delimited theoretically within the constructivist paradigm employing a case study of each location based on a qualitative research design.

Limitations are situations or factors within the research study that are uncontrollable by the researcher and are to identify potential weaknesses that may emerge during the research and

affect the outcomes of the study (Creswell, 2003; Mauch & Park, 2003). Mauch and Park (2003) stated: “limitations typically surface as variables that cannot be controlled by the researcher and may limit or affect the outcome of the study” (p. 115).

The following limitations apply to this research. As the sole researcher, collector, and analyzer of the data, my perspective may influence the interpretation of the data collected. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews, site observations, and the field notes generated will be solely my responsibility to present in this study, and the nature of qualitative research is mediated through me and hence could be influenced by me. However, in every instance, the transcripts were member checked and verified for accuracy by the participants. In both cases, the principal or division administrator was provided with the interpreted data as well as the manuscripts resulting from data collection.

Also, the nature of qualitative research and the case study allowed me to consider the context. With semi-structured interviews, there is the capacity to ask for clarification of the information given by the participants to capture a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. The animation of meaning to the findings represents a co-construction process between the collection of interview responses and my interpretation.

Another limitation would be that this research represents two case studies of two schools and the teachers within a Canadian and New Zealand context. The sample size of participants is small, and the findings should not be over-generalized but instead represented as specific to the cultures of those schools. Instead of identifying teacher strategies that can be transferrable to other teachers, the dynamics may only be present and effective in particular schools. However, the third manuscript presented *Professional Development, Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) and Indigenous Student success: A comparative Case-Study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada* does identify some similarities in approach and strategies implemented in each context (See, Papp & Cottrell, 2019).

As acknowledged above and specific to this research study, in general, education research has limitations. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, “education, as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, has borrowed concepts and theories from psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and other disciplines” (p. 14). The theories associated with the different disciplines affect different parts of the education system, and for this reason, conclusions may be contradictory. McMillan and Schumacher also explained that education is

multilayered and is a living organism continually changing as it is affected by the people within the system, the students, families, communities, and the larger systems. The next section addresses issues of significance and describes in detail the structure of this manuscript dissertation and the chapters that follow.

2.13 The Significance of this Study

It should be noted that although the context of this dissertation is both a focus on Canada and New Zealand, Indigenous Peoples occupy all corners of the world and the education practices instituted for Indigenous peoples and many policies that are linked to education for Indigenous Peoples are broadly in dire need of reform. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided reports on the state of the world's Indigenous Peoples that focused on Education in 2009, 2014, and most recently in 2017. There are an estimated 370 million Indigenous Peoples in the world that occupy regions of Africa, Arctic, Asia, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, North America, the Pacific, and the Russian Federation (United Nations, 2017). If the Indigenous population were a country, it would be the third largest in the world following China and India; hence, the imposing significance of this study. The 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article 14 establishes the right to education, control of educational systems, and education in their own culture and languages. (United Nations, 2007). Recognizing that there are many Indigenous peoples in the world, this dissertation does not attempt to generalize across all global contexts and acknowledges that within each county, there are variations of Indigenous cultures. This dissertation does provide insights and presents teacher practices that benefitted their Indigenous students that may be of interest to other Indigenous peoples around the globe.

The significance of this dissertation is to fill a gap in the literature, wherein teachers of Indigenous students identify strategies that they believe engaged Indigenous students that led to improved academic achievement levels and increased graduation rates. This study has recorded the voices of the teachers of Indigenous students in both Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand. It reports the strategies that they believe animated success in their classrooms. The relevance of the teachers' perspective is critical as the teachers are the people in direct contact with the students, and a multitude of research confirms that teachers have the single greatest impact on student learning and make the most significant difference in the educational outcomes

of their students. The teachers' voices have been minimally present in the literature and are viewed as a valuable component to inform education reform and the actualization of educational improvements.

The distinctiveness of this research is that it builds on pedagogical theory and presents two school-wide reform initiatives, one in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the other in New Zealand, which impacted over 700 students within two schools. This research described *how teachers affected change* by presenting case studies documenting theory-to-practice, with robust empirical data demonstrating improved outcomes. This empirical data verified the effects of strategic changes in teacher's actions, attitudes, and intentionally implemented pedagogical strategies.

In addition to capturing the teachers' voices, the originality of this research came from the combination of success markers represented by Eurocentric measurements, such as course credits and increased graduation rates, together with the Indigenous students' measures of cultural success, such as pride in being Indigenous and their culture, learning Indigenous history and language, and succeeding in school by obtaining course credits and graduating. The Eurocentric measures of success and the Indigenous student's cultural and social orientations were supportive of each other rather than contradictory. The research findings represent teachers that challenged and rejected deficit-thinking assumptions and genuinely expressed that Indigenous students are capable of learning. These attitudes demonstrate that within the Eurocentric educational systems, teachers are capable of embracing change to improve Indigenous student outcomes through a culturally responsive curriculum and developing caring relationships with their students to transform school contexts.

This research will provide a Canadian, and more specifically, a Saskatchewan context to expand the academic knowledge base regarding education for Indigenous students in Canada. The study also includes the New Zealand context, which provides a comparative focus to delineate similarities and differences, while in both instances, Indigenous students achieved improved educational outcomes. The comparative inquiry with New Zealand is complementary to the quest to improve education levels for Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is prudent to consider strategies that have been successful in other countries with Indigenous students. Along with Canada, countries such as New Zealand commonly share the European colonization experience and the marginalization of their Indigenous peoples. Also shared is the corollary that the most disadvantaged people of these countries are the Indigenous peoples with the lowest

education attainment levels relative to their non-Indigenous counterparts. In both contexts, the significance of this study provides economic and social justice arguments to support the strategies implemented in the classrooms of Indigenous students.

This study revealed what teachers perceived to be strategies that they implement in the classroom to improve retention and learning in the schools. Retention and attendance are critical in order for students to achieve course credits that ultimately lead to graduation and a high school diploma. From an economic perspective, within the Canadian context, the educational achievement levels of Indigenous students indicate that Indigenous students have incrementally higher school dropout rates than non-Indigenous students based on the educational attainment levels (CBC, 2017). Without a high school diploma or equivalent, higher education is not possible, and the consequences are significant with regard to employment opportunities and income (Sharpe et al., 2009). Steeves et al. (2010) reported the differences in unemployment rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are 3.25 times higher for Saskatchewan Indigenous peoples and the average income for Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan is substantially lower than the Saskatchewan average (Carr-Stewart, 2003).

The 2019 Federal budget earmarked \$16.8 billion to address the critical needs of Indigenous communities that include housing, child and family services, and education. Budget 2018 stated, “The Centre for the Study of Living Standards estimates that if we close the education and labour market gaps for Indigenous people by 2031, Canada’s gross domestic product could gain \$36 billion that year.” Another source presented a robust boost to Saskatchewan’s economy by \$90 billion (Warick, 2016).

The Saskatchewan School Board Association (SSBA) identified their strategic plan in a position paper requiring a mandatory curriculum to include treaty teachings and improving education outcomes for Indigenous students as a form of reconciliation (SSBA, 2020). The Saskatchewan government has introduced a priority to reduce the difference in Grade 12 graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 50 percent by 2020 and allocated \$5.1 million towards Indigenous initiatives such as *Following Their Voices* (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). The significance of this study reaches every level of government and education.

From a social justice perspective, a lack and lower level of formal education, intergenerational effects of the residential school system within Canada, cultural identity

struggles, and poverty are cited as the primary factors that contribute Indigenous people over-represented in correctional facilities and psychiatric centers (Government of Canada, 2013). This has been called the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon (Bartlett, 2015; Gebhard, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Ogundele, 2018; Preston et al., 2012; Salole & Abdulle, 2015; Stanford University Education, 2011). The students of the two case studies of this research were considered to be poor demographically. By Canadian standards, the students were living in poverty. In New Zealand, the school's students were defined as a decile two school, wherein decile one is the lowest economic level and decile ten the wealthiest.

Little research has been conducted that presents the effects of strategic professional development for teachers in the area of culturally relevant curriculum, relational pedagogy, and inquiry-based learning and the effects the professional development has on Indigenous students and improved educational outcomes. This research offers information that is empirically substantiated, well described, and compared to identify similarities and differences between two different countries (See Papp & Cottrell, 2020).

Furthermore, the significance of the findings is accented by a clear need echoed by Indigenous peoples and their leaders as well as all levels of governments to improve education achievement levels for Indigenous students. This study is noteworthy and timely in guiding governments, policymakers, school directors, teachers, university education departments, and the discourse of teacher education and their instruction and directives.

2.14 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation is presented in a manuscript style following the guidelines offered by the College of Graduate Studies and Research, University of Saskatchewan. The chapters that follow represent three separate manuscripts that present complementary aspects of teacher practices that have promoted educational success for Indigenous students. The research design was qualitative, and the case studies were urban schools in Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand. The schools were selected based on empirical data on outcomes revealing a dramatic increase in course credit completion and graduation rates between 2010 to 2014. The data collection became saturated at seven participants in both instances, and the participants in both locations represented classroom teachers as well as administrators. In a few cases, participants played dual roles.

Each manuscript written for the peer-reviewed journals was required to meet publication guidelines for each specific journal and was bound by the scope of the information presented, the accurate data offered, and in each instance, the expectation to write a focused paper restricted by the word length limitations posed by each journal.

The first manuscript represents the New Zealand case study and its findings from a high school, which experienced a dramatic improvement for the Indigenous students' educational achievements as a result of the professional development strategies implemented by school leaders. Chronologically, this is where my research began. The next manuscript presents the findings from a case study conducted in a Saskatchewan urban high school that, within a four-year timeframe, produced increased credit completions and graduation rates for their Indigenous students. The third manuscript provides a comparison of teachers' professional development in culturally responsive practices that led to Indigenous success in the classrooms of Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand.

The first manuscript (Chapter 3), "*Teaching strategies to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students*," represents the findings of a New Zealand case study of a high school with mainly Indigenous students that experienced dramatic improvements in student learning outcomes within a few years through administrative leadership that introduced professional development incorporating student-focused relationship-based pedagogy. The research found that the positive atmosphere was developed through the building and repairing relationships. Teachers included inquiry-based pedagogy and provided feedforward and feedback to students, along with the incorporation of Indigenous culture in the classrooms.

The second manuscript (Chapter 4), "*A Canadian study of coming full circle to traditional Indigenous pedagogy: A pedagogy for the 21st century*" delves further into the teacher strategies implemented in a case study of an urban Saskatchewan, Canada high school that utilized a traditional Indigenous pedagogy approach which resulted in educational success for the Indigenous students. Chapter 4 is augmented by delineating the similarities between traditional Indigenous pedagogy and what is considered to be 21st-century teaching approaches. Traditional Indigenous pedagogy is student-centered, culturally responsive, multidisciplinary, project-based, practical, relevant, cooperative, flexible, and implements a collaborative learning community, sharing many of the critical features of 21st Century pedagogy.

The third manuscript (Chapter 5), “*Professional development, culturally responsive practices (CRP), and Indigenous student success: A comparative case-study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada*” is a multiple case-study that explores teachers’ perspectives on the effects of professional development (PD) in culturally-responsive and relational pedagogy on the improved academic outcomes for Indigenous students in New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada. The findings highlight the transformational potential of intentional PD that address educational inequities and describes a learning environment that infuses Indigenous cultures and inquiry-based pedagogy to provide students with a more meaningful learning experience.

The significant findings from the three manuscripts are synthesized in the final chapter that concludes this manuscript dissertation. The closing chapter concludes with an in-depth reflection on theoretical and methodological approaches used in the research and evolution of interpretations made possible by the previous three manuscripts. The common themes are discussed and presented in Chapter 6. The reflection leads to another level of understanding of the innovations documented in the research and opportunities for future research in the overall quest to promote educational success for Indigenous students are suggested.

2.15 Copyright and Author Permissions

Chapters 3 through 5 of this dissertation consists of manuscripts that have been published by peer-reviewed journals or are in press. The manuscript citations are listed below, consistent with copyright and author rights. Permission to use or author rights has been acquired from each publisher, allowing the use of the published manuscripts to appear in this thesis. Journal permissions are included in Appendixes B, C, and D. Following the guidelines provided by the College of Graduate Studies and Research for a manuscript style dissertation, the student is the first or only author, and the supervisor is the second author. Thank you to the editors for allowing me to reprint my article published in the *Comparative and International Education* journal. The full citation is as follows.

Chapter 3. Papp, T. A. (2016). Teacher strategies to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students. *Comparative and International Education* 45(3), 1-14. Available at <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1380&context=cie-eci>

Chapter 4: Papp, T. A. (2020). A Canadian study of coming full circle to Indigenous pedagogy: A Pedagogy for the 21st century. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority education*:

Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival 14(1), 25-42. DOI:
10.1080/15595692.2019.1652587. [Taylor & Francis]

Chapter 5. Papp, T. A., & Cottrell, M. (2020, In Press). Professional development, culturally responsive practices (CRP) and Indigenous student success: A comparative case-study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*.

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PREFACE TO CHAPTER 3: TEACHING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

This manuscript presents the teaching strategies that supported education success for Indigenous students of New Zealand based on a case study research approach. Interviews conducted with teacher participants revealed five dominant strategies that were perceived as key elements for improving Māori education outcomes. These strategies were: Building and repairing relationships through a relationship-based pedagogy; student-focused school and classrooms; teachers providing feedforward and feedback to students; administrative leadership; and the regular incorporation of Māori culture in the school and the classroom. Over a six-year timeframe, the implementation of these strategies raised more than twofold the Māori academic achievement levels.

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CHAPTER 3: TEACHER STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Indigenous peoples of countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand share the experience of European colonization and subsequent marginalization. Across these countries, Indigenous peoples consistently demonstrate lower education attainment levels compared to the non-Indigenous population. In both Canada and New Zealand these lower education attainment levels have persisted for many decades (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2014; Statistics New Zealand, 2013b). Canadian statistical reports reveal the need to promote high-quality education programs and improve education completion levels for Aboriginal peoples (Government of Canada, 2015; Government of Saskatchewan, 2014; Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2012; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Sharpe & Arsenault, 2009). This has alerted political leaders, school administrators, and teachers of the need to improve the education attainment levels of Indigenous peoples through various programs.

Statistics Canada (2014) reported, “in 2006, one-third of the Aboriginal adults aged 25 to 54 had less than a high school education compared to nearly 13% of the non-Aboriginal population” (para. 2). In New Zealand attainment levels are similar with almost half of Māori students not attaining high school or equivalent qualifications compared to one-third of non-Māori students (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b).

In the quest to improve education levels for Aboriginal peoples in Canada, it is imperative to consider strategies that have been successful in other countries with marginalized Indigenous students. Research in both Canada and New Zealand has produced academic papers recording Aboriginal/Indigenous voices in which students express what they need from teachers to succeed in school (Bergstrom, Cleary, & Peacock, 2003; Berryman et al., 2014; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Ireland, Hawryluk, Medeiros, & Paris, 2012; Kanu, 2002; 2006; 2011; Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Parent, 2011; Preston & Claypool, 2013, Silver, Mallet, Greene, & Simard, 2002). However, more studies focusing on teacher perspectives and practices that enhance Indigenous students’ academic achievement are needed. As a result, this study asks what practices and strategies do teachers of Indigenous students perceive as effective in improving student motivation,

engagement, and retention? And, do these practices and strategies result in greater academic success for Indigenous education attainment?

This article identifies and presents internationally recognized strategies used by teachers in New Zealand that have resulted in greater educational performance among Māori students. This success has been documented by New Zealand's National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) over a six-year period following the introduction of a teacher professional development program named Te Kotahitanga. Māori student achievement increased from 32.4% in 2009 to 70% in 2014 (Wharekura¹ personal correspondence, August 4, 2015).

Before exploring these teaching strategies, I provide a few caveats and definitions of the terms used in the study. I provide background information on the foundations of the Te Kotahitanga Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) followed by the research methodology that directed this study. This is followed by a presentation of the findings enriched with the voices of the teacher participants. Finally, I provide an analytic discussion that draws upon existing literature and situates the findings through the lens of critical race theory. Throughout this article, I highlight the instrumental roles that teachers hold in nurturing their students. This is a timely topic as teacher-centred experiences and perceptions from this study may offer guidance for policy planners, government leaders, university education leaders, professional development schools, education administrators, and educators of Aboriginal students.

3.1 Caveats and Terminology

Prior to presenting the details of this study, some caveats are required. Although there are striking similarities among the histories of Indigenous peoples of Canada, United States, New Zealand, and Australia, this study does not attempt to consider all Indigenous people as homogenous. Improving education outcomes is a shared odyssey of these countries. It is not purported that the findings are to be a panacea to the marginalization of all Indigenous peoples. Successful and unsuccessful education initiatives from other countries should be shared and reviewed with a critical eye as all countries can learn from one another. The purpose of this study is to report the findings of education strategies and not to imply or compare similarities beyond education.

Different researchers and countries use various terminologies in academic literature; for the benefit of the reader, clarification of terminology is required. According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC, 2010), Aboriginal peoples are defined as “the

descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian *Constitution* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people—Indians [First Nation], Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs” (para. 3). The United Nations (2014) defines Indigenous as people who are descendants “of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived” (para. 1). For clarification, the Māori people of New Zealand and Aboriginal people of Canada are both Indigenous. The different titles and terms will be referenced as they appear in original text, and in the discussion below, the terms “Indigenous” and “Aboriginal” will be used interchangeably.

3.2 Background Information: Te Kotahitanga Effective Teacher Profile (ETF)

Te Kotahitanga Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) is a theory-based educational reform that began in 2001 and is based on the narratives of the Māori children (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Relevant academic literature forms the basis of the ETP as a professional development tool for teachers (Bishop, O’Sullivan & Berryman, 2010). The ETP adopts an agentic position and rejects deficit theorizing through culturally appropriate and responsive pedagogy that builds relationships between teachers and their students.

The Te Kotahitanga ETP is comprised of six observable components: (a) Manaakitanga: building and nurturing a supportive environment that is culturally responsive; (b) Mana motuhake: caring about each student’s classroom performance and helping the child to develop identity, independence as well as group identity; (c) Whakapiringatanga: creating a safe learning environment; (d) Wananga: engaging the Māori students as Māori; (e) Ako: using a variety of teaching strategies to promote interaction among learners and to build relationships; and (f) Kotahitanga: collaborating to improve Māori education achievement through monitoring and reflecting (Bishop et al., 2010).

Over the years, reports about the effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga have provided student achievement data, observation, self-reports and interviews documenting sustainability and improvements in student outcomes. The key findings show that as teachers build on their capacity through implementing the ETP, their Māori students experience continuous improvement in numeracy and literacy external examinations (Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth, Peter & Clapham, 2012). It has been noted that the integrity of the ETP requires leadership and support to maintain its effectiveness in the classroom. The following section will describe the methods used in this research.

3.3 Research Methodology

This research used a case study collection strategy to identify and understand the teacher strategies used to help Māori students improve their educational attainment levels. The New Zealand teacher participants perceived the strategies as supportive and contributive to the educational success of their Māori students in Grades 7 to 13. The research findings are the researchers' interpretations of the teachers' experiences, which represent truth and reality. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explain that the constructivist design "focuses on the perspectives, feelings, and beliefs of the participants" (p. 237). This study used the theoretical lenses of critical race theory (Milner, 2008) from the constructivist paradigm. Milner explains that "critical race theorists are concerned with disrupting, exposing, challenging, and changing racist policies that work to subordinate and disenfranchise certain groups of people and that attempt to maintain the status quo" (p. 333). Critical race theory explains how Indigenous peoples' experiences of race and racism are deeply rooted in the dominant society through power and privilege, and "are ingrained and deeply imbedded in the policies, practices, procedures, and institutionalized systems of teacher education" (Milner, 2008, p. 332).

The researcher was a partial participant who spent time at a school assisting students with their classwork. This role helped the researcher establish a rapport with the participants, gain a sense of the school dynamics and the classroom culture, and witness teacher-student and student-student interactions. A journal was kept of the activities and observations. Semi-structured interviews were used to probe the witnessed interactions, adding richness to the findings.

The methodological strategy used in this research, which was congruent with an Aboriginal worldview (Acoose, Blunderfield, Dell, & Desjarlais, 2009; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Torrance, 2011, Wilson, 2001), considered the participants as partners by hearing and recording their voices. The framework of this research was relationship-based, conversational, and was designed to support Indigenous communities by sharing the information obtained from this study. The majority of the teacher participants' students in the study were Māori.

3.3.1 Participant Selection and Data Collection

The school selected implemented the Te Kotahitanga program in 2009, and the improvement in student achievement at the school was recognized to have benefited not only Māori students but all students of that school (Wharekura, personal communication, August 4, 2015).

This accomplishment was recognized at an international education conference. The independent data collected by the NCEA for Grade 12 students indicated that Māori students at the school had a 32.4% achievement level in 2009, well below the national level of all Grade 12 students of 65.6% and the national Māori achievement level of 52.9%. By the completion of the 2014 academic year, Grade 12 Māori students at this school had a 70% student achievement level. The achievement levels attained in 2014 surpassed the Māori national standards at 67.8% which came close to matching the national level of 75.4% (Wharekura, personal communication, August 4, 2015; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2014).

At the time this research was conducted in 2014, the school for this case study housed grades 7 to 13 with a school population of 420 students. The middle school was comprised of grades 7 to 9 with approximately 90% Māori students, while the upper grades from 10 to 13 had approximately 55% representation of Māori students. New Zealand ranks the socioeconomic status of the school by decile rating with the lowest socioeconomic population documented as decile one and the most affluent ranked at decile ten. The school of this research ranked at decile two.

Interviews were conducted with seven participants. Five were classroom teachers, of which three were also administrators. One was also a resource teacher of learning and behavior, and another was a restorative facilitator. The questions were semi-structured, open-ended, and specific to the intent of the research. The interviews each lasted approximately one hour. After the transcriptions were approved by the participants, the transcripts were coded and recoded several times for accuracy; key concepts emerged, and five dominant strategies discovered from the research process will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.2 Limitations

There are limitations to this study. As this is a case study of one school that had been recognized nationally and internationally for improved education outcomes according to New Zealand government standards, the findings can be considered small. The documented achievement levels are government standards set by the New Zealand NCEA for Grade 12 students. There were seven participants and the findings were saturated at that number. There was one self-declared Māori participant; however, the focus of this study was on teacher practices and not on the influence of Māori teachers compared to non-Māori teachers.

3.4 Findings

The main question posed was what were the dominant teacher strategies that had contributed to the improved educational outcomes for the Indigenous students of this school? This question revealed five dominant strategies: building and repairing relationships, student-focused school and classrooms, teachers' feedforward and feedback, culture in the classroom, and administrative leadership. These strategies will be described below. To add credibility and context to the surfaced strategies, direct quotes will be included from the participants' transcribed interviews as well as notes from the researcher's journal. The names presented are pseudonyms.

3.4.1 Building and repairing relationships: A relationship-based pedagogy

When asked what strategies the teachers felt were the most effective for students to improve education outcomes, the answers revolved around building relationships and creating a parent-child relationship. It was explained that these interactions demonstrated care and concern for the student. This relationship-based pedagogy was believed to enhance effective interactions. Relationships were built and maintained through a style of teaching that was described as discursive, in which the teacher demonstrated value and respect for the student. As Edward observed:

It is about me teaching in a way that the kids know very quickly that I am open to what they think, and I value what they think . . . I can close that down very quickly by the way I speak, the way I act or if I don't follow up on their ideas . . . The trust has to be built by letting them know that I am willing to listen.

Another participant Charles also spoke about listening and responding to the student's voice; embracing "the concept of power sharing with the children and the elements of self-determination" which represented a respectful relationship between the student and the teacher.

Teacher meetings maintained an attitude of respect for the students. Teachers met regularly in co-construction meetings to discuss student progress and to identify students that may need extra support. The teachers at the meeting instructed different subjects but shared the same students. This allowed them to identify if a student needed extra work in one subject area or was experiencing a generalized academic concern. In her description of a co-construction teachers' meeting, Felicia noted, "we start with a prayer, then we talk about the guiding principles of the meeting; that is, we will discuss our students as if they were our own children." The researcher also witnessed this attitude at the beginning of other school meetings. The teacher assumed a parental role, and all conversations with students were caring and concerned, as if it were their own children. This was

further demonstrated when the researcher witnessed Alice's telephone alarm going off, and Alice went to one of her students to remind her to take her medicine.

At the beginning of the school year, Grades 7 and 9 are the first points of entry for many students. Alice shared, "at the beginning of the school year we don't teach for the first week or two weeks. We are building those relationships. If we started off straight away to teach we would start building conflict with students and the kids would develop conflict among other students." Various teacher participants explained that it could take the form of sports, arts, plays, music or games to learn students' names. Teachers used a variety of adventure-based learning (ABL), cooperative or orienteering games to familiarize the students with the school and one another. Edward who taught higher-grade level students also shared how he focused on relationship building through ABL games: "it is about breaking down the barriers and to get people interacting with each other. I participate because that is really important. We take two or three days with the level ten class so that is two to three hours of the class doing ABL."

In some cases, teachers went beyond being the students' teacher to connect with them on an interpersonal level. As Alice stated:

I have opened myself up to my students. Letting the students know who I am rather than me just being the teacher . . . The kids know me and I know my kids. I could list at least ten things about each of my kids in my class . . . By being able to do that you can connect with them on a different level. They respond to you better.

Alice further explained that the interpersonal connection had been achieved through Facebook. There was often a flurry of messages in the morning among the students to remind one another to bring their gym clothes. If the student does not bring gym clothes, they cannot participate in the gym class activities.

Edward stated that it was the interpersonal connections that really affected learning. He reflected, "It is to make that time to make that meaningful connection, getting next to them, and having meaningful conversations with them about their learning." Similar relationships were also built with the students' parents through constant contact and texting. The relationships among the teachers, students, and students' parents were extended when the teachers walked to the gates and saw the students off at the end of the school day. This provided opportunities for teachers to meet with the parents, students, or alumni who are siblings of students.

Relationships had their challenging times. The school had a Restorative Thinking Room and a restorative facilitator. If the students could not resolve their differences among themselves

or if a teacher and a student had issues that they could not resolve, the student would talk with the restorative facilitator and a restorative meeting would be set up involving the facilitator, teacher, and student. Initially, it was the teachers' responsibility to build the relationship in the classroom with each of the students. Donald reflected on this successful learning environment and stated the following:

I think a lot of that [positive learning environment] has to do with the restorative justice process that we have set up because that means that people can't bear grudges, people get things out in the open, talk about things in a productive way to try to get the kid back into the classroom.

Teachers perceived that building good teacher-student relationships, performing reflective practices, and instilling restorative justice were keys to the improved education environment and successful educational outcomes. Gail explained the success of the restorative program as she remarked, "if they don't care about each other [the student and teacher] at all or know anything about each other, it is very hard for them to reflect and worry about if they are upsetting someone." During the process of restorative justice, the student was asked to reflect on the relationship, on what happened and how to deal with the facts, and how the actions have affected others around them. Reflecting on the consequences of the action is the aim of restorative justice:

It is a standard thing that if you care about someone and you respect them, then you are going to care about how you are making them feel. That is what the restorative meetings are about. It is not necessarily about the actions that the kids have done, but it is about the consequences about what they have done.

The restorative justice program was not part of the Te Kotahitanga program; it was introduced at this school to compliment the program and was recognized by the teacher participants as pivotal in maintaining and building relationships at this school.

3.4.2 Student-focused school and classrooms

The next dominant strategy that emerged from the study was the focus on the needs of the students. It was explained that students' progress through the grade levels sequentially, and no student is held back to repeat a grade level. This creates a classroom with students at various levels of knowledge and skills. The various classes the researcher observed were testimony to this. The teacher had various structures and activities in place to accommodate all students. Classroom sizes would vary from 12 to more than 20. The classroom was not unified with a

single lesson being taught for the day. Instead, the teacher might start with a brief announcement or minimal instruction. Students would get their workbooks or textbooks and carry on from where they had stopped working.

Donald explained that because he has students at different levels, he has to have something for everyone to do which allows him to move around to the students that are really struggling or disengaged to help them and get them engaged. The researcher observed that the teachers circulated from student to student as they used an arsenal of activities that allowed the students to work at their own pace and individual levels to accomplish the learning outcomes required for the National Standards credits. Upon completion of coursework, students earned credits that are accumulated to earn different achievement levels according to the NCEA.

Student focus also covered the course work that the students study or write about. The topics were reported to be relevant and interesting to the students. As Charles explained:

We try to bring the student's background into the classroom, whether that background is their own Māori culture, whether it is their own youth culture or their own family, whether it is things they are interested in. It is about trying to connect with them on a relationship level but also to connect them with the content that you are doing in the classroom to give relevance to them.

The teachers perceived that if the students did not see the purpose of what they were doing, they would not be engaged.

Betty explained that she would review the reading and writing levels of the students and request extra support to help them. In her class, she would write the information on the whiteboard for students to copy and practice their writing skills. She would also have a copy on the table for the students to read. If some students could not finish writing the information, she would cut off the missing part from the paper copy to put it into the student's book. She felt it was important to know her students and help them succeed with support if necessary. For those students who could accelerate in the class, they were offered the opportunity to delve deeper into a subject and be challenged.

Some grade levels, such as Grade 9, had many students enrolled. There were three classrooms of Grade 9 students, and they were allowed to choose what class (hub) they were divided into. They could choose from sports hub (games, sports, and statistics focused), discovery hub (inquiry based) or expressive hub (arts, drama, and music). The curriculum was taught through those concepts. The teachers commented that since students select their hub of

interest, they tend to get along better because they are with like-minded students, and that gives them “a lot of empowerment and ownership.” In Alice’s class, the different levels of readers were also split into groups and then further separated by gender. Alice explained that this flexibility engaged the students, “specially to get the boys engaged in the reading. The boys have been reading about cricketers, rugby players, adventurers, horror stories, and worlds under the sea; whereas the girls have been reading about fairy tales, princesses and the frog because they still love that, they love romance novels.”

In an effort to meet the needs and interests of the students, the school focused on providing classes that would earn the students credit. The student subject-selection booklet provides students with various core classes in addition to elective classes in tourism, media studies, horticulture, visual arts, performing arts, Māori art and performing arts, hospitality, food and nutrition, catering, digital technology, construction, Māori language, physical education, and outdoor education.

The learning and social environments created were flexible and varied to meet the needs of all the students in the classroom and the school. The learning outcomes were met while teaching each student in the classroom at the level where they could experience learning success. A one-size-fits-all classroom did not exist in this school. Front-of-the-classroom instruction in a synchronous manner was also non-existent since the program was introduced.

3.4.3 Teachers’ feedforward and feedback: An effective conversation

Feedback in the classroom was a strategy of regular teacher practice. Teachers provided feedback orally or in written form to tell the student what they had accomplished. The mantra of this school was “Don’t tell what you can ask.” This statement defines the strategy of feedforward where intentional questions are posed to the student to generate reflection and critical thinking to solve problems or improve classwork. Teachers described feedforward as a hard task to learn to do with their students. There is an urge to tell a student what needs to be done next rather than allowing the student to think through the process. Feedforward allows learning and reflection to come from the students, as Edward explained:

You can be more effective by having the student reflect and ask them how they did or why they think they did that well. It is not telling the kid but asking. How do you think you could improve this paragraph? Feedback is what they have done, and feedforward is what *they* need to do next by asking them and not telling them.

The participants acknowledged that this shift in teaching strategy did not come naturally but has to be developed with practice. Some teachers practiced how to ask questions. Edward described that in the beginning stages, he had a piece of paper on his desk to help him ask the feedforward questions. He consciously asked the questions, and intentionally did not want to impede the students academically through his response. In the class dynamics, this practice must be learned to the point that it becomes automatic and part of a teacher's language in the classroom. Examples of positive academic feedforward questions include the following:

- What is the next step?
- Expand on that thought.
- How will you show that?
- What else would be useful?
- How could you . . . ?

Felicia indicated that there were many shifts in the teachers' language and in the classroom and the shifts were significant.

In the classroom, it was reported that traditional teaching was still required to a certain extent, but the *front of the room teaching* was minimal. Instead, the teacher was "roaming" or "constantly moving" to provide one-on-one or small group assistance to the students. Felicia explained that with discursive teaching, the students were not passive recipients of knowledge. The questions posed by the teacher were focused on getting the students thinking for themselves. Felicia further explained that since feedforward academics required each student to take their thinking to a higher level, discursive teaching and feedforward academics questioned the students to make them more engaged and active participants. As Felicia stated, "[discursive teaching] is asking questions around prior knowledge . . . Discursive is interactive. The students are interacting, and the teacher's language facilitates that."

Feedforward was also an important part of the restorative process. In a situation where the student disagreed with a teacher or another student or misbehaved in the classroom, the student was asked to reflect on what they were doing and how it was affecting everyone else around them. This process may begin with a one-on-one session between the student and the teacher. The purpose was to restore the relationship to a positive state but not through "you" language. The students were asked questions, so they can reflect on their actions and reveal their own answers. If a resolution was not attained, the student would be asked to go to the

Restorative Thinking Room to reflect on the situation and talk to the Restorative Facilitator. Gail reported that the restorative session began with a discussion with the student:

What happened? Who did you affect? Who was affected by what you did? Who was upset? Who was angry? Who was distracted? How do you think they felt about it? Were they angry? Were they annoyed? Were they not working because you distracted them? Was the teacher getting frustrated? . . . It is to get them to come up with the answers.

The facilitator would have a conversation with the student and the teacher independently, followed by a restorative meeting with both of them. The focus is on the facts, not past history.

Gail noted:

The groundwork has to be done by the teacher initially. It is very hard if I am trying to run a restorative meeting and if there is absolutely no relationship established between the teacher and the student . . . It is a standard thing that if you care about someone and you respect them, then you are going to care about how you are making them feel.

The restorative process was noted as a better approach than suspension from school or a student leaving the classroom angry without any follow-up discussion. Gail explained that if “nothing is followed up, then it sits there, and it builds and builds, and then the next time something happens, it is building on top of that.” Through effective conversations by using feedback and feedforward, there are benefits in the students’ learning process and in restoring relationships to create a better learning environment.

3.4.4 Bringing Māori Culture into the Classroom

Māori culture was present in the school and in the classroom. Students were offered Māori language classes, Whakairo academy (Māori arts), Māori performing arts, and traditional carving classes. The school also celebrated special Māori occasions and events such as the Matariki, a celebration of the Māori New Year; they also hosted a festival that was student-organized, and invitations were extended to other schools in the area. These events were under the direction of the school Elders who were readily available to provide guidance.

The philosophy of the school was built on a cultural-responsive pedagogy of relations. The school values revolved around Māori terms. Manaakitanga means respect, Whanaungatanga means belonging, and family, and Hirangatanga means excellence in effort. These values were discussed in the classroom and translated into appropriate classroom behavior. When the Māori values were discussed, the students were reported to take the conversation seriously as Māori

terms are sacred words. Charles explained that the Māori terms of Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Hirangatanga form the basis of the relationship-based pedagogy, discursive interaction, and questioning.

Betty explained that using the Māori language in the school had been a factor in building relationships with the Māori students. Indeed, language usage could be extrapolated to have had an effect on the improved education outcomes for Māori students. Alice echoed the importance of Māori values when she stated, “those [Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Hirangatanga] are all underlying now and are weaving through our teaching and planning.” Donald reinforced that the school’s focus was to improve education outcomes for Māori and to help Māori students succeed as Māori. This definition of success is within the Māori context. He further explained:

A lot of the Māori kids are profoundly Māori, and yet they live in a dominant Pakeha [white] world that when you actually start to scratch the surface you start to see these things that are deeply important to them so what we have to do is understand the importance of having good relationships with these kids, understand the way they do things and not just about the way we do things.

The Māori culture, together with the school values—Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Hirangatanga—as well as the approach taken within the school all assisted in the restorative relationship process. These values helped create the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L), which was a definite guideline for the expectations held for the students in the classroom. Appropriate behaviours were taught in the classroom and were used to assist the facilitator to restore the relationship. As Gail described:

If I am dealing with an incident around behaviors that fall into that category it gives me something to work with . . . Are we showing Whanaungatanga [belonging and family]? Is this how we act? It is just another way of teaching them the correct behaviours or the behaviour we want to encourage them to use . . . There are real definites there. The three things together all build around good relationships and the behaviors we are trying to encourage them to use.

The strategy of incorporating culture also appeared to contribute to the relationship-based pedagogy approach and was related to the effectiveness of a student-focused approach by being respectful of students and nurturing the students’ academic growth.

3.4.5 Administrative School Leadership

Leadership is a critical intentional strategy that underpins the improved outcomes of Indigenous students at this school (Bishop et al., 2012). The application to the Ministry of Education to bring Te Kotahitanga to the school was initiated by the principal and the school qualified due to the number of Māori students attending. Once approved, teachers were asked to volunteer to participate for the first year of the program. They were supported through training sessions, and administrators were active participants in the program.

The participants in this research acknowledged that many administrators and teachers talk about the need for change to help Indigenous students succeed. They agreed that initiatives are hard to implement and even harder to keep alive. Alice, for example, talked about the need to improve Māori achievement levels and explained that “it was talked about in other schools, but it was never specifically actioned. It was something we talked about, and we really should do it, but nothing happened. But here we live it, we breathe it.” The participants also said that while one teacher can make a difference, school-wide efforts and the leadership of the school administration played an important role in enabling them to impact student education outcomes. They also said the program offered regular professional development opportunities for teachers. Alice identified leadership as a main contributing factor to the success of their school; she stated that the leader was “passionate and his passion filters down to us. But it is not just the passion. He is walking the walk that we talk about and we learned the philosophy behind it.”

The administration had also identified other determinants to the academic success of students such as the ETP, Restorative Thinking Room, and co-construction meetings. Although the school no longer receives the Te Kotahitanga program funds, the administration continues to fund the learning and behavior resource teacher who regularly conducts ETP assessments and supports the teachers in professional development. The Restorative Thinking Room and the restorative facilitator position were not components of the Te Kotahitanga teacher professional development program. However, the leadership team deemed them to be critical elements in student achievement improvements, which resulted from improved relationships between students as well as between students and teachers. Numerous co-construction meetings of teachers and administrators were scheduled as part of the leadership process to determine student progress and to provide intervention or support where necessary to achieve the education successes.

Leadership was a driving force contributing to a student-focused atmosphere where students and administrators regularly collaborated to produce school newsletters, student-driven assemblies with performances provided by students, and celebrations and social events organized and directed by students with the support of Elders. Students were recurrently requested to complete an anonymous survey to provide feedback on the school and the teachers. They were also encouraged to provide suggestions for improvements. This represents a school environment with a shared leadership atmosphere among teachers, administration, and students.

3.5 Discussion

This research revealed five dominant strategies that improved education outcomes for Indigenous students:

- 1) Relationship-based pedagogy that builds and repairs relationships;
- 2) A school with classrooms that are student-focused;
- 3) Providing feedforward and feedback to students;
- 4) Bringing Māori culture into the school and the classroom;
- 5) Administrative leadership.

For these strategies to be implemented effectively, teachers had to reflect on their attitudes towards their students. As Charles stated:

The imperative [situation] is that Māori students were under-achieving and no matter what we have done they are still under achieving nationally and locally. So we had to turn the status quo on its head. And here was a nationally based research project that was actually proving to be effective. It starts with people's attitudes; the teacher's attitude . . . maybe they [teachers] do have an impact on how students feel about school and interact in school . . . that is probably the biggest challenge.

Deficit-thinking mentalities perpetuated the low achievement levels and the cyclical stereotyping of the minoritized group by placing blame either on the student, the student's socioeconomic situation, or various other potential influences and stake little or no claim to responsibility or agency (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al., 2010; Freire, 1970; St. Denis, 2007). The teachers' attitudes and the student-teacher relationship is the foundation of this school's reform, which was demonstrated by the teacher participants through a genuine parental-like attitude. A positive interaction with their students created an agentic, nurturing environment

that supported academic performance by following the creed of Te Kotahitanga and ETP guidelines. This created reciprocity of respect. Research indicates that the most powerful influence on education achievement improvements come through relationships and teacher-student interactions that reject deficit thinking (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al., 2010; Riley & Ungerleiger, 2012). The teachers' use of feedback and feedforward also exemplifies a technique that rejects a hegemonic and paternalistic approach to teaching and values the student and his or her voice. Upon the introduction of the ETP, each school year saw continuous improvements to education attainment levels.

The participants also found that the implementation of the Te Kotahitanga program resulted in a change in student attitudes; aggressive responses disappeared once the teacher practice shifted to the ETP. Prior to the ETP, the classroom and school were volatile. Some teacher participants reported regular fights among students and at times teachers were concerned about their own safety. The shift in the teachers' attitudes to being more supportive, caring and respectful became the change agent that resulted in a less defensive response from students including a demonstrated mutual respect to their teachers and classmates. Teacher efficacy beliefs can create a self-fulfilling prophecy that will affect the potential of students (Preston & Claypool, 2013; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012). The restorative process also assisted in this transition to build and repair relationships. The researcher witnessed an overall sense of contentment in and outside the classrooms.

Student-focused teaching strategies where students learned at their own pace and at a level that they can succeed emerged as a dominant theme. Māori students appreciated the flexibility in the classroom where they learned about topics that were relevant to them in a style that benefitted them. These are considered motivators for students to succeed academically (Demmert, 2011; Kanu, 2006; Preston & Claypool, 2013).

The presence of Indigenous culture is closely tied to the student-focused classroom and relevance of the class material. Research indicates that the incongruence between the culture of Indigenous students and the school environment is a main contributor to school failure and negative learning experiences (Kanu, 2006). Kanu explained, "socio-cultural theories link the development of children's thinking, communication, learning, and motivational styles with the culture into which they are socialized and posit that an intricate connection exists between culture and student learning" (p. 120). Culturally responsive teachers are vital when including

cultural knowledge, language, and ceremony as part of the school curriculum, and are appreciated contributors to improving education outcomes for Indigenous students (Demmert, 2011; Kanu, 2006; Preston & Claypool, 2013). Indigenous students proudly embrace their heritage, and the acceptance of culture builds self-worth and self-esteem within students (Kanu, 2006; 2011).

Special note is taken regarding the importance of leadership in the successful implementation of the ETP and the overall success of the school. Recognizing disparities between social groups and Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was a primary catalyst. However, a desire and passion to initiate change was also present. Leadership is at the heart of the strategic changes provided by the ETP that transform teacher practices and address the inequitable practices that were affecting Māori student success. The principal and administration led change by creating a learning environment that was inclusive, respectful and relinquished hegemony, providing the link between education and social context. Shields (2010) explored the effects that principals had on making schools more inclusive and socially just and, as demonstrated in this case study, those schools reaped the academic rewards.

The strategies implemented by the teacher participants and the professional development ETP appeared to effectively improve Māori students' academic achievement levels. Within the five dominant strategies were various attributes that emulated the ETP. The teachers demonstrated genuine care for the students, dedication to student success, constant monitoring and co-construction, incorporation of culture, and culturally responsive teaching that builds relationships and provides a safe learning environment.

Future studies may inquire about the perceived teacher strategies that contribute to improved education outcomes in the Canadian context. Case studies and success stories can reveal which teacher strategies motivate students and assist them in succeeding academically. This exploration could reveal the commonalities and contrasts between academic papers that have recorded the voices of Aboriginal/Indigenous students' reporting what they need from teachers to succeed in school and what teachers have provided them that resulted in academic success. This could be followed with a comparative inquiry between New Zealand and Canada. Combining the student perspective with the teacher perspective provides a wholistic view that could contribute to a model of education success for Indigenous students. From a professional development perspective, the exploration of teaching strategies benefitting Indigenous students and improving education

attainment levels could be a foundation for a Canadian ETP to assisting both in-service teachers and pre-service teachers.

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3.7 Footnotes

¹ Wharekura: Wharekura is a pseudonym used to keep the anonymity of the school. "Wharekura" in Māori means "house of learning" or "school."

**PREFACE TO CHAPTER 4: A CANADIAN STUDY OF COMING FULL CIRCLE TO
TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY: A PEDAGOGY FOR THE 21ST
CENTURY**

One objective of this manuscript dissertation was to identify what teacher strategies had been implemented in a Saskatchewan, Canada urban high school, with mainly Indigenous non-traditional learners. Teachers reported that student-centered learning within a culturally-responsive atmosphere contributed to educational success. The school and teachers provided decolonizing school practices that were wholistic, experiential, and relational instruction; a range of non-academic supports; all within a culturally-affirming environment. This manuscript documents and analyses the teachers' strategies which, upon reflection, combine elements of traditional Indigenous pedagogy with features of what is labelled '21st-century learning'. Strategies included multidisciplinary project-based pedagogy, collaborative learning communities, and student-centered learning that was both practical and relevant to the students. Teachers believed that the decolonized classrooms that were animated through these innovations dramatically improved attendance, credit completion, and graduation rates. This case study demonstrates the potential of Indigenous educational approaches to foster innovations that can revitalize schools and improve educational attainment levels for all learners.

Chapter 4 has been reviewed and published in the *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education. Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival*. See Papp, T. A. (2020). A Canadian study of coming full circle to Indigenous pedagogy: A Pedagogy for the 21st century. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education. Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival* 14(1), 25-42. DOI: 10.1080/15595692.2019.1652587.

CHAPTER 4: A CANADIAN STUDY OF COMING FULL CIRCLE TO TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY: A PEDAGOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Reviewing the Canadian high school graduation rates for both Indigenous¹ and non-Indigenous students show that changes are urgently needed that address pedagogical and curriculum approaches. The school selected for this case study had experienced a dramatic shift in outcomes in four years. Between 2010 and 2014, the credit completion improved from 31% to 81%, attendance increased from 52% to 77%, and graduation rates increased from 3 to 55 (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015). Culturally-responsive approaches are deemed the most appropriate to engage Indigenous learners and improve outcomes (Hammond, 2015; Papp, 2016), and this case study confirms this and suggests that positive change is underway.

These teachers successfully improved motivation and engagement for their students, who were mainly Indigenous, and described as ‘non-traditional learners’.² This research presents teachers’ strategies and pedagogical approaches for implementing transformative³ and, decolonized⁴ Indigenous pedagogy in an urban Saskatchewan school that helped engage their Indigenous high school students to persevere, complete credits, and graduate from high school. The strategies that were instrumental in their students’ success are presented and found to emulate a decolonizing approach closely paralleling traditional Indigenous pedagogy. The teaching strategies also correlate to what is considered 21st Century Pedagogy⁵.

The significance of this research in Canada is to honour the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015) by improving educational outcomes and employment levels for Indigenous peoples. Also, the relevance of the findings extends worldwide as Indigenous peoples occupy all corners of the world. This research expands the literature in a Canadian context by explaining how pedagogical approaches were animated and provided substantiated empirical evidence building on previously reported education level gains in a New Zealand context (Papp, 2016). The findings are timely as students require much-needed skills to succeed in the current and future 21st-century workplace, and the findings demonstrate the potential of Indigenous educational approaches to foster innovations that can revitalize schools for all learners. This manuscript will be of interest to government leaders, policymakers,

and administrators to provide financial and political support for meeting the 21st-century workplace demands.

This paper synthesizes an understanding of the Indigenous worldview represented by the medicine wheel, a sacred circle that explains the world through the four domains: physical, socio-emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. A discussion is offered that demonstrates the intriguing parallels that overlap between 21st-century pedagogy and traditional Indigenous pedagogy (Munroe, Borden, Orr, Toney, & Meader, 2013) that centers on the medicine wheel. The results presented found the decolonizing pedagogy implemented at this school dramatically improved education outcomes, credit completion, and graduation rates.

4.1 Background Context: Education Attainment and Employability

A pre-requisite for higher education is a high school diploma. Improved education outcomes directly correlate to increased education levels and employability, which is one of the key ingredients in improving the economic conditions for Indigenous people (Howe, 2006; Ponting, 1997). Indeed, some Indigenous people speak of education as “the new buffalo” (Stonechild, 2006). Canadian reports consistently stress the need to provide quality education that supports Indigenous culture and identity and improves completion levels for the Indigenous peoples in Canada (Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2012; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Sharpe, Arsenault, Lapointe, & Cowan, 2009; TRC, 2015). Comparing the 2006 census to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) indicates that the completion of secondary studies for young Indigenous adults aged 20-24 has risen (Richards, 2014). Statistics Canada reported that in 2016, only 10.9% of Indigenous people aged 25 to 64 had a bachelor’s degree or higher postsecondary education and 23% had a college diploma (Statistics Canada, 2017). However, over the past 25 years, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student education successes has widened because of the more robust gains made by non-Indigenous learners (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2011).

4.2 Transformative Decolonized Classrooms: Indigenous Culture and Pedagogy

The low education attainment levels suggest that education as a whole needs transformation to improve outcomes for Indigenous students. A review of the literature found several studies that pertain to Indigenous pedagogy and traditional ways of Indigenous teaching.

Indigenous scholars have described traditional *Indigenous pedagogy* as wholistic⁵, relational, experiential, community-focused, ritual-centered, ceremonial, spiritual, and interdependent (Cajete, 1994; Castellano, 2016; Couture, 2011). Such culturally responsive approaches are most appropriate by including oral traditions (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009) and also linking culture to scaffold information, defined as “the act of taking in information, with the intent to understand it, relate it to what you already know, and store it in a way so you can easily retrieve it” (Hammond, 2015, p. 124).

Redwing Saunders and Hill (2007) stated, “no one epistemology is shared by all. However, a number of concepts bridge most, if not all, Indigenous people. Respect for each other and nature, the understanding of community, and the need for authenticity or an authentic voice are common values” (p. 1019). This does not imply that Indigenous people are homogenous and there is diversity in their linguistics, geographic locations, and cultural traditions; however, Indigenous people share “a common experience with colonization and racialization” (St. Denis, 2007, p. 1087).

The Indigenous worldview often is explained through the symbolism of the medicine wheel and the sacred circle (Calliou, 1995; Couture, 2011; Hampton, 1995). Couture (2011) explained the circle was centered and quartered to signify wholeness, inclusiveness, balance, and harmony with all nature. The model is circular to represent all quadrants of the human being. All quadrants are interrelated and must be equally developed while striving for balance (Castellano, 2016; Laframboise & Sherbina, 2008). Further findings endorse the wholistic imperative whereby learning must embrace the entire student by making cultural connections and creating relevance (Curwen Doige, 2003; Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Papp, 2016, 2018) an approach that Hammond defined as *culturally-relevant pedagogy* (2015). Indigenous pedagogy is wholistic, recognizing that the focus should be on students’ physical, socio-emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs as “all aspects of human life are fundamentally interconnected” (Pewewardy, 1998, p. 33).

To decolonize the classrooms, a transformative approach would include removing hierarchy, respecting alternative ways of knowing, introducing a new curriculum style that builds attachment and hope while providing curricula that are meaningful to the students by incorporating Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous pedagogy into the classroom (Battiste, 2000, 2013; Battiste & Barman, 1995; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Kanu, 2011). Other studies

explained the lack of Indigenous culture and language in the classroom has eroded the Indigenous students' sense of self-worth and lowered their self-esteem (Castellano, 2016; Kanu, 2006, 2011). Their absence was identified as a crucial factor in Indigenous students' lower outcomes (Kanu, 2002, 2006). Smith (1999) stated that "Indigenous groups have argued that history is important for understanding the present and that reclaiming history is a critical and essential aspect of decolonization" (p. 29-30) and for "decolonizing our minds, to recover ourselves" (p. 23). Other scholars have problematized decolonization and its terminology, suggesting that this approach to transforming classrooms are often token activities (Carey, 2014; Gebhard, 2018; Scott & Gani, 2018). Many recommendations for decolonization are theoretical and conceptual; few studies present empirical data on practical application and robust outcomes. This study provides both.

The school in this case study developed a decolonized pedagogy that attended to the whole student and embraced Indigenous culture by celebrating traditional ceremony and Indigenous languages. Numerous reports have privileged the voices of students (Kanu, 2002; Preston & Claypool, 2013) within elementary school contexts. Relatively little research has been conducted in Canadian urban high school contexts with Indigenous students that addresses the voices of their teachers (Kanu, 2011).

4.3 21st-Century Pedagogy: Traditional Indigenous Pedagogy Alignment

Reviewing the literature on 21st-century pedagogy identified specific skills that students need to acquire to be successful in current and future workplaces. These include creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, metacognition, communication, collaboration, information literacy, technological literacy, citizenship, life and career skills, cultural awareness, and personal and social responsibility (Binkley, Erstad, Herman, Raizen, Ripley, Miller-Ricci, & Rumble, 2012; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Additional literature suggests that, for students to achieve the skills previously listed, 21st-century pedagogy should be project and problem-based, experiential, collaborative, and student-centered, within a space of positive relationships, with the teacher as a guide (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

At first glance, the comparison may not seem obvious; however, closer examination suggests fundamental similarities between what is considered to be a traditional Indigenous pedagogy (Cajete, 1994; Castellano, 2016; Couture, 2011) and 21st-century pedagogy (Munroe et

al., 2013). Indeed many tenets of 21st-century pedagogy are deeply rooted in ancient traditions of Indigenous knowledge. The intent, through this case study, is not to argue for a substitution of one for the other but to delineate and highlight similarities that may be mobilized through decolonization for the benefit of not only Indigenous students but all students.

Reports state that students are not prepared for the workplace, and as a post-secondary instructor, I see that many students fall short on the skillsets required for today's workplace and come to the post-secondary classroom with the expectation that the instructor will impart knowledge through transmission learning. Although 83% of educators believe they are preparing youth effectively for the workplace, only 44% of youth believe they are adequately prepared, and employers report that only 34% of youth are prepared (McKinsey & Company, 2015). Also, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) confirmed that transmission or the lecture model is highly ineffective but still widely used (Scott, 2015; SSHRC, 2016).

Pedagogy must change to achieve the skills, and competencies learners need for the 21st century. SSHRC has recognized such 21st-century pedagogy, such as experiential student-centered learning, promotes creative and critical-thinking skills; however, the same report states that more empirical evidence of the effectiveness of student-centered learning is required (2016). This study responds to the need for empirical evidence identified by SSHRC and others.

Finally, a systematic search for research that connects 21st-century pedagogy with traditional Indigenous teaching had limited success. One text suggested that future models of 21st-century pedagogy would be wholistic and not only attend to knowledge and skills, but also incorporate students' feelings, beliefs, values, health, and resilience as a learning framework (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Its recommendation for future models is a wholistic approach that parallels traditional Indigenous pedagogy, which attends to the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional needs of the student (Cajete, 1994; Castellano, 2016; Couture, 2011; Curwen Doige, 2003; Munroe et al., 2013; Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Papp, 2016, 2018; Pewewardy, 1998).

The school for this case study had embraced project-based, experiential learning in a collaborative learning setting with a student-centered approach. The teachers in the case-study incorporated traditional Indigenous pedagogy into their practices to create a culturally-responsive decolonized pedagogy, and this study furthers the discussion of pedagogy for the 21st century as

it aligns with traditional Indigenous Pedagogy. The next section will describe the research question and methodology.

4.4 Purpose and Research Questions

This study and interview questions were designed to gain a better understanding of the pedagogical strategies that teachers perceived to be successful in helping Indigenous students attend school, remain in school, and graduate high school. The central research question directing this study was, What strategies and pedagogies have high school teachers implemented in the classroom that they perceive to have increased student engagement and educational achievement for their Indigenous students? Also, how did the pedagogies implemented in the classroom align with Indigenous approaches and 21st Century Pedagogy?

4.5 Research Methodology

Using a case study research design and qualitative methods, this inquiry seeks to document and analyze teachers' strategies that promoted educational success for Indigenous, high school students. Flyvbjerg concluded that a case study identifies the boundaries of what is chosen to be studied, approaches the study seeking depth and richness with consideration and understanding of the context (2011). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested that case study sampling "refers to an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon and not the number of people sampled" (p. 327).

This research follows an interpretive constructivist paradigm. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that the constructivist design "focuses on the perspectives, feelings, and beliefs of the participants" (p. 237) and the researcher acknowledges responsibility for co-constructing meaning while interpreting the participants' perspectives. The constructivist approach to research uses the participants' understanding and the multiple meanings that may emerge from the social construction of the interpretations to generate "or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8).

The research is also influenced by Critical Race Theory. Milner (2008) which explains how education institutions manipulate experiences through privilege, power, policies, practices, and procedures (Milner, 2008) and more specifically manipulate Indigenous peoples' experiences of race and racism. Milner encouraged researchers to elucidate the effects that race

and racism have in teacher education and ultimately in the classroom. Consequently, critical race theorists challenge and disrupt the status quo, to animate more egalitarian arrangements and outcomes (Hylton, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1994; Milner, 2008).

I also acknowledge the influence of Indigenous research methods, especially a non-hierarchical approach to my participants, seeing them as partners whose voices need to be heard and honoured. This respectful interaction, congruent with the Indigenous worldviews, will hopefully ensure that the findings will be seen as reliable and helpful within Indigenous communities (Acoose, Blunderfield, Dell, & Desjarlais, 2009; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Wilson, 2001, 2008). *In vivo*, axial, and comparative coding were used to honor and interpret the participants' voices. Saldana (2013) explained that *in vivo* coding is a verbatim coding and is congruent with Indigenous approaches to research in that it gives priority “. . . And honor [to] the participant's voice . . . By coding with their actual words” (p. 91).

The researcher collaborated with an Indigenous education leader to gain guidance and support, and the research was endorsed to be potentially beneficial for Indigenous students. Upon completion, the findings were reviewed and discussed with the aforementioned Indigenous leader, with the hope that the findings would provide practical guidance to the school division.

4.5.1 Site Selection and Participant Selection

This research presents a case study of one high school in Saskatchewan, Canada, catering to predominantly Indigenous students that had demonstrated significant improvements in student outcomes. Once considered a *survival school* catering primarily to Indigenous student's non-academic needs, divisional administrative leadership enacted significant innovation to improve educational outcomes for the students “by combining an inquiry-based pedagogy alongside Indigenous ways of knowing” (Lessard, 2015, p. 4). The students were primarily categorized as non-traditional learners in that they had experienced failure in numerous other schools before attending this school. The school scores empirically established improvements in grades, attendance, and graduation rates over four years (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015).

Using purposeful selection methods, seven participants were recruited. Creswell (2007) recommends purposeful sampling that is representative of the context. The criteria for selecting participants were that the teachers had to have taught together at the school a minimum of two academic years within the same timeframe. Two participants filled a dual role of school

administrators and teachers, four were teachers, and a division administrator was later added to be interviewed based on the critical role played in effecting change in the school on a system-wide basis. Two of the participants were female, and five were male. Three participants self-identified as Indigenous. The length of time the participants taught together ranged from 4 to 6 years. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted from one to two hours. All participants were highly articulate and demonstrated an impressive capacity to reflect on their work in the school, leading to the creation of vibrant and insightful data. Participants' anonymity was protected by the assignment of pseudonyms. The quotes included in this text are accurate to the transcription.

4.5.2 Limitations and Delimitations

Delimitations were applied to this study to manage the scope and breadth of the research. This case study was delimited to one school; so, findings may not be transferrable to other contexts. Also, what was discerned from interviews with the teachers represents a snapshot in time covering four years when they all taught together at the school. It is acknowledged that the strategies did not attain a 100% credit completion or graduation rate; however, the improvements are substantial. The focus was on the teacher participants' perceptions of what contributed to educational success for their Indigenous students.

Critical Race Theory centers the voices of the oppressed to disrupt the status quo. Teachers are often viewed as holding positions of power through their roles and practices. In this case study, the teachers interviewed had disrupted the typical hierarchy of power held within schools and relinquished their power to the students. They were committed to change and transformed the dynamics within their classrooms. The purpose of gaining the teachers' perspectives was to understand how they changed their practices, how this was animated in practical ways in the classroom, and how this resulted in improved learning outcomes for their Indigenous students who had typically endured negative experiences in previous schools through stereotyping and racism.

4.6 Findings: The evidence

At the time the research was conducted, the school hosted approximately 300 students in grades 9 to 12 from 51 First Nations across Saskatchewan. 56% were living independently, and

20% had children of their own (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015). Between 2010 and 2014, the credit completion improved from 31% to 81%, attendance increased from 52% to 77% and graduation rates increased from 3 to 55 (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015). What follows is a description of the emerging themes that made such dramatic improvements in Indigenous student outcomes.

4.7 Emerging Themes

The teacher participants described pedagogy and strategies that they implemented in their classrooms that they believe had improved student engagement and educational outcomes. Documenting and reflecting on their strategies and pedagogical approaches revealed that their instructional methods adapted and modernized traditional Indigenous pedagogy into the mainstream education system. Scholars describe Indigenous pedagogy to attend to the wholeness of the student through the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical realms within relationships based on respect and equality (Archibald, 2008; Castellano, 2016; Little Bear, 2009). The school and teachers attended to the whole student; therefore, the emerging themes are not solely pedagogical approaches but also supports and strategies that empower all aspects of the student.

The data revealed six main themes:

- Culturally-relevant pedagogy and affirming practices
- Student-centered education with student supports
- Teacher supports: administrative leadership and professional development
- Positive learning environment and social system
- Relational pedagogy: building trust, respect, and value
- Active learning and inquiry-based pedagogy

Figure 4.1 employs a medicine wheel model to depict the central themes and represents a transformative model for decolonizing education for Indigenous students. Culture encompasses all other themes as the dominant factor in the transformative model. Of the listed themes, two are overriding and interrelated to the others: culturally-affirming practices and student-centered education with student supports. The remaining four are dynamic and interwoven. The main themes are presented in more detail in the following sections as well as further elaboration of the transformative model.

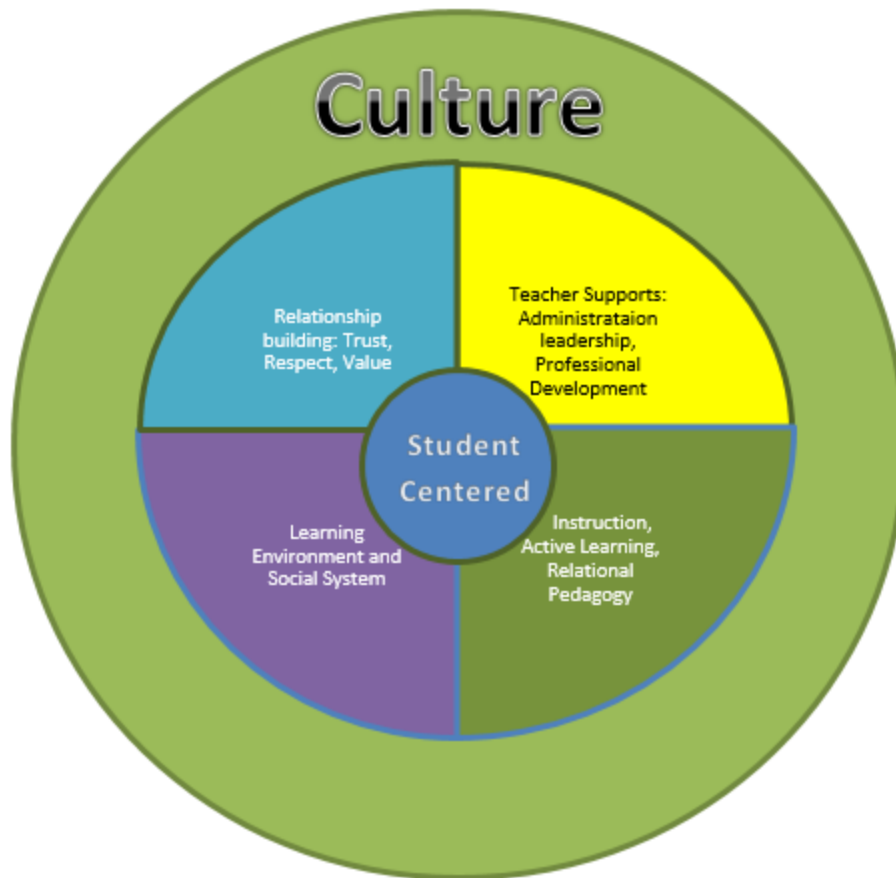


Figure 4.1: Transformative Model for Decolonizing Education for Indigenous Students

There were three vital components, identified as themes, introduced to the school that was essential strategic precursors to improving school outcomes. Firstly, the concept of disruptive innovation was employed by the division administrator to initiate a system-wide change. Next, the students were offered a variety of non-academic supports. And finally, significant professional development was provided to the staff every week for four years. What follows will be an explanation of the three preliminary antecedent themes followed by a discussion of the culturally-relevant pedagogy, the positive learning environment, social system, relational pedagogy, and active learning.

4.8 Transformative Leadership: A Vision for Change

The division administrator had a vision for change and wanted the school to experience academic success. A review of the statistics on attendance, enrolment, attrition, credit completion, and graduation rates by the division leader produced sobering results (Personal communication, CG, December 19, 2016). This prompted him to implement a strategic plan that asked critical questions to address the poor statistics. Deficit-thinking assumptions were identified as a significant concern, resulting in some staff leaving and new staff coming to the school, thereby upsetting the complacency. The new team was offered resources and encouragement to try innovative approaches and new ideas that engineered autonomy and support was provided for teachers through collaboration and professional development. The administrator also recognized that the students needed a variety of non-academic supports to be successful in school. Renihan (2012) stated, “leadership is critical to school and system effectiveness and, more specifically, student success” (p. 11).

4.9 Student-Centered Education and Student Supports

The school strategy was to remove the barriers that these students were facing and support the students with their challenges so they could achieve success and learn. The students’ needs (body, space, and place) were honoured as well as academic and spiritual needs, so the wholistic approach was congruent with an Indigenous pedagogy. The division administrator implemented an integrated-services model that provided student supports and addressed the roadblocks that might prevent them from attending school. Wholistically, the students’ basic needs for food, shelter, and transportation were met through practical supports: a breakfast and lunch food program, daycare, wellness programs, and services including a pediatrician, social workers, home and school liaison workers, community coordinators, addiction counselors, employment readiness courses, housing assistance, income assistance, financial literacy courses, and parenting programs. Eliminating barriers allowed the students to succeed.

Dan noted that the supports allowed students to attend school and feel successful. He stated, “These students were in all the other buildings [schools] in the city, and all they experienced everywhere was failure, failure, failure because of whatever issues they had to deal with.” The student-centered approach is woven through all the other initiatives. For example, the cultural programming focused on affirming, respecting, and valuing the students as Indigenous

peoples and embracing culture with pride. The school environment and social system provided a positive experience and learning space that offered multiple integrated supports. The focus on relationship building developed trust and respect; it valued the students for their ideas, time, and family, and accepted them and interacted with them based on equality. The instruction connected the students to the material by drawing on their lives and concerns, providing education that was student-paced and which deliberately and systematically infused culture into the curriculum. As such, culturally-responsive pedagogy was implemented through an agentic approach. At the core of the findings is student-centered education. The next section describes the teacher supports provided through professional development.

4.10 Teacher Supports and Professional Development

At the school level, the administration had adopted an emancipatory style of leadership where teachers felt they were working together towards a common purpose. New ideas were explored, and teachers felt trusted in their capabilities. The two school administrators led weekly professional development meetings that initiated the shift from transmission teaching to interactive, experiential, inquiry-based pedagogy. The weekly meetings revolved around student engagement, teaching styles, pedagogy, book studies, and discussions of what was working and not working in the classrooms. Teachers felt this activity built comradery between the teachers over the four years that it was implemented.

The administrators intentionally sought best-practices and methods of traditional Indigenous pedagogy to share with the teachers. They were in the classrooms every day, getting to know the students, supporting teachers, co-planning interactive pedagogy, co-teaching, and collaborating to develop a change in teachers' practice – one teacher at a time. The teacher's comradery and collaboration affected the atmosphere of the learning environment for the students, creating a positive learning space. The change in teaching styles further allowed students to connect with the material in culturally appropriate ways, under the direction of Elders, which developed the students' sense of self-esteem.

4.11 Culturally Affirming Practices: Decolonizing through Culturally-Relevant Pedagogy

Culture is present in all the themes emerging from the data, and in Figure 4.1, it is represented in all of the quadrants and permeates inward through the four central themes to the

student center. Figure 4.1 is a dynamic model that is in a constant state of flux and evolution, and it is suggested that achieving harmony and balance between all quadrants is the ultimate goal of education.

A focus of teacher learning was the ‘cultural continuity hypothesis’ (Friedel, 2010) which assumes that by acknowledging culturally based differences related to communication, interaction, and learning styles between Indigenous children and Western schools, more equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous learners can be achieved. Based on these insights, the school offered a culturally-responsive pedagogy that indigenized the curriculum, with the assistance of the Elders and the Indigenous community. Ken commented that regardless of a subject area, the goal was “making sure we are placing value on being true and authentic to First Nation knowledge and content in the curriculum.” Elders were available to provide direction and teach protocol. Dan commented that the Elders were welcoming and “very respectful of whatever level of [Aboriginal] knowledge you had about culture. [Elders were] Very eager to teach”.

Culture was deemed to improve learning for Indigenous students by connecting them to cultural knowledge as a means of increasing their sense of self-worth and scaffolding their learning (Castellano, 2016; Haig-Brown; 1995; Kanu, 2006; 2011; Regnier, 1995; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002). The Indigenous worldview was honoured by making connections with students’ concerns and interests. Students were offered the opportunity to reflect on their learning and, make connections to create meaning and conceptualize. The teachers were aware of the Indigenous approach to life. The Indigenous culture is based on the land and nature, and Adam explained, “The fall does not force the winter, and the winter does not force the spring. It all happens in due time.” He also explained that the culture is body-based and relational and used the smudge and sweat as examples because they focus on the fire, the hands, the smell, the mind, and the sitting. He translated this to his mathematics class and made it land-based by physically getting the students out of the classroom and into nature, working in groups and experiencing both relational and wholistic experiential learning.

Influenced by professional development, the teachers implemented inquiry-based learning programs that revolved around experiential learning, a traditional Indigenous teaching style (Cajete, 1994; Couture, 2011) as well as 21st-century pedagogy. The school demonstrated traditional Indigenous pedagogy through active learning, discussions, group learning,

storytelling, culture, ceremony, peer-based, and teacher-student-based relationships. This diversity in approaches and the commitment to addressing the whole student helped the students achieve educational success.

Indigenous culture was the heartbeat of the whole school, and the teachers affirmed that the students felt that culture was the most important thing about the school. Culture was not *out there* in the hallways. Ken confirmed that being in a school that was predominantly Indigenous provided a sense of power and community, which had a positive effect on the Indigenous students and contributed to their learning. Ken concluded that in other schools, the dynamics of the school could be intimidating. Ken stated, “They felt like they belonged here. There was a sense of family; there was a sense of belonging.” The students felt accepted for who they were, and many developed a sense of pride and found their Indigenous identity through culture and ceremony that was infused into the curriculum.

Spiritual needs were regularly addressed through ceremony. Many students had never learned the teachings or protocol around the ceremony, so Elders taught the students about the long history of the Indigenous tradition. Teachers remarked that it was evident that the students felt a sense of pride, identity, and purpose through engagement in ceremony. Adam recalled, “A lot of the students were discovering culture for the first time.” Having a daycare on the premises allowed the students to share their culture with their children by bringing them to celebrations and smudges. The school was an intergenerational community where Elders, teachers, students, and their children were all welcomed and learned from each other.

The circle time was deemed especially significant. Circle time was an opportunity for students and their teachers to share what was happening in their lives and the challenges they were experiencing in a safe environment without criticism. Dan explained, “It also gave the kids a chance to share, you know [even share] some of your own struggles with the kids. To have the opportunity to support each other,” demonstrating teachers have challenges and their humanness.

Visibly, the school was not just teaching academics; it was also honouring the complete student by addressing their physical, socio-emotional, and spiritual needs. Mainstream schools typically focus on the lessons and are transmission oriented. Ken stated, “Once it [change to Aboriginal teaching style] happened, it is like they [the students] came alive. The blossoming of ideas and thinking and creativity and voice.” Some participants noted culture was an inconvenience or a token event in other schools that had to fit into the school schedule. A

culturally-responsive approach to Indigenous pedagogy and epistemology was present in every aspect of the themes and central to the school and classroom teachings. The culture permeated every aspect of the classrooms, activities, pedagogy, curriculum, and ceremony. These activities are central to decolonization.

The school created a positive environment, and the school's culture was infused with language, ceremony, Elders, and Indigenous cultural classes. The teachers viewed the cultural component as a way for the students to be acknowledged and honoured as Indigenous students. Monthly award ceremonies recognized students for their achievements in demonstrated leadership, cultural leadership, diligence, kindness to others, attendance, and grades.

4.12 School and Learning Environment: Structure and Positive Learning Spaces.

A positive learning environment was incorporated through building relationships between the teachers and the students. Teachers relinquished their power and engaged with students in a non-hierarchical manner to decolonize their classrooms. The teachers were allies in education and very much aware of their students' past negative school experiences, which included white privilege, racism, power, hierarchy, and exclusion. Unlike other institutions that perpetuate hegemonic approaches, these teachers first addressed the students' damaged spirits about education and learning. Through regular professional development, teachers changed their teaching style from transmission teaching to inquiry-based learning, which assisted students to engage in learning regardless of their skillsets.

The atmosphere was welcoming, and students were encouraged to return to school when they could. The atmosphere was less structured than a traditional school and had less hierarchy, representing a decolonized school. Everyone called each other by their first name. This sense of equality created positive communication between students, teachers, and administration. There was no *us and them* attitude. Also, the school's immersion in Indigenous culture and ceremony created a sense of commonality between the teachers and the Indigenous students as a decolonizing process to honour other ways of knowing. Most of the teachers were non-Indigenous and embraced learning about Indigenous culture as a positive accomplishment.

Physically, the building was small and old but had a homey feeling with a maximum capacity of about 300. Classrooms did not look like *regular* classrooms with desks in rows. The teachers played peaceful, inspirational music and started classes with a sharing circle.

Classrooms contained coffee pots and kettles for students to help themselves to coffee or tea. Some classrooms had couches, armchairs, and roundtables for group work, and sage hung from the ceiling. The fluorescent lights were off, and lamps or sunlight lit the room. Teachers moved around the room and talked with different students rather than lecturing at the front of the class. Some teachers explained that the classroom was designed to make the students feel at home. The classrooms' structure lent itself to students working together and engaging with each other as explained as traditional Indigenous pedagogy. Laptops and iPads were available for the students to use or take home. Teachers had Facebook pages for their courses so students could keep track of what was happening when they were not in school.

This school offered a modified-block system for the students, which the participants viewed as another vital factor contributing to the students' success. The modified-block system consisted of a two-hour block in the morning and afternoon for ten weeks with the potential to earn at least two credits per term. Students could complete credits in a few weeks compared to months. Two-hour classes also allowed the teachers to be more relationship-focused than they could be in one-hour classes.

The school was one of the first to adopt dual-credit classes that were supported by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum was designed to intersect the learning outcomes of two classes with the same number of hours. For example, one dual-credit class blended Native Studies, a content-driven course, with English, a process-driven course. Dual-credit classes required two teachers to plan and assess together. Dual-credit classes were attractive to students. The teachers noted that the students were engaged in the dual-credit courses, and this approach was less *silo-ish* and more wholistic than mainstream schools.

Also, the school implemented the credit recovery system. If students had to be away for personal reasons or a family emergency for a few weeks they could return and be able to continue the class through the credit recovery program. The credit is held over without the frustration of starting at the beginning again. Credit recovery changed the students' attitudes. Dan explained, "If they were there [in school] they could be successful, then it was a fun place to be. Even if those successes were just little ones along the way. . . then that was attractive to them, and they wanted to be there." Adam explained that it "is not so much as you have failed the class"; it was '*not yet.*' This helped students experience success in school where other schools

represented failure, so students acquired an intrinsic desire to attend school, and attendance resulted in the credits necessary to graduate.

4.13 Relational Pedagogy: Building Trust, Respect, and Value

The teacher-student relationship is the foundation of successful pedagogy (Papp, 2016; Preston & Claypool, 2013). In this case study, it is clear that the school supported the students' socio-emotional needs through the relationships built with the teachers. They experienced a feeling of family and genuine caring. Through sharing circles, teachers and students shared their concerns, which developed trust, respect, and healing.

The teachers took on the role of a healer and ally being aware of the students' past school experiences. Often, the students' spirits were damaged by the racism, failure, ridicule, and shame they felt in other schools. Students often felt that their failure was their fault, not realizing it was the effect of the school's colonization process. Ken explained that most students who attended the school had already attended four to six different high schools, and the transmission learning experience did not work for most Indigenous students. Teachers offered support, provided a sense of family, and nurtured the learners. The teachers' caring approach and sensitivity to their students' past classroom experiences built trust, and the students experienced healing.

The participants were aware not to criticize or evaluate harshly. Emily commented that "no one is greater than or less than [anyone else]," which created a sense of equality and mutual respect in the classrooms. Teachers demonstrated respect and parity, and the school was non-hierarchical with everyone on a first-name basis representing a decolonized approach to teaching. Students knew they were respected, and the teachers were interested in them as people and their lives. Adam commented:

There was a real relaxed sense of equality between the students and the teachers in terms of equality of dignity and equality of personhood that they perceived, and they knew they were respected because they were not talked down to in that authoritarian kind of wagging the finger kind of way. It was much more relational based.

The relationships built between the students and teachers helped students to feel confident to learn because they knew that they would not be humiliated. Respect was also pivotal in the learning process. As Emily stated:

How students learn – if they are comfortable with you, they know you, you are not threatening to them, there is no judgment there ... when you ask them a question in any

class, in any course that you are teaching – they will try. They will give you an answer because they don't fear. They don't fear the ridicule or judgment or humiliation, and so their learning is greatly increased by that relationship.

The teachers strived to open the dialogue and resist the traditional-style classroom, where the teacher lectures and gives an assignment, and the class is quiet. The teachers related to the students and had conversations as equals. Adam stated, “[It was] more about building those relationships and getting to know one another than it is about the science that we are going to do in class. Spend time getting to know each other first before class work.” Student first – then teach.

All the teachers commented that they did not require classroom management techniques, and disruptive behavior was uncommon. The relationships and respect established between the student and the teacher was the reported reason.

4.14 Active learning, Assessments, Engagement, and Inquiry-based Pedagogy

The school recognized that transmission learning was not successful for their students. Hence, the school embraced inquiry-based learning, where students work together in groups to drive their learning. The interactive pedagogy offered students a sense of belonging and ownership of the learning. The curriculum was presented in a culturally-relevant manner that was considerate of Indigenous learning preferences. The onus for student engagement, course credits, and attendance was on the teachers who endeavoured to make the curriculum applicable to the students' lives.

The curriculum was student directed, and teachers attended to the intellectual needs of the student by connecting the curriculum with the students' lives, culture, and interests which engaged the students and allowed the students to be curious. Students experienced educational success with this approach. Knowing the students were deemed important to the pedagogy, as Ken explained, “you are able to open doors to students to bring their experiences to the learning context. Their ideas. Their perspective and understanding and experiences to the curriculum.” Ben explained that he would find out about his students' families, hobbies, likes, and dislikes, which helped him personalize the students' learning.

Teachers used culturally-responsive pedagogy that was inquiry-based, problem-based, or land-based pedagogy, which provided the freedom to be less institutional. The teachers and

students shared ownership and leadership. By incorporating this type of pedagogy, Adam stated, “I believe it is about opening up the channel of curiosity and giving them the opportunity to be curious about anything.” The teachers’ philosophy for curriculum delivery is to not waste the students’ time on *doing stuff* just to keep them busy but to make it interesting and applicable to their lives. Participants noted that the school focused not only on helping the students to graduate but also on preparing them with life skills to be productive citizens.

The students enjoyed cooperative work in small groups because it created a sense of community. Teachers acknowledged that more heads were better than one; this built strength within their learning community. Students have different skills, and through collaboration with others, everyone can be successful.

The learning structure allowed for the material to be student-paced. Teachers recognized the need to present the big picture before fragmentation or introducing theory. The teaching style was process driven so students would gain understanding instead of information just for the sake of information; the teachers’ goal was applied knowledge. One barrier to student achievement was their education gaps caused by absenteeism and frequent moving to different locations and changing schools. These gaps caused problems in courses with sequential concepts like mathematics. To help, one teacher created math videos that students could access at any time.

Teachers were aware that evaluations were viewed as high-stress situations, so they preferred formative, ongoing assessment that was usually discussions with students individually. They noted that it was a more valuable assessment method that was more rigorous to implement. Faye stated, “Taking it [assessment] away from being super high stress, ‘I know she is judging me on this,’ to just being – let’s have a conversation about this; what can you tell me about this?” The inquiry-based and project-based learning did not align well with traditional tests and quizzes; teachers were continually assessing and believed assessments should be ongoing, varied, and transparent to the students. The teacher and the students jointly established evaluations to present a clear outline of the expectations. Students were also invited to evaluate themselves and others.

Emily would interview students informally to assess where students were at in the learning process and to assist them in getting back on track if needed. Students were offered multiple alternatives to demonstrate their learning. Some teachers said they would eavesdrop on discussion groups and provide immediate feedback on a sticky note to the students and took

notes on the students' progress regularly. The teachers reported continually moving around the room from student to student and group to group offering feedback and encouragement verbally.

4.15 Coming Full Circle: Indigenous Pedagogy Compared to 21st-Century Pedagogy

This research set out to answer the research question, What strategies and pedagogies have high school teachers implemented in the classroom that they perceive to have increased student engagement and educational achievement for their Indigenous students? Also, how did the pedagogies implemented in the classroom align with Indigenous approaches and 21st Century Pedagogy?

This qualitative case study presented the perceptions of the teachers' and the school's strategies that promoted educational success for their Indigenous learners through decolonized pedagogy. The school and its teachers achieved this by respecting the plurality of other ways of knowing that embraced Indigenous culture and traditional pedagogy. Critical Race Theory would identify teachers to hold positions of power; however, these teachers disrupted the status quo and relinquished their power that is typically the hierarchy embedded in the education system. The teachers genuinely cared about their students, demonstrated compassion, and created a healing atmosphere for students consistent with transformative learning through decolonization (Battiste, 2013; Katz & St. Denis, 1991; Silver, 2013). This research has presented theory into practice with empirical evidence to validate the findings. Between 2010 and 2014, the credit completion improved from 31% to 81%, attendance increased from 52% to 77% and graduation rates increased from 3 to 55 (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015).

Figure 4.1 presents culture as the encompassing requirement to decolonize the classroom with culturally-relevant practices while engaging the students with relational and inquiry-based pedagogy. Teachers were provided the skills to incorporate these pedagogies through weekly professional development led by the administrators. Students were provided with the necessary non-academic supports while learning material was student-centered. The transformative model is represented by a traditional circle, and the participants believed that all components were required to be present for their students to achieve improved educational outcomes as compared with other education facilities.

This study revealed that the teachers taught following a traditional Indigenous pedagogy that also paralleled what is described as 21st-century pedagogy. See Table 4.1 for a comparison.

What was found from this research was the similarities between traditional Indigenous pedagogy and 21st-century pedagogy which fostered respect, active learning, collaboration, and learning activities that were student-driven while regularly celebrating Indigenous culture and ceremony that built their students' self-esteem and self-confidence. The application of traditional Indigenous pedagogy that parallels 21st-century pedagogy in this case study produced empirical evidence that endorses these strategies. It also provides data requested by SSHRC (2016) to demonstrate that transformative learning utilizing experiential and hands-on student-centered learning improves learning outcomes.

Table 4.1: Comparing Traditional Indigenous Pedagogy to 21st Century Pedagogy

Aboriginal Traditional Pedagogy	21st Century Pedagogy
Student centered and student driven	Student centered and student driven
Active learning	Active learning
Hands-on, experiential, inquiry-/problem-based	Hands-on, experiential, inquiry-/problem-based
Work collaboratively, small groups	Work collaboratively, small groups
Relevance to student's life, connections	Relevance to student's life, connections
Life-long learning	Life-Long Learning
Teacher as a guide	Teacher as a guide
Community involvement and participation	Community involvement and participation
Learning space and time	Learning space and time
The whole learner focused	Emerging: the <u>whole</u> learner focused
Big picture – applied knowledge	Big picture – applied knowledge
Shared ownership and leadership	Shared ownership and leadership

The teachers incorporated experiential learning through inquiry-, problem-, project-, or land-based learning. This style of learning is both identified as a traditional Indigenous form of education (Cajete, 1994; Couture, 2011) and is consistent with 21st-century pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). For both types of pedagogy, researchers attested that learning should be student-centered and student-driven to allow students to direct their learning into areas that are relevant to them and have a purpose. The findings of this research endorsed the effectiveness of students working together in collaborative groups to create a sense of community within a positive learning space that is supported by teachers who are guides or

facilitators of learning rather than directors of learning (Cajete, 1994; Couture, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2008; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Learning of this type is consistent with both traditional Indigenous and 21st-century pedagogy.

The school offered flexible and student-paced classes through the credit recovery program. Assessments endorsed by the school often focused on formative evaluation for learning, conversational evaluation, and demonstrated learning. This approach is considered to be a more effective method of assessment than summative assessments or teaching to the test (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Teachers strived for students to obtain a more in-depth understanding, to apply their knowledge, and to reflect on the bigger picture that is achieved through the learning projects congruent with both Indigenous and 21st-century pedagogy (Cajete, 1994; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Merriam (2009) stated:

The qualitative case study design is employed to gain an in depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned for case studies can directly influence policy, practice and future research. (p. 19)

This research has shown promise but does have its limitations. The case study was a snapshot in time, and further research is required to affirm the sustainability of improvements in educational attainment levels using these strategies. This study reported the findings from one case study, and more studies are needed to address one of the challenges SSHRC (2016) identified to advise new ways of learning for our evolving society. This research is a starting point for future research in this area to inform educators and policymakers.

Verna Kirkness (1998) described the following as a possible definition for educational success for Indigenous students as, “You know when you have achieved your goal of quality education when your children are enjoying the challenge of school/learning, when their self-esteem and self-confidence are evident, when your children are proud of who they are, when their links with the older generations are made” (p. 15).

Teachers’ intentional strategies to incorporate traditional Indigenous pedagogy into the classrooms has come full circle. There are striking congruencies between traditional Indigenous pedagogy and what is described as 21st-century pedagogy. By decolonizing the classroom, Indigenous ways of knowing were respected, and the hierarchy of power typically found in

society and education were removed. The Transformative Model for Decolonizing Education for Aboriginal Students (See Figure 4.1) represents an interrelated model of which all components, pedagogies, supports, and strategies, that must be present to decolonize the classrooms of this case study. It is ironic that Indigenous pedagogy, once considered an inferior pedagogy through the colonization process, has come full circle, under the guise of a new name, 21st-century pedagogy. A shift to traditional Indigenous pedagogy may help make this vision possible and improve learning outcomes for Indigenous students, if not all students.

4.16 References

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4.17 Footnotes

¹ Aboriginal: “Aboriginal identity refers to whether the person identified with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada) and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.” (Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/009/98-500-x2016009-eng.cfm>)

Although the term Aboriginal is used as an encompassing term, the school was represented by students from 52 First Nations and it is recognized that Aboriginal peoples can have different languages, ceremonies, cultural activities, spiritual beliefs and unique histories (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

² Non-traditional learners: Non-traditional learners are described as learners that do not excel through transmission learning commonly used in learning environments.

³ Transformative: Shields (2010) provides distinctions among three theories of leadership: Transactional, transformational and transformative leadership wherein transformative is closely aligned with critical race theory and the process involves “deconstruction and reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity, acknowledgment of power & privilege” (p. 563) for the purpose of liberation and justice.

⁴ Decolonize: Education is dictated by policies and power that has imperialistically established a *mainstream* of knowledge while ignoring and discounting other ways of knowing and knowledge. It is the rejection of Eurocentrism as the only foundation for learning. To decolonize education is to remove “the hierarchy of power embedded in society” (Battiste, 2013, p. 105). Decolonization respects educational pluralities and, other ways of knowing and reflects the students’ lives.

⁴ Wholistic: Wholistic is used instead of holistic. The root word of holistic is hole. The root word of wholistic is whole. The connotative preference when consider education and addressing a person’s complete needs is considering the person as a whole; hence, the preference to wholistic.

⁵ 21st Century Pedagogy: 21st century pedagogy should be project and problem-based, experiential, collaborative, and student-centered, within a space of positive relationships, with the teacher as a guide (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). 21st-century pedagogy would be wholistic and not only attend to knowledge and skills, but also incorporate students’ feelings, beliefs, values, health, and resilience as a learning framework (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

PREFACE TO CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES (CRP) AND INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS: A COMPARATIVE CASE-STUDY OF NEW ZEALAND AND SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

Employing a multiple instrumental case study approach, we document and analyze initiatives in Saskatchewan and New Zealand to enhance cultural responsiveness among Caucasian educators through professional learning initiatives undertaken as part of broader strategies to animate more equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous students. The findings of this research confirm the capacity of teachers to act as agents of change and highlight the potential of teacher professional learning to catalyze educational reform and innovation, ensuring that schools can indeed benefit students who have historically been underserved by public education. We conclude that the growing Indigenous presence in classrooms is a powerful driver of innovation, which offers the potential to transform curriculum, pedagogy and teacher-student relationships for the benefit of all learners.

Chapter 5 has been submitted for publication to the *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*. See Papp, T. A., & Cottrell, M. (2020, In press). The manuscript is entitled, *Professional development, culturally responsive practices (CRP) and Indigenous student success: A comparative case-study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada*. This paper draws on data collected by the principal researcher, Theresa A. Papp. Aspects of that data, including some participants' quotations, have been previously cited in the following publications: Papp, T. A. (2016). Teaching strategies for improved education outcomes for Indigenous students. *Comparative and International Education* 45(3), 1-14 and Papp, T. A. (2020). A Canadian study of coming full circle to Aboriginal pedagogy: A pedagogy for the 21st century. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education: Studies of Migration, Integration, Equity, and Cultural Survival* 14(1), 25-42 (See Chapters 3 and 4).

CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES (CRP) AND INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS: A COMPARATIVE CASE-STUDY OF NEW ZEALAND AND SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

5.1 Academic Disparities Characterize Indigenous Peoples Globally

In a recent paper, Santamaria et al. declared that “[a]cademic achievement gaps are the contemporary schooling educational pandemic of this age” (Santamaría, Santamaría, Webber, & Pearson 2014, p. 4). Others have noted that there “is an ongoing issue of educational disparities that characterize Indigenous peoples in many countries and continue to plague them for the rest of their lives” (Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth, Peter, & Clapham, 2012, p. 695); with Canada, the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand often being framed as comparators (Campbell, 2017; Cottrell, 2010; Cottrell & Hardie, 2019; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Papp, 2016, 2020; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016; Timperley & Parr, 2009). Since global reforms have amplified teachers’ accountability for their students’ learning outcomes, educators in these jurisdictions are increasingly being called upon to embrace profound innovations in classroom approaches and practices so that Indigenous students can derive more equitable benefit from publicly-funded education. However, despite a growing recognition of the efficacy of teacher professional learning in bridging the disconnect between a predominantly Caucasian teaching personnel and a burgeoning Indigenous student presence in many schools, very little research has focused on the impact which this learning and innovation is having on teaching, learning, and classroom dynamics (CTF, 2015 Campbell, 2017; Hattie, 2009; Kozlowski, 2017; Paris, 2016).

Our purpose here is to address that gap in the literature by documenting and analyzing initiatives in Saskatchewan¹ and New Zealand² (jurisdictions with particularly large Indigenous student populations) to enhance cultural responsiveness among Caucasian educators through professional learning initiatives undertaken as part of broader strategies to create more supportive school environments for Indigenous students. Our goal is to document these initiatives from the perspectives of teachers and administrators involved in the processes, to delineate motives, experiences, and impacts of such innovations. Because of striking similarities

in Indigenous histories, demographic trajectories, educational inequities, and neo-colonial tensions, the implications of this comparative study are potentially broad and significant.

We begin with a brief historical overview of Saskatchewan and New Zealand providing short sketches of current contexts, highlighting differences but also striking similarities in the shared trajectory from colonization towards new accommodations with Indigenous Peoples³ in these disparate locations. The literature section provides definitions and descriptions of teacher professional learning, reviews links between teachers' professional learning, culturally-responsive education and pedagogical efficacy, and highlights a significant gap in evidence regarding the role of professional learning in fostering cross-cultural competence among teachers working with Indigenous students in North American, and especially Canadian contexts. Our methodology section follows, and we then present our data and identify the central themes derived from the data. The findings suggest that in the contexts studied, intentional teacher professional learning, aligned with whole systems initiatives, has transformational potential in inducing some educators to confront deeply-held epistemic and ontological assumptions and to entertain radically different pedagogical strategies and conceptions of relationships with students. After documenting the positive impacts of those initiatives for Indigenous students' educational and personal success, we conclude the paper with recommendations regarding policy and practice and suggest further areas for research.

5.2 Historical Background

Saskatchewan and New Zealand share a common historical trajectory from British colonies to modern English-speaking culturally diverse settler states. A comparative lens highlights five distinct and almost identical post-contact phases in the evolution of discourses around indigeneity and education in these two contexts. These include attempts by Indigenous groups after contact to access formal European schooling, often through treaty; a colonial⁴ era beginning in the 19th century when education was used by British authorities both as a vehicle for nation-building and as a tool of Indigenous assimilation with culturally genocidal effects; a post-World War Two integrationist phase underpinned by liberal ideas of individualism and equality; the beginnings of a decolonization discourse in the 1970s characterized by Indigenous groups asserting control over education as a means of revitalizing their languages and cultures; and contemporary contexts in which Indigenous assertions of sovereignty are bolstered by

growing demographic presence and are complicated by increasingly unambiguous data around incommensurate educational outcomes (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). Common to both historical contexts also were deeply entrenched educational discourses that framed Indigenous peoples through a range of deficit conceptualizations that problematized them as deficient in critical ways related to learning, due to racially and culturally ascribed limitations (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). A consequence of these pathologizing discourses in both contexts is entrenched alienation and disengagement from schools among significant numbers of Indigenous students (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Sleeter, 2011).

5.2.1 Saskatchewan Context

Approximately 16% of the Saskatchewan population claim Aboriginal status as descendants of the Indigenous groups, which occupied the area in pre-contact times (Waiser, 2005). Two-thirds of Aboriginal people identify as First Nations, roughly one-third as Métis, and less than 1% as Inuit (Aboriginal Population Profile, 2006). In Saskatchewan today, one in four children under four years old is of Aboriginal ancestry, and Aboriginal students represent 47% of the province's school-age cohort. If the Aboriginal growth rate continues in line with the 2011 census, half of Saskatchewan's population will be Aboriginal within 25 years (Falihi & Cottrell, 2015). However, for Aboriginal peoples themselves and the broader community to derive maximum benefit from this demographic potential, it is critical that persistent gaps in educational attainment are addressed (Cottrell & Hardie, 2018; Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019).

The 2010 Saskatchewan Education Indicators Brief (2011) reported that “almost three-quarters of Saskatchewan students graduate from Grade 12 within three years of starting Grade 10. Of the self-identified Aboriginal students who entered Grade 10 in 2008-09, about one-third had graduated on-time by 2010-11” (p. 6). The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2013-14 Plan reported that in the “2009-10 school year, 35.9% of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students graduated on time compared to 73.7% of all students” (p. 11). “The Ministry of Education says more students are graduating from high school in Saskatchewan, but the rate for Indigenous students remains more than 20 percentage points lower than the province's long-term goal. In 2016 -17, the graduation rate for Aboriginal students increased to 43.2 percent in 2016-17, from 41.9 percent in 2015-16 (CBC, 2017).

5.2.2 New Zealand Context

In New Zealand, Māori people constitute approximately 20% of the population, 5% are of Pacific Island Polynesian descent, and 3% are Asian. English and Māori are New Zealand's two official languages. The Māori and Pacific Island populations are typically younger than other groups, and close to 30% of the school-age population are Māori. The New Zealand education system has undergone extensive change over the past three decades, informed by neoliberal accountability and market-driven reforms, with a strong focus on improving outcomes for Māori students, including a Māori Education Strategy and specific Māori-medium education. Despite this, the Māori student still experiences persistent disparities in educational outcomes. In 2010, 55% of Māori students achieved the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 2 (minimum graduation certification) compared to 78% of the non-Māori student population. Only 24% of Māori students leaving school were qualified to enter university, in comparison with 52% of the non-Māori student population (Education Counts, 2012). As described starkly by Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, and Teddy (2009):

The overall academic achievement levels of Māori students is low; their rate of suspension from school is three times higher; they are over-represented in special education programmes for behavioral issues; enroll in pre-school programs in lower proportions than other groups; tend to be over-represented in low stream education classes; are more likely than other students to be found in vocational curriculum streams; leave school earlier with less formal qualifications and enroll in tertiary education in lower proportions. (pp. 1-2)

Similar colonial dynamics in Saskatchewan and New Zealand over the past two centuries have therefore resulted in contemporary contexts where “more equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous learners is a shared and urgent policy priority” (Cottrell, 2010, p. 223). And in both jurisdictions, policymakers have increasingly looked to whole system school reforms to address this challenge. This approach is defined by Fullan (2011) as “raising the bar and closing the gap for all students in every school, and in every district and at all levels in the public school system (p. 1), and it is achieved through “professional development, leadership development, curriculum, and instructional resources, reinforced ... with interventionist accountability schemes” (Fullan, 2010, p. 25).

5.3 Ongoing Teachers' Learning and Professional Development: A Review

An imperative to engage in ongoing learning and professional development to improve pedagogical effectiveness with the goal of maximizing the conditions for student learning has been an expectation of teachers since the earliest days of the teaching profession (Grimmet, 2014). Typically accessed as a one-day in-service, such ongoing teacher professional development and learning is described by Bullock and Sator (2015) as featuring:

...A combination of presentations, hands-on workshops, and collaborative teamwork that are often organized in advance by school and school district leadership. Teachers also routinely set their own, informal, ongoing PD agendas, such as taking additional courses, pursuing graduate study, personal study of their subject matter or teaching approaches, sharing resources and ideas with colleagues, and building learning networks through social media. (n.p.)

Avalos (2011) suggested that “professional development is about teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students’ growth” (p.10). Historically framed as teacher professional development, proD, or *PD*, the process has more recently been recast as teacher professional learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Bullock and Sator (2015) referenced the essential learning involved in the process by defining teacher professional development as “teachers’ ongoing learning to improve the way they teach [which] occurs in both formal and informal ways.” Since others (Campbell, 2017; Fullan, Hill, & Crevola, 2006) also prefer the term professional learning, we will follow that usage here, unless referencing sources that employ more traditional terminology.

A large body of research highlights the importance of teachers’ professional learning and confirms that students are more successful when teachers have meaningful, ongoing, professional learning opportunities (Bullock & Sator, 2015; Campbell, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2008; Fullan, 2010, 2011; Nieto, 2013). Other studies (Hattie, 2009; Kozlowski, 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Papp, 2016, 2020; Sleeter, 2011) noted the powerful effect of professional learning on improved student achievement, with positive impacts being most significant for low-achieving students. Teacher professional learning is recognized to be a complex process, requiring cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity to examine convictions and beliefs, and the willingness to enact appropriate innovations to practice (Avalos, 2011). In whatever form it is accessed, the best professional learning “involves knowledge for practice, knowledge in practice, knowledge of practice and knowledge

of self” (Kelly, 2017, p. 1). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017, p. 1) delineated the following features of effective professional learning for teachers:

- Is content focused
- Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
- Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
- Uses models and modeling of effective practice
- Provides coaching and expert support
- Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
- Is of sustained duration

Significant for this research is the professional learning needs identified by Canadian teachers in a recent survey, highlighting the importance of, and demand for, appropriate professional learning to enhance their ability to support and teach diverse students, in particular, to increase knowledge and understanding of Indigenous students (CTF, 2015). Despite this, however, we were unable to uncover any significant body of research analyzing types of professional learning that might assist Caucasian teachers in working effectively with Indigenous students in North American contexts. In contrast, extensive research has been conducted in New Zealand on the Ministry of Education-funded *Te Kotahitanga* professional learning project to validate its effectiveness for improving outcomes, specifically for Māori students (Bishop et al., 2012; Bishop, O’Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010; Hynds, Hindle, Savage, Meyer, Peneito, & Sleeter, 2016; Papp, 2016, Sleeter, 2011).

5.3.1 Culturally Responsive/Sustaining Practices

The powerful effect of teacher professional learning on improved outcomes for low-achieving students highlights its potential to enhance the interface between the predominantly Caucasian teaching profession and the growing number of Indigenous learners in classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Papp, 2016, 2020; Paris, 2016). A large body of research also suggests that a critical dimension of such professional learning is that it be informed by what initially was described as culturally-responsive educational practices (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop, et al., 2010; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Cherubini, 2014; Kanu, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b, 2014; Orłowski & Cottrell, 2019; Papp, 2016, 2020; Pelletier, Cottrell & Hardie, 2013), more recently described as culturally sustaining practices (McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris,

2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). Culturally-responsive practices acknowledge culturally-based differences related to communication, interaction, and learning styles termed “cultural discontinuity hypothesis” (Friedel, 2010, p. 5), that when addressed, may provide more equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous students. By highlighting shortcomings in schools and curricula and unmasking mainstream schools as cultural sites, the culturally-responsive turn invites educators to embrace “Indigenous people’s worldviews, social structures and pedagogy as a legitimate foundation upon which to construct new meanings or knowledge alongside Western traditions and ways of knowing” (Bouvier & Karlenzig, 2006, p. 17). Gay (2002) defined culturally-responsive pedagogy as:

Using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively... based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the students’ lived experiences and frames of reference, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly by Indigenous students. (p. 106)

Culturally-responsive pedagogy is predicated on teacher-student dialogue, without which teachers are left drawing on essentialized conceptions of students and their cultural background. In other words, teachers need both awareness of community and family cultures of their students and an ability to develop pedagogical implications of this knowledge through interactions with their students. Discursive interactions between teachers and students enable learners to make meaningful connections between learning activities and their lives outside the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Papp, 2016, 2020), as well as providing teachers with windows into what students already know and care about. In such classrooms, knowledge is co-created through power-sharing strategies whereby learners have a voice, raise questions, engage in critical reflection, and take responsibility for their own and others’ learning (Bishop, Ladwig, & Berryman, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Papp, 2016, 2020). Authentic teacher caring is demonstrated through teachers’ high expectations for all students and effective instructional approaches that enable students to learn and thrive (Papp, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999). Gay (2010) identified an ideal state that she termed “culturally responsive care” (p. 48), which “encompasses a combination of concern, compassion, commitment, responsibility, and action” by teachers on behalf of minority students (p. 48).

Recent work by Ladson-Billings (2014), McCarthy and Lee, (2014), Paris (2012), Paris and Alim (2014), and Santamaría and Santamaría (2016) call for a deepening of culturally-

responsive approaches towards *culturally-sustaining practices* (CSP), an approach defined as having the “Explicit goal [of] supporting multilingualism and multi-culturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). These authors suggest that CSP goes beyond being responsive or relevant to the cultural experiences of minoritized youth in that it “seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain— linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (p. 95). CSP democratizes schooling by placing “social justice and equity at the forefront of practice” (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2016, p. 4), while “supporting both traditional and evolving ways of cultural connectedness for contemporary youth” (Paris, 2012, p. 95).

5.4 Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

A multiple instrumental case study design was adopted as our methodological approach since it facilitates the exploration of a contemporary phenomenon within real-life settings through a variety of data sources (Stake, 2006). According to Stake (1995), an instrumental case study allows researchers to select a case that will focus on a specific issue through a thick and rich examination that will “maximize[d] what we can learn” (p. 4). The case is selected not necessarily because of its intrinsic nature but because it allows the researcher to explore a particular phenomenon of interest that is especially prominent within that setting. The multiple instrumental case study involves studying a number of cases simultaneously or sequentially in an attempt to generate a still broader appreciation of a particular phenomenon in multiple contexts. The two cases examined here were schools in very different geographic locations where teachers had engaged in intentional professional learning to increase their effectiveness in working with Indigenous students (Papp 2016, 2020). That professional learning prompted significant changes in pedagogical and curricular approaches which yielded extraordinary improvements in student learning over a four-year period. So, our multiple instrumental case study is centered on documenting and exploring links between teacher professional learning, pedagogical and curricular innovations, and improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students in two different school contexts.

Other features of a case study method identified by Creswell (2013) include the following: data is gathered in the setting where the participants experience the issue; the researcher as the vital instrument who is reflective and collects all the data through methods that

include interviewing participants, observing behaviours and examining documents; the study is emergent while the focus remains on learning the participants' meanings and acknowledging multiple perspectives and views; and data analysis utilizes inductive and deductive logic to derive a holistic account of the issue under study.

Ontologically our research aligns with the constructivist paradigm which seeks to create knowledge by trying to understand individual and shared social meaning; and is guided by constructivist beliefs. Underlying assumptions informing constructivism are that "knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process and that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience as much as possible from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 221). A constructivist design "focuses on the perspectives, feelings, and beliefs of the participants" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 237), enabling exploration of the depth, richness, and complexity that these participants assign to lived experiences in an "attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). The qualitative case study methodology employed here enables participants to socially construct knowledge based on their lived experiences while providing us as researchers with an opportunity to interact with the participants to gain a better understanding of the socially constructed truths dependent on the participants' perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In that way, this multiple instrumental case study sought to "explicitly seek out the multiple perspectives of those involved in the case[s], aiming to gather collectively agreed upon and diverse notions of what occurred" (Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2012, p. 5). Our purpose was to "thoroughly describe complex phenomena in ways to unearth new and deeper understandings of the phenomena" (Mertens, Cram, & Chilisa, 2013, p. 245).

Constructivist assumptions also guided our approach to exploring teacher and student learning, since we see all learning as an inherently social process where knowledge is constructed through personal experiences and reflection, mediated through social interactions (Piaget, 1978; Vygotsky, 1987). In the case of teacher learning through professional development activities, we assumed that educators learn through their interactions with other professionals, facilitators, and the content being presented, and then translate that learning into innovative practices through reflection and in interactions with their students in their classrooms (Kozlowski, 2017).

5.4.1 Research Questions

Three broad research questions informed the data collection: How did teacher professional learning initiatives evolve at these schools? In what ways did teacher professional learning opportunities enhance the cultural responsiveness of educators within these schools? How did enhanced teachers' cultural responsiveness impact student engagement, attendance, and learning at these schools?

5.4.2 Site Selection

The school sites purposefully chosen were identified as unique cases (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010) since they catered to large Indigenous student populations. In both cases, the schools had experienced notable improvements in credit completion and graduation rates within a few years of implementing teacher professional learning strategies for their respective teaching staff. They were thus deemed unique by comparison with other schools with similar student populations and were appropriate for a multiple instrumental case study.

The *Wharekura*⁵ school in New Zealand was selected because it had implemented a national teacher professional learning program in 2009 and saw a dramatic improvement in student achievement not only for Māori but all students (NZQA, 2014; Papp, 2016; Wharekura, personal communication, August 4, 2015). In 2014, the school population was 420 students and housed grades 7 to 13 with the middle school (Grades 7-9) comprised of approximately 90% Māori students and grades 10 to 13 about 55 to 65% Māori students. A socioeconomic lens ranks New Zealand schools by decile rating, with the most affluent ranked at decile ten and poorest documented as decile one. Wharekura ranked at decile two.

The Saskatchewan site, identified here under the pseudonym Young Persons' High School (YPHS), was a high-school catering to approximately 300 exclusively Indigenous students, 56% of whom were living independently, and 20% of whom had children of their own (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015; Papp, 2020; Personal communication, CG, November 17, 2016). The majority of students were non-traditional learners, and many had experienced failure, sometimes repeatedly, in other schools. In some cases, the students had been in four to six different high schools before coming to YPHS.

5.4.3 Participant Selection

Participant selection was purposeful and convenience-based in both cases. In Saskatchewan, seven participants, including a division administrator, two school administrators/teachers, and four classroom teachers, volunteered to participate in our research. Two were female, and five were male, three had teaching experience ranging from 8 to 15 years, and the other three ranged from 23 to 30 years. Two teachers self-identified as Indigenous. The length of time the participants taught together at that school ranged from four to six years. In New Zealand, interviews were conducted with seven participants. Three were classroom teachers and administrators; two were classroom teachers, one was a restorative facilitator, and one a resource teacher of learning and behavior. One participant self-identified as of Māori descent. Teaching experience ranged from 10 years to over 32 years, and the staff was together for a minimum of five years.

5.4.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Consistent with the case study approach, multiple methods of data collection, including documentary analysis, site-based participant observation, and individual semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately one hour in length were employed to develop a “holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible” (Kawulich, 2005, p. 92). The principal researcher conducted research in New Zealand in 2015 and in 2017 completed data collection in Canada. Data from interviews were particularly valuable in accessing the voices of teachers and administrators in both sites in understanding ways in which the professional learning impacted their practices, and in documenting the impact of these changes on Indigenous student outcomes. Documentary sources, including divisional and school improvement plans, were consulted to understand the broader context in which the schools operated, and data from standardized tests provided empirical evidence of impacts on Indigenous student performance in both settings.

We followed the five-stage data analysis spiral outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018) that began with managing the data, reading and writing memos, describing, classifying codes into themes, interpreting, and representing and visualizing the data. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and presented to the participants for accuracy and member checking. Charmaz (2017, 2020) stresses that those people conducting research put reflexivity into practice. Charmaz

(2020) further recommended “paying attention to language helps researchers to position the data in their cultural context, and hence enrich the resulting analysis” (p. 170). Hence, the researchers adopted the coding style of *in vivo* to honour the participants' voices. Saldana (2013) explained that *in vivo* coding is a verbatim coding and is congruent with Indigenous approaches to research in that it gives priority and honor [to] the participant’s voice by coding with their actual words (p. 91).

5.5 Emerging Themes

Merriam’s insight that “conveying an understanding of the case is the paramount consideration in analyzing the data” (1998, p. 193) led to the delineation of themes across the two cases. These included the importance of whole systems reform initiatives, supported by strategic hiring and school-based leadership. This led to greater professional and moral commitment to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students; the development of various teacher professional learning initiatives to enhance cultural responsiveness among educators with a focus on embedded and ‘catalyst teacher’ approaches, sustained by ongoing reflection and monitoring; the use of these professional learning opportunities for the development of innovative pedagogical approaches and strategies aligned with Indigenous cultural values; and the powerful impact on Indigenous student engagement and learning affected by the creation of culturally affirming, personally relational, and academically meaningful school experiences animated by intentional teacher professional learning.

5.5.1 Whole School Initiatives

In both Saskatchewan and New Zealand, attending to disparities in educational outcomes among Indigenous students has been consistently articulated as a leading imperative for school systems for more than a quarter-century (Cottrell, 2010). Within a broader context of neoliberal reform and accountability measures, policymakers in both jurisdictions have embraced whole systems approaches to school improvement as a means of addressing inequitable educational outcomes. According to Campbell (2015), the “quest of whole system educational improvement is to support all students to learn, all teachers to teach, all education leaders to lead, and all schools (and systems) to improve” (p. 3). This is achieved through strategic planning and benchmarking at ministerial, divisional and school levels, intensive professional development for

teachers and school leaders, the implementation of innovative curriculum and instructional resources, reinforced by the use of data to inform practice and ensure accountability (Campbell, 2015; Fullan, 2010). Drawing on culturally responsive education theory and school effectiveness research that highlighted the centrality of good teaching and whole-school approaches in improved learning, the New Zealand Ministry of Education initiated Te Kotahitanga research in 2001. The findings of that research subsequently guided the creation of a teacher professional learning tool, the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP)⁶, based on delineated teacher competencies.

Shortly after the principal of Wharekura school was appointed, he oversaw staff changes by hiring more culturally responsive educators and then made an application to the Ministry of Education to bring the Te Kotahitanga program to the school. Through intense ongoing professional learning, the participating teachers were encouraged to engage in discursive (re)positioning, strategic goal setting, the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogies, the re-institutionalization of the decision-making processes within schools to promote student empowerment, the development of distributed leadership, the inclusion of the Indigenous community and the effective use of evidence of student performance (Bishop et al., 2014).

Teachers who participated in the research quickly recognized that the commitment to improving Māori achievement at schools they had previously taught at was primarily lip service. Alice, a teacher, commented it was “something we talked about, and we really should do it, but nothing happened.” In contrast, at Wharekura school, “we live it; we breathe it.” The teacher participants identified the influence of the principal as critical both in initiating and sustaining their commitment to ensuring more equitable outcomes for Māori students: “He is passionate, and his passion filters down to us. But it is not just the passion. He is walking the walk, that we talk about, and we learned the philosophy behind it [the ETP]”.

At YPHS in Saskatchewan, persistently low academic achievement became the catalyst for reform. The transformation began as an iterative process after a review of data on attendance, enrolment, attrition, credit completion, and graduation rates. The division leader created a strategic plan that led to significant staffing changes, and the new team was provided with resources and encouraged to take new approaches and implement innovative ideas. Greg, the division administrator at YPHS, explained that this was a form of “disruptive innovation and upsetting complacency into more of a sustainable leadership.” The next stage was to introduce innovative strategies and a positive direction. The administration and teachers were supported at

the divisional office, and Greg stated, “When you brought in a new team it was helping them see the possibilities, resourcing their innovation, no idea was a bad idea . . . trying to build enthusiasm for being there”. An instrumental part of the support was through a collaborative approach to teacher professional learning at the school.

5.5.2 Teacher Professional Learning to Enhance Cultural Responsiveness

At Wharekura school, the Te Kotahitanga research guided the development of the professional learning tool, the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) consisting of six observable characteristics, articulated in the Māori language, that teachers were encouraged to display in the classroom. These include (a) *Manaakitanga*: building and nurturing a supportive environment that is culturally responsive; (b) *Mana motuhake*: caring about each student’s classroom performance and helping the child to develop identity, independence, and group identity; (c) *Whakapiringatanga*: creating a safe learning environment; (d) *Wananga*: engaging the Māori students as Māori; (e) *Ako*: using a variety of teaching strategies to promote interaction among learners and to build relationships; and (f) *Kotahitanga*: collaborating to improve Māori education achievement through monitoring and reflecting (Bishop et al., 2010; Bishop et al., 2014).

Coaches from the Ministry of Education provided embedded professional learning to Wharekura teachers with a focus on strategies based on relationship-based pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and inquiry-based learning. After training and implementation, all teachers were observed once each term by a trained facilitator. Teachers were provided with feedback and recommendations to improve student interactions (Personal observation and communication, Fiona, June 24, 2014). Bishop et al. stated, “The students’ narratives of experiences are used to provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect upon the experiences of others involved in similar circumstances to themselves, including perhaps for the first time, the students” (2012a, p. 696). In addition to the regular teacher ETP assessments, teachers frequently met in co-construction meetings to discuss their shared students and monitor the students’ progress, and areas of concern were addressed collectively. Reflection of this nature allowed supports to be put into place for students that required extra assistance in reaching educational goals.

At YPHS, teacher professional learning evolved in a less structured but equally effective manner. It began under the direction of the school administrators, with the principal and vice-

principal collaborating with teachers to research best practices for teaching Indigenous students as a form of action research. Participants noted that Indigenous ways of knowing and learning were at the heart of the weekly search for culturally responsive teaching practices. An informal learning community approach was initially adopted, where staff organized book studies and then discussed what could be implemented in their classrooms. Adam, a science and math teacher, felt the sessions were beneficial, and “we would actually talk about the kind of things that would happen in the classroom, and that would generate collegiality and familiarity among the staff, support from one another, and sharing of ideas.” Through the weekly activities, a shift from theory towards practice in adopting techniques that emulated traditional Aboriginal pedagogy occurred, with a focus on cultural infusion in the curriculum, relational pedagogy, and inquiry-based learning approaches, supported by resident Indigenous Elders. The weekly meetings provided an opportunity for ongoing reflection on what was working in the classrooms for the Indigenous students, and a regular review of data on attendance and credit completion allowed monitoring of the success of implementing culturally responsive pedagogy.

Teacher professional learning at YPHS was translated into practice by the adoption of the instructional leadership model, with administrators in the classrooms co-teaching with the teachers. Based on early positive results, teacher professional learning was intensified by applying the catalyst teacher model (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Needham & Cottrell, 2016), where a particularly effective and passionate teacher was released from regular teaching duties and assigned to work with other staff members as a coach and mentor. She was tasked to partner with the teachers, create resources to assist her colleagues, and co-develop new relational and inquiry-based pedagogical approaches that infused Indigenous cultural values and strategies into all aspects of the school.

5.5.3 Relationship-Building Pedagogy

Relational pedagogy requires teachers to develop a sincere and genuine interest in their students, not just as learners but as human beings deserving of the best that teachers can provide and capable of being successful both academically and in life (Allen, 2017; Papp, 2016, 2020). This kind of authentic relationship assists teachers in engaging students with the curriculum by encouraging the students’ voices and focusing on what the students are interested in knowing.

Through deliberate teacher professional learning, participants from both sites came to feel it was critical to know their students, not just as students, but as Māori, Cree, or Dene students. In both contexts, the teachers were encouraged to focus on the student to become familiar with their personal and family circumstances before teaching (Papp, 2016, 2020).

The New Zealand teachers spoke of beginning the school year and not teaching for the first week or two, depending on the grade level and the familiarity of the students with each other and the teacher. Alice, one of these teachers, shared, “We are building those relationships. If we started off straight away to teach, we would start building conflict with students, and the kids would develop conflict among other students.” The activities could include adventure-based learning, cooperative games, sports, arts, or music. Edward, another New Zealand teacher, commented, “it is about breaking down the barriers and to get people interacting with each other. I participate because that is really important.”

Participants at both sites commented that they did not require classroom management techniques and that disruptive behavior was uncommon because of the mutual respect established between students and teachers. At YPHS, Emily explained that “when you have a strong relationship with a student, there is no discipline needed” by a teacher. Dan, another YPHS teacher, explained that respect for the teacher would be “even so much that students will defend teachers in the face of other students.” At Wharekura, Alice, another teacher stated, “I have opened myself up to my students. Letting the students know who I am rather than me just being the teacher . . . The kids know me, and I know my kids. I could list at least ten things about each of my kids in my class.” Similar relationships were also built with the students’ parents through constant contact and texting.

The incorporation of the ETP at Wharekura brought about a subtle change in the attitudes of the teachers and the interaction between the teacher and the student. Charles, holding a dual role of teacher and principal, described relationship building as “being very aware of the interaction between the teacher and the student all the time and the type of questioning that is happening, so the students are actually having to think and are engaged in that type of dialogue” instead of the teacher telling the students. He remarked about listening and responding to the students’ voice, embracing “the concept of power-sharing with the children and the elements of self-determination.” Power-sharing demonstrated a respectful relationship between the student

and the teacher and a commitment to non-hierarchical and caring relationships. Edward, a teacher and the vice-principal, observed:

It is about me teaching in a way that the kids know very quickly that I am open to what they think, and I value what they think . . . I can close that down very quickly by the way I speak, the way I act or if I don't follow up on their ideas . . . The trust has to be built by letting them know that I am willing to listen.

At YPHS, the approach was to encourage dialogue between students and teachers, resisting the traditional style classroom where the teacher monopolizes power, is the expert, and teaches by transmission. Adam observed, “[It was] more about building those relationships and getting to know one another than it is about the [classwork] science that we are going to do in class - Spend time getting to know each other first before classwork.” Teacher professional learning strongly discouraged harsh and critical evaluation. The teacher Emily stated:

How students learn – if they are comfortable with you, they know you, you are not threatening to them, there is no judgment there . . . when you ask them a question in any class, in any course that you are teaching – they will try. They will give you an answer because they don't fear. They don't fear the ridicule or judgment or humiliation, and so their learning is greatly increased by that relationship.

A striking difference was that interactions at YPHS were described as being non-hierarchical, with a non-authoritarian approach between teachers and students, where everyone was on a first-name basis. Teachers such as Dan explained that “It [first names] is usually something that you reserve for friends and family” and allowing students to call you by your first name was “a way of inviting them to be family.” Another teacher, Adam, described other schools in Saskatchewan as being “Very cut and dry, cold and institutional instead of more casual” and described some teachers to be “emotionally removed.” At Wharekura, in contrast, student-teacher interactions, although supportive and caring, remained more formal with students calling their teachers Mrs., Mr. or Miss.

5.5.4 Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy

In both cases, a significant focus of teacher professional learning was on cultivating culturally-responsive curricular and pedagogical approaches. At Wharekura, the philosophy of the school was built on a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations with three core values revolving around Māori terms. The terms and their meanings formed the basis of the pedagogy and discursive interactions and were woven throughout teaching strategies. Māori values were

used to discuss appropriate classroom behaviour, and teachers referred to *Manaakitanga*, meaning respect, *Whanaungatanga*, meaning belonging and family, and *Hirangatanga* meaning excellence in effort. These values and Māori terms were sacred words, and conversations about these values were taken seriously. Betty explained that teachers “use[ing] the Māori language in the school had been a factor in building relationships with the Māori students and educational success” which was defined within the Māori context with the goal to have Māori students succeed as Māori people. If teachers are dealing with a behavior that is not acceptable, Gail, a restorative facilitator, described interactions: “Are we showing Whanaungatanga [belonging and family]? Is this how we act? It is just another way of teaching them the correct behaviors or the behavior we want to encourage them to use”.

The school offered a variety of Māori specific classes in language, performing arts, traditional carving, and *Whakairo* academy (Māori arts). The students organized festivals at the school and invited other schools to attend. One special Māori celebration was the *Matariki*, a celebration of the Māori New Year. Students were provided with guidance from the school Elders regarding protocol for the celebration.

At YPHS, the approach to teaching became more flexible, and participants noted they adopted the philosophy that it takes as long as it takes for students’ learning. By embracing the inquiry approach to teaching, students worked together in learning communities, a collaborative approach that was consistent with traditional learning approaches. Emily stated, as teachers, “We work in partnership. Life is like that, isn’t it? So, you have to learn how to cooperate and who has the best skills [to get the work done together].”

There was also a strong focus on experiential learning activities, again as consistent with traditional Indigenous strategies. Ken, the principal, was adamant that the school was “making sure we were placing value on being true and authentic to First Nations knowledge and content in the curriculum.” Traditional teachings revolved around equality and respect, and Emily explained “that was part of it and to have that equality, and no one is greater than or less than” as student-student or student-teacher. Through circle time, teachers and students had a chance to share their challenges, and everyone had a voice without judgment. The regular ceremonies, especially drumming circles and sweat lodge ceremonies, assisted students in finding their identity as Indigenous people and developing a sense of pride in their heritage and history. Ken, as the principal, confirmed that being in a school that was predominantly Indigenous also had a

positive effect on the students and contributed to their learning. Ken concluded that “while in other schools, the dynamics could be intimidating, they felt like they belonged here. There was a sense of family, a sense of belonging, and pride in their culture and identity.”

5.6 Impact on Student Outcomes

The result of developing culturally-responsive and relationship-based pedagogy through whole systematic and intentional teacher professional learning at both schools was dramatic. In 2009, the Wharekura school implemented the Te Kotahitanga program, “and the improvement in student achievement at the school was recognized to have benefited not only Māori students but all students of that school” (Personal communication, August 4, 2015, as cited in Papp, 2016, p. 4). The independent data collected on Grade 12 Māori students by New Zealand’s National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) indicated that in 2009 the school had a 32.4% achievement level, while the national Māori achievement level was 52.9% and the national level of all Grade 12 students of 65.6%. Five years later, in the 2014 academic year, the school achieved a 70% student achievement level for Grade 12 Māori students surpassing the Māori national standards at 67.8% and nearly matching the national level of 75.4% (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2014; Papp, 2016; Wharekura, personal communication, August 4, 2015).

The research conducted at YPHS focused on approximately 300 students in grades 9 to 12 from 51 First Nations across Saskatchewan, of which 56% were living independently, and 20% had children of their own and between 2010 and 2014, the credit completion improved from 31% to 81%, attendance increased from 52% to 77%, and graduation rates increased from 3 to 55 (Lessard, 2015; Needham, 2015; Papp, 2020; Personal communication, CG, November 17, 2016). Data suggests that the improved educational outcomes for both groups of Indigenous students resulted from similar transformational initiatives, primarily teacher professional learning that focused on culturally responsive and relational pedagogies that affirmed Indigenous students by infusing Indigenous culture into the curriculum.

5.7 Discussion

This qualitative study adopted a multiple instrumental case study approach to explore, from the perspectives of teachers and administrators, how teacher professional learning that

focused on culturally-responsive teacher practices and relationship-based pedagogy altered classroom dynamics and improved educational outcomes of Indigenous students at two selected schools in Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand. Data revealed the perspectives, feelings, and beliefs of the participants and allowed for interpretation of phenomena in terms of the meaning participants brought to them. Themes emerging from the data are now aligned with secondary literature to identify findings from our inquiry.

5.7.1 Whole Systems Approaches

Although the increasing use of national and international assessments and accountability approaches have generated significant controversy (Darling-Hammond, 2010), this research attests to certain benefits of these approaches. In particular, it was data generated from standardized tests in the Saskatchewan and New Zealand contexts that initially focused attention on the fundamental disconnect between Indigenous students and schools, forcing system leaders to assume greater accountability, as a result of the gaze of government and the public, for the success of Indigenous students (Cottrell, 2010; Cottrell, Preston, & Pearce, 2012). The resulting whole system innovations were made possible through the animation of transformative and distributed models of leadership “instituting changes in the educational environment of schools – structures, culture, pedagogical practices – that resulted in more inclusive and more just experiences for all students” (Shields, 2010, p. 584).

5.7.2 Leadership

Participants’ insights on the importance of leadership in promoting greater cultural responsiveness in the two study sites align with a large body of leadership literature which favours forms of transformational and instructional leadership, where the principal acts as a guiding light for the values a school aspires to; and certain leadership qualities “cause others to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students” (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe 2008, p. 70). As this case study demonstrated, the modeling of the principal is especially critical when promoting professional learning initiatives that require teachers to critique their culturally located practices (Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins, & Broughton, 2004). Fundamentally, the actions documented here began with administrators who saw the potential of schools to serve as spaces of social and cultural transformation and who were willing to

challenge traditional pedagogical and curricular practices by engendering a climate of shared learning, experimentation, and risk-taking (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Importantly, however, the principals encountered in this multiple case study positioned teachers as agents rather than subjects of change, with opportunities through evidence and inquiry-based professional learning to exercise their collective professional judgment around appropriate pedagogical and curricular innovations (Campbell, Lieberman, & Yashkina, 2017; Papp, 2016, 2020). In this way, a balance of teacher's voice and system coherence was achieved whereby teachers were provided the opportunity to imaginatively renew their practice for moral and professional purposes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

5.7.3 Collaboration and Reflection

Data from this multiple case study highlights the efficacy of collaborative approaches to teaching and learning and the power of teacher co-learning to improve outcomes for traditionally marginalized students (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Through systematic and intentional professional learning and formal professional learning communities, teachers who participated in the research engaged in cooperative learning activities, evaluated the results, learned from one another, and reflected on action plans to improve their teaching practices continually. The common goal of improving student academic achievement and personal wellness was based on a broad understanding of student achievement, in addition to equity, engagement, learning, well-being, and many other outcomes, with recognition of the diversity of students' contexts and needs (Timperley et al., 2007). This confirms that teacher professional learning that allows for discourse or the exchanging of ideas and learning through critical discussion and provides an opportunity for critical reflection that strengthens the connection between teacher and student learning can contribute significantly to more effective teaching practices and improved student outcomes (Darling- Hammond, 2008; Timperley et al., 2007).

5.7.4 Teacher Transformation

While data from this study demonstrates the impact of teacher professional learning on improved Indigenous student outcomes, there is evidence that the teachers themselves were also profoundly impacted by the learning initiatives. Opening themselves to culturally responsive tenets encouraged these Caucasian teachers to contemplate and implement fundamentally

different relationships with students and their families, where notions of expertise and authority had to be renegotiated and democratized. The initiatives also induced these educators to confront deeply held epistemic and ontological assumptions about curriculum and pedagogy, to acknowledge that culture, language, race, and class influence perspectives on what counts as knowledge and in the process of constructing new, more comprehensive understandings of knowledge (Harris, 2002). In effect, the process of decolonizing the schools required a transformation in the educators' conceptions of themselves as teachers and learners and a fundamental re-evaluation of what constituted legitimate and worthy knowledge.

5.7.5 Transferable Insights

A limited capacity to transfer insights from a particular case to broader contexts is a recognized feature of case study methods. Nevertheless, approaches documented in this case study delineate some exemplary practices for sustainable teacher professional learning. The system, division, and school leaders committed to maximizing opportunities for all students to learn are essential, as is their willingness to mobilize appropriate resourcing to ensure sustainability at the design and implementation stage (Timperley et al., 2007). School leadership capable of inspiring teachers to engage in ongoing learning for personal and professional growth, and student benefit with the courage and creativity to facilitate time and place for teacher experimentation and initiative are also critical. The best teacher professional learning is directly connected to teachers' working contexts and problems of practice; so, actions that are practical, relevant to teachers' needs, and contribute to achieving valued student outcomes are recommended (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010). It is also clear from this research that effective professional learning that achieves significant change cannot be undertaken in a short period, so "prolonged interventions are more effective than shorter ones, and combinations of tools for learning and reflective experiences serve the purpose in a better way" (Timperley et al., 2007).

5.8 Concluding Thoughts

The findings of this research confirm the capacity of teachers to act as agents of change and highlight the potential of teacher professional learning to serve as a powerful catalyst for educational reform and innovation, ensuring that schools can indeed benefit students who have historically been underserved by public education. In the two schools at opposite ends of the

world encountered in this study, predominantly Caucasian educators adopted strikingly similar approaches to disrupt deeply entrenched historical, educational patterns through intentional teacher professional learning. With social justice priorities at the forefront of their practice, they rejected deficit explanations and assumptions, and viewed Indigenous students as both deserving of success and eminently capable of learning. Informed by cultural-responsiveness theory, they sought to use Indigenous students' cultural attributes, experiences, and perspectives as assets and conduits for more effective teaching (Gay, 2002). Caucasian educators' engagement with Indigenous cultures at both sites led to the adoption of more caring and egalitarian interactions with students and their families, and these innovations facilitated learning that was additive rather than subtractive, enabling students to make more meaningful connections between learning activities and their lives outside the classroom (Papp, 2016, 2020; Paris, 2016). A remarkable transformation in student engagement and dramatic empirically documented improvement in academic outcomes was visible within a short time for students at both sites.

Because of commonalities between Saskatchewan, New Zealand, and many other international contexts with similar Indigenous histories, demographic trajectories, educational inequities, and post-colonial tensions, the implications of this study are potentially broad and significant. We see this identification of intentional, strategic teacher professional learning as an essential addition to research on effective, culturally responsive, and culturally-sustaining practices in schools serving Indigenous and other disadvantaged students. While much attention and handwringing has been devoted to closing the Indigenous education achievement gap, these case studies draw attention to the need to consider the imperative of opening the opportunity gap by creating optimum conditions for Indigenous student success.

Findings also have implications for leadership preparation, particularly regarding the critical role of leaders in supporting teacher-driven efforts to facilitate culturally responsive practices. Our research should also be of interest to teacher educators, as it delineates the kinds of teachers and teaching practices made increasingly necessary by the growing diversity within classrooms in these and similar contexts.

Lastly, this comparative of case studies suggests that the search for equitable academic outcomes for Indigenous students, although typically framed in deficit terms, actually represents an enormously exciting opportunity for public education in these contexts and beyond (Cottrell, 2010; Papp, 2016, 2020). Ensuring that Indigenous learners derive commensurate benefit from

K–12 education is currently one of the leading drivers of innovation in Saskatchewan and New Zealand schools, challenging teachers, administrators, policymakers, and governance personnel to reflect profoundly and improve profoundly on all educational practices. But, in addition to calling existing systems to do better, our research suggests that the growing Indigenous presence in classrooms also offers educators the potential to embrace Indigenous peoples’ worldviews, social structures, and pedagogies as a legitimate foundation upon which to construct new meanings, alongside established Western curricular knowledge. Such an exciting opportunity to reimagine schools rarely presents itself!

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5.10 Footnotes

¹ Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan is one of Canada's three Prairie Provinces with an enormous landmass, an abundance of natural resources, and extreme climate and a relatively sparse population of just over one million people.

² New Zealand: New Zealand is a small island nation in the South Pacific, with a population of 3.6 million people. Close to 75% trace their origins to Europe (mainly the British Isles) and are commonly referred to as Pakeha.

³ Indigenous Peoples: The terms Indigenous, Aboriginal and First Nations are used interchangeably and is not intended to minimize the diversity among the many distinct populations of peoples indigenous to Canada and New Zealand. When using direct quotes, the original author's terminology will be used.

⁴ Colonialism: Colonialism and imperialism were interconnected in the European imperial quest for territorial and economic expansion in a "chronology of events related to 'discover', conquest, exploitation, distribution and appropriation" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2008, p. 21). Colonies were formed to subjugate the Indigenous populations and access resources and served as a means of imposing European cultural Western norms on non-Indigenous populations.

⁵ *Wharekura*: *Wharekura* is a pseudonym used to maintain the anonymity of the school. "*Wharekura*" in Māori means "house of learning" or "school."

⁶ Effective Teacher Profile: The basis of the professional development tool used, the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP), was developed from academic literature that adopted an agentic position through culturally-responsive pedagogy that builds relationships between teachers and their students (Bishop, O'Sullivan & Berryman, 2010).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In the first chapter, I shared a narrative that introduced the reader to my life experiences and my positionality in the research and the analogy to the making of a quilt. As a quilt is assembled, there are the main components: the front is composed of many different pieces of fabrics, colours, and textures. The borders tie the front of the quilt to the backing of the quilt, which is one large piece of fabric. The front of the quilt represented the worldview that I formed based on my family experiences, school experiences, and myself as an instructor. Each piece of the quilt is integral to the final product and the textures, both contrast and harmonize, as all are stitched together in a unique tapestry to represent me as a person and a researcher.

Chapter 2 provided an academic introduction and an overview of the two case studies and the research conducted in both locations. Chapters 3, 4, and 5, represented the manuscripts that have either been published or are in press. These chapters addressed the overarching question: what were the teaching practices that promoted improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students? This chapter, Chapter 6 is the final chapter that will provide a synthesis of various aspects of the research undertaken in two case studies: in Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand. This chapter completes the quilt and provides the reader with the final fabric that represents the backing of the quilt in which I summarize the manuscripts, interpret the papers collectively, and present the primary and underlying themes.

Another incubation period has rewarded me with insights that were not present at the beginning or various stages of this journey. Some may call it procrastination; others may say it represented thoughtful deliberation and sustained consideration of the research findings. My research journey was not merely for another set of letters behind my name. This journey represents my passion for research to give back to the Indigenous peoples. Along the way, I have gone down other paths of interest in the research field, and each one has added a different dimension to contribute to this dissertation. As I smudge and express gratitude daily, I give thanks for the gifts that come from the east, south, west, and north. I have been favoured with

revelations that were bestowed upon me for my patience and dedication to the work that has gone into this research.

The papers included in this manuscript style dissertation demonstrate an evolution in understanding and confidence and represent my growth from a novice researcher at the onset to a more experienced scholar. The progression of the manuscripts documents my learning journey as a researcher. It should be noted that over the years, when the data collection and analysis was originally conducted, a wealth of new data and scholarship emerged. As with any research, nothing stands still; and such rapid change presents the challenge of hitting a *moving target* while remaining current. My research journey began in New Zealand in 2014, and the data collected and eventually printed represent that time in history. Over the next six years, much more data has been collected, a wealth of academic publications and books have been published to enlighten audiences on Indigenous education and circumstances. For example, one of the most impactful was The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, its reported findings, and Calls to Action.

I would like to draw awareness to the restrictions that come in publishing the papers included in this dissertation. Peer-reviewed journals have word limitations that restricted my ability to share the wealth of rich information that came from the data transcriptions. In keeping with word restrictions, the focus is confined to the exploration of selected and specific topics, while other data remains dormant. Also, journals have an explicit focus and scope of interest to particular issues of interest for the identified readership.

I begin this final chapter by restating my positionality, which provided the driving force behind this research. I then describe how the studies unfolded, leading to a progression of discoveries emerging from the data comprised of the voices of the teachers. The major themes that emerged from the papers, the secondary or underlying themes, along with recommendations, and the significance of the research are then summarized. I conclude this dissertation with a vision to drive future research because instead of finishing this research journey, the journey is just beginning. A final comment on the findings and a personal reflection conclude this chapter.

6.1 Position Statement

Since contact with Europeans and the inception of colonization policies, Indigenous peoples have experienced deplorable socio-economic conditions resulting in intergenerational

poverty and subsequent low education outcomes (Battiste, 2013; Hawthorn, 1966; Kanu, 2011; Milloy, 1999; Silver, 2013). Numerous reports (RCAP, 1996; Truth and Reconciliation Canada, 2015; United Nations General Assembly, 2007), some dating back over two decades, offered prudent recommendations that were either not implemented or, when implemented, met with marginal success. While progress has been made, and there are success stories to be shared (Bell, 2004; Fulford, 2007; Gunn, Pomahac, Striker, Tailfeathers, 2011; Papp, 2016, 2020; Pelletier, Cottrell, & Hardie, 2013), Indigenous peoples still benefit the least from schools in Canada. For the most part, a significant change to the education system remains elusive. Low education achievement levels for Indigenous peoples are identified at all government levels as the most compelling challenge for Canada and Saskatchewan (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014; Haldane, Lafond, & Krause, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2014, 2017). This study offers hope, as other authors have sought, to overcome the effects of colonization on Indigenous peoples and establish their fundamental human rights to education and an improved standard of life (United Nations, 2007). I have positioned myself as an ally, and the research is presented as a contribution to reconciliation and decolonization.

6.2 Purpose

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of the strategies that teachers have animated in their classrooms, which they perceived to be successful in encouraging Indigenous students to attend school, remain in school, complete course credits, and persevere in graduating from high school. The intent was to discover the *how-to* strategies and advance working knowledge of pedagogical practices leading to improved educational experiences and achievement levels for Indigenous students. Through this research, I hope to give back to the Indigenous communities and support those who provide essential services to Indigenous peoples. The following section provides a brief review of the three published manuscripts.

6.3 A Circle Unfolds: The Spiral into a Much Larger Circle

My research began in New Zealand in 2014, and the published paper (Chapter 3) that resulted was entitled *Teacher strategies to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students* (See Papp, 2016). New Zealand scholars and academics recognized the need for a more extensive systemic change, motivated by a concern for the lower Māori student educational

achievement levels, leading to the creation of the *Te Kotahitanga* approach and the development of the professional development tool, the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP). Findings from this qualitative research included strategies that involved teachers building and repairing relationships, adopting a student-focused approach in the school, teachers providing *feedforward* and *feedback* in assessment, supportive administrative leadership, and the incorporation of Indigenous culture into the classroom. These strategies were reported to have benefitted not only the Māori students but all students of the school.

In the New Zealand context, the process of change and improvement began with the administration. A passion and vision to implement school-wide change by the school leader moved the initiative beyond just talking about the fact that they should make a change to the actual implementation of change. The motivation for change should have been the first item listed as a strategy that resulted in improved outcomes. The application of the *Te Kotahitanga* approach to teaching, along with the professional development instrument, Effective Teacher Profile (ETP), assisted teachers to improve their teaching styles, making pedagogy more effective in the classrooms. Everything else associated with the school improvements would not be possible without the transformative change agent.

Another significant feature was the caring community that existed at the school, witnessed by meetings beginning with prayer and the reminder to the teachers to speak about students as they would their children. Building relationships was the primary goal of the daily activities that were intentionally implemented at the beginning of each school year in each classroom. In some grades, academic classes did not begin until after two weeks of adventure and game activities. Participants described the relationships between teacher and student as more like a parent and child relationship.

Teachers worked hard to earn the trust and respect of their students and understood that these should not be expected because of their formal teaching role. In the classrooms, teachers moved from student to student to assist each one in a personalized manner. Instead of teaching from the front of the classroom and attempting to move the class in unison and potentially some students being left behind in mastering the new material, instruction in each class was individualized to engage students at their level of knowledge and skill.

The *feedforward and feedback* approach provided to students at first glance appeared to be unique; however, with more investigation, the feedforward and feedback were teacher

strategies that are typical for inquiry-based learning, which allowed students to exert agency in their learning. Many teachers are inclined to direct students to what needs to be done next; this would be a transmission approach to teaching. Instead, feedforward was a form of questioning that prompted the students to think for themselves and take ownership of their learning. The teachers' mantra, "Don't tell what you can ask," was key to students' discovery in inquiry-based learning and self-guided learning facilitated by the teacher asking the student questions.

Chapter 4 represented the next stage of the evolution of this dissertation and was inspired by the insight that the traditional Indigenous teaching strategies resembled what was identified as the new pedagogy or 21st Century Pedagogy. The manuscript entitled *A Canadian study of coming full circle to traditional Indigenous pedagogy: A pedagogy for the 21st century* explored these similarities and found that many components of 21st Century Pedagogy did not appear to be new at all. The techniques described by scholars as 21st Century Pedagogy were, in fact, a reimplementations of what has been described by Indigenous scholars as traditional Indigenous ways of teaching, which were discounted as being inferior to Western standards and replaced by didactic lectures and transmission learning in earlier Canadian schools.

Scholars describe traditional Indigenous pedagogy as student-centered and student-driven active learning that is experiential and inquiry-based or problem-based on topics that are relevant to the student(s) while working collaboratively in small groups (Cajete, 1994; Couture, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2008). It is also a pedagogy that attends to the wholeness of the student through a focus on the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical realms (Archibald, 2008; Castellano, 2016; Little Bear, 2009). Similarly, advocates of 21st century pedagogy recommend this approach to teaching and learning, use the same descriptions of the process, and purport that the transmission or lecture model is highly ineffective but remains widely used (Scott, 2015; SSHRC, 2016). Twenty-first Century approaches have been described as a better learning model and are identified as project-based or problem-based learning, which is experiential, collaborative, and student-centered (Fadel, Bialik, & Trilling, 2015; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

The final paper of this manuscript dissertation (Chapter 5) is a joint effort with my supervisor, Dr. Michael Cottrell, entitled *Professional Development, culturally responsive practices (CRP) and Indigenous student success: A comparative case-study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada*. A strong underlying theme for both case studies was the professional development that, through administrative leadership, directed the teachers of the schools to

address their deep-rooted opinions, challenge their perceptions of students of colour, reject deficit theorizing and learn new ways of thinking and teaching. School leaders achieved this through disruptive innovation by implementing intentional hiring, strategic resourcing, and regular professional development at the schools.

In Saskatchewan, administrators that were also teachers led the professional development that emulated Indigenous ways of teaching, described as experiential and inquiry-based, and joined the teachers in their classrooms to co-teach and develop inquiry-based curriculum. Later, catalyst teachers were seconded from regular teaching duties to provide pedagogical support and offer resources to their colleagues. Changing from transmission learning to inquiry-based learning activities was also inspired by the need to develop a curriculum that was culturally responsive to their Indigenous students.

The provincial directive was provided by two aspirational documents to guide the administrators. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education offered *Inspiring Success: Building Towards Student Achievement* a First Nations and Métis Education Policy Framework and *A Time for Significant Leadership: A Strategy for Implementing First Nations and Métis Education Goals* (2009). This was later supplemented with a Canadian research project, under the directive of New Zealand scholar, Dr. Mere Berryman. A Canadian version of *Te Kotahitanga* resulted in the report *Seeking their Voices* (2014) within the Saskatchewan context. This became the guide for the Saskatchewan Education Ministry, which resulted in the *Following Their Voices* initiative. *Following Their Voices* focuses on “enhancing relationships between students and teachers, creating structures and supports for teachers and school administrators to co-construct teaching and learning interactions with students and create safe, well-managed learning environments” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018, p. 7). Although the Saskatchewan school that was one of the case studies did not participate in the *Following Their Voices*, a post-interview conversation with one of the administrators confirmed the intention and focus for the professional development was to seek out best practices that emulated Indigenous ways of teaching. Later, once the *Te Kotahitanga* program was discovered, the administrators reviewed the New Zealand approach to professional development and deliberately utilized the process to inform the direction of the Saskatchewan school’s professional development.

In New Zealand, the development of the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) was a crucial part of *Te Kotahitanga*. This professional development reviewed the teachers’ effectiveness and

capacity to instruct in inquiry-based and student-centered approaches. The facilitator would visit classrooms regularly and provide feedback and supports to improve the classroom experience based on observations and student interviews. More information is provided in *Teacher strategies to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students* (See Papp, 2016).

The comparative study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan provided an international perspective on professional development, where deeply held epistemic and ontological assumptions were challenged, and new relationships with students and their families were nurtured. Inquiry-based learning was implemented, resulting in improved outcomes for Indigenous students in geographically distant contexts.

Through the progression of the published manuscripts, the transcripts were reviewed repeatedly, providing an opportunity to reflect on the meaning and interpretations. Systematically and under rigorous scrutiny, repeated critical analysis allowed for new questions to be asked, sparking new ideas. The action of circling back and re-circling again through the transcripts and emerging themes created more depth through reflexivity. The evolution of thoughts from the reacquaintance of the data allowed for deeper meaning and understanding. The following section summarizes the main themes uncovered from both case studies: Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand.

6.4 Main Themes: Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand

This section will present the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the teachers' narratives in both Canada and New Zealand. In both locations, it was recognized that Eurocentrism remains persistent in schools, and for minority students or Indigenous students to succeed, the school and classrooms needed to be decolonized. Also, in both locations, schools and classrooms were decolonized, beginning with strong transformative leadership. In both places, the following were found to impact the improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous students: transformative leadership, disrupting the status quo, knowing your students, professional development, raising teacher consciousness, incorporating culture, robust non-academic supports, inquiry-based learning, respectful relationships, and acknowledging the intergenerational effects of residential schools, colonization, and poverty. Each of these will be discussed in further detail in this section.

6.4.1 Transformative Leadership

After critically analyzing the educational achievement levels, the administration of both schools concluded that Indigenous students were not benefitting from current teaching practices and that learning environments continued to marginalize their students. With a social justice orientation, their vision for change saw the potential for social transformation within their classrooms that would result in learning environments that were culturally affirming and conducive to improved learning outcomes. Also, in both cases, the principals, through their transformative leadership, provided the critical impetus, skills, and resources that inspired their staff to embrace and implement the prescribed changes through a system-wide approach that contributed to the success of the educational outcomes for their Indigenous students within their schools. Renihan (2012) stated, “leadership is critical to school and system effectiveness and, more specifically, student success” (p. 11). School leaders were invested in making a change in their schools by securing funding and providing the latitude to make change happen in the classrooms.

Strategies to effect change included the intentional hiring of teachers, strategic resourcing, and professional development. Principals were co-constructing and co-teaching in the classrooms providing transformative instructional leadership. The principals and catalyst teachers were role models to deconstruct complacency and co-construct culturally responsive and culturally caring environments that formed positive teacher-student relationships. Shields (2010) claimed transformative leadership was about “instituting changes in the educational environment of their schools – structures, culture, pedagogical practices – that resulted in more inclusive and more just experiences for all students” (p. 584). The principals led and supported professional development for their teachers regularly while implementing a cultural interface to attend wholistically to their student's needs. The development of positive teacher-student relationships empowered the students and built mutual respect and equality, rejecting hierarchical power relations within the school environment. In many cases, this was accomplished by purposefully hiring teachers and principals to support school leadership. Transformative leadership made disrupting the status quo a priority.

6.4.2 Disrupting the Status Quo

The genesis for the school-wide reform, adopted in both school contexts, was for the schools' transformative leaders to intentionally introduce disruptive innovation to upset the status quo and decolonize the classrooms in their schools. School leaders initiated a strategic approach to change based on the conclusion that current teaching practices were not working for their Indigenous students. Teachers and administration knew that Eurocentrism persists in the classrooms. Schools have remained cultural constructs serving the hegemonic majority. Indigenous students can and will succeed in decolonized environments when deficit assumptions are rejected, and teachers assign to a belief that Indigenous students are capable of learning (Mayor & Suarez, 2019; Pelletier et al., 2013; Sasakamoose, Bellgarde, Sutherland, Pete, McKay-McNabb, 2017; Silver, Mallett, Greene, & Simard, 2002). Adopting a culturally responsive education approach, in both instances, proved that all students, specifically Indigenous students, can learn (Gay, 2002; Hammond, 2015). This was demonstrated by Indigenous students successfully passing provincial examinations in the Saskatchewan context and increased graduation rates and meeting New Zealand national standard achievement levels that marked improvement in educational attainment levels.

The administration was supportive and assisted teachers in transitioning to learn to teach students through inquiry-based and problem-based learning. Through the decolonizing process, the teaching styles, teacher attitudes, relational practices, the curricular focus became more student-focused and culturally relevant. The Indigenous culture was prevalent in both schools by way of language, incorporation into the curriculum, and regular ceremonial practices contributing to the students' success (Castellano, 2016; Haig-Brown; 1995; Kanu, 2006; 2011; Regnier, 1995; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002).

6.4.3 Know Your Students and Their History

A theme that emerged from both Canada and New Zealand was the need for teachers to know their students so that they could form authentic relationships with students and their families. As witnessed in New Zealand, teachers knew a great deal about their students' likes and dislikes, their family, and their interests. Teachers would walk with their students to the school gates to see students off at the end of the day, and if parents or older siblings were coming to get the students, the teachers and administration would visit with the students' families. At the

beginning of the school year, especially for the earlier grades, teaching would not commence for two or more weeks to allow students to get to know each, play games, and bond.

Teachers also shared their lives and families with their students, and everyone was connected through Facebook at both schools. Students were reminded of upcoming events for the next school day through Facebook. In some cases, the teacher created excitement by posting what was happening at school on Facebook. Other times, the Facebook post was between students reminding each other to bring gym clothes. Teachers would post links and documents for students to refer to in the lessons and for students to have available if they were not able to attend school that day.

The Canadian teachers spoke of taking the time to connect with their students first before teaching would commence. These teachers were also committed to their students on a personal level and offered support both academically and non-academically. Teachers shared personal stories during talking circles and showed their humanness. This bonding was seen as critical to the success of their teaching strategies (Allen, 2017; Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2015; Hattie, 2012; Papp, 2016, 2020). In addition to knowing their students, teachers understood and had acquired knowledge of the history of Indigenous peoples, their worldview, and gained experience while teaching their Indigenous students. The teachers that were interviewed acknowledged that they had no preparation or specific education to inform them how to teach Indigenous students. They did report profound growth, understanding, and personal improvements as teachers of Indigenous students primarily through professional development and under the guidance of the Elders.

Teachers were aware that their Indigenous students had experienced racism and marginalization based on their culture or socio-economic circumstances at the previous schools they attended. These teachers had a relationship with their students that could be described as pastoral or family-like, where teacher compassion allowed them to serve as allies of their students and students' families (Papp, 2016, 2020). The teachers who participated in the research identified many benefits they accrued by working with Indigenous students and learning about Indigenous culture and ceremony.

6.4.4 Professional Development

Teachers who participated in the research confirmed that they benefitted enormously by engaging in professional development regularly. The professional development in the decolonization process begins with a self-assessment and addressing deficit-thinking, stereotyping, racism, and the effects of positive teacher efficacy on their students' classroom performance (Berryman et al., 2014; Harris, 2002; Papp, 2016, 2020; Pete & Longman, 2013; Preston & Claypool, 2013; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Sasakamoose et al., 2017). By moving away from deficit-thinking to an appreciative approach, it was affirmed that Indigenous students could effectively learn, especially if culture is mobilized as part of the learning process (Castellano, 2016; Haig-Brown; 1995; Kanu, 2006; 2011; Regnier, 1995; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002). In both locations, through professional development, teachers learned how to engage their students using experiential, problem-based, and inquiry-based learning opportunities (Papp, 2016; 2020).

The new learning approach replaced transmission learning and offered students the opportunity to collaborate in team projects. Teachers, through professional development, learned how to adapt classroom material to all learning levels and developed assessments that were wholistic. Students were able to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of assessment strategies. Students embraced this approach compared to transmission learning, and student engagement and educational attainment levels improved dramatically. The New Zealand school utilized the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) where each teacher was observed twice a term, did a self-assessment of the classroom interaction with the facilitator, was provided feedback, and, if necessary, the facilitator offered group coaching for teachers.

In both instances, teachers would have co-construction opportunities with other teachers to discuss their common students and share teaching approaches. This took the form of dialogue with colleagues, sharing materials, observing, mentoring/coaching, informal in-house professional development. These approaches to professional development were found to be an effective way to improve teaching practices (Bullock & Sator, 2015; Campbell, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2008; Fullan, 2010, 2011; Hoekstra, Kuntz, & Newton, 2018; Nieto, 2013). Professional learning, in both instances, had an impact on improved student achievement, particularly being most significant for low-achieving students (Hattie, 2009; Kozlowski, 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Papp, 2016, 2020; Sleeter, 2011).

6.4.5 Raising Teacher Consciousness

Teachers who participated in this research had developed a raised consciousness of their potential role in the classroom with Indigenous students. In both locations, teachers practiced relational pedagogy (Allen, 2017; Papp, 2016; 2020; Preston & Claypool, 2013). The positive impact was evident in student learning and improved course completion. Teachers demonstrated and spoke about genuinely caring for their students and often described the experience as a parent-child or a student-friend relationship (Papp, 2016; 2020).

Teachers that were observed were described to be compassionate and caring. They created a positive emotional climate and a safe learning environment without students' fearing ridicule or humiliation. The teachers realized that students would shut down or not try to learn if they thought they would be embarrassed in the classroom. Teachers recognized that students had a variety of needs beyond academics, and there was life and struggles beyond the classroom. The raised teacher consciousness included cultural consciousness, where teachers harmonized education learning outcomes with Indigenous knowledge within their classes. Teachers offered more than instructional support but also social and emotional support always from the interaction of respect for the student. They knew their students through genuine conversations and understood their students' likes and dislikes, their challenges, and ongoing tribulations they would encounter. The teachers, in many cases, were healing agents that demonstrated compassion. They embraced their role as an ethical obligation.

6.4.6 The Power of Indigenous Culture

Bringing Indigenous culture into the classrooms was powerful and aided in decolonizing the classrooms and improving the learning outcomes. Unlike other schools that compartmentalize learning and maintain hegemony, the schools and classrooms embraced their students' culture. As part of the decolonizing effort for both schools, an appreciative approach to Indigenous culture became a part of the learning. The Indigenous culture at the schools created freedom for the students to experience their culture emotionally, physically, spiritually, and intellectually without ridicule.

Other schools, where students previously attended and did not succeed, provided minimal cultural experiences that were described as an interruption or inconvenience. The two schools focused on the culture, and culture was infused into every aspect of the students' learning. The

schools celebrated Indigenous ceremonies regularly, and students felt accepted for being Indigenous and cultivated a sense of pride embracing their ancestry.

The culture was part of every class and played a role in the students' learning experience. In many cases, particularly in Saskatchewan, Canada, academics were brought into the culture, and every opportunity was made to learn from an Indigenous perspective. Most teachers were Caucasian and commented that the Elders were willing to share and teach the Indigenous ceremonies. Incorporating culture was authentic and not considered token activities. Great care and respect were taken to have Elders guide the learning or activities with their knowledge. The Canadian Caucasian teachers participated in a daily smudge, talking circles, and the ceremonies. All students, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, benefitted from learning about Indigenous culture.

At this point, it should be reinforced that culture alone is not a panacea. However, when culture is combined with the other themes listed, the results have had an undeniable positive impact (Castellano, 2016; Haig-Brown; 1995; Kanu, 2006; 2011; Papp, 2016, 2020; Regnier, 1995; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002). Celebrating Indigenous culture affirmed students that it was acceptable to be Indigenous and to take pride in their ancestry. It should also be restated that, particularly in the research at Saskatchewan, Canada, culture was not embraced by all the students immediately. Especially the younger students. In many cases, they were learning about their culture for the first time and felt uncomfortable to participate in the ceremony, and some avoided attending. However, the teachers interviewed stated that graduating students would repeatedly confirm the impact culture had on them and their academic success and how celebrating their culture helped build their self-esteem as an Indigenous person.

6.4.7 Non-Academic Supports

Non-traditional learners, described as learners that come from backgrounds where educational success was not common or who are challenged to learn from transmission forms of education, often require more than academic supports to be successful in school (Bartlett, 2015; Salole & Abdulle, 2015; Papp, 2016, 2020; Preston, Carr-Stewart, & Bruno, 2012). Some students also require non-academic supports to clear the path for learning to occur. In some cases, students need support for living accommodations, food, health and dental care, childcare, social security or financial aid, transportation, social justice, addictions, and emotional support from Elders. Students need assistance in life skills and job skills that go beyond the grade school

level. In both schools, there was a host of non-academic supports offered to the students. In the Canadian context, especially, these supports offered the opportunity for students to succeed academically.

6.5 Underlying Themes

The teachers' narratives from the school in Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand offered vibrant dialogues that provided a secondary level of themes. I had spent time in both schools. In New Zealand, specifically, I attended many meetings and was immersed in the classrooms in addition to conducting interviews with the participants. Experiencing the schools' environments and the social structures and spending time in the classrooms offered observable themes that were augmented by the conversations with the participants. The underlying themes that will be discussed are the school environment and learning space, social systems, school structure, active learning, and student-centered pedagogy, and finally, teacher traits and attributes.

6.5.1 School Environment and Learning Space

The atmosphere at both schools would be described as welcoming and inviting to students. The schools were physically smaller and housed approximately 420 and 300 students, respectively. Both had a less institutional and less structured appeal. The physical learning space was unstructured with tables rather than desks in a row. Often the table configuration changed daily, and students took ownership of the design. Some classrooms had round tables and couches for reading as an alternative to the tables. The atmosphere was conducive for group work, and the physical space positively impacted learning. This confirms other studies that revealed that pedagogy, curricula, and learning space design affected the student's learning experience and resulted in positive student outcomes (Blackmore, Bateman, Loughlin, O'Mara, & Arana, 2011; Durak & Cankaya, 2018; Ellis & Goodyear, 2016).

Both schools recognized the importance of public recognition for student achievement with awards ceremonies. Teachers expressed their confidence in their students' learning abilities and set high standards for their students to achieve. The Canadian school offered students credit recovery and dual credits for blended classes.

6.5.2 Social Systems

Patrick, Kaplan, and Ryan (2011) stated, “classroom environments play an important role in students’ motivation, engagement, and achievement at school” (p. 367). In the two case students presented, the environment created was positive for the students’ education. As a result, the teachers confirmed that the Indigenous students felt affirmed from both a cultural and personal perspective. The general tone for both schools was one of mutual respect and acceptance. The classrooms represented physical and social safety for the students, and the communication between students and teachers was positive.

In both case studies, classroom management was rarely required based on the relationships that had been built and the mutual trust and respect. On occasion, if a student swore at the teacher or said unkind words, their classmates would defend the teacher and reprimand their classmates for their poor behavior. In New Zealand, if a student or students were *acting out*, they were asked to leave the room, and the teacher would speak with them in private. However, if the situation could not be suitably rectified between the teacher and students or between students, they would be provided a pass to the Restorative Thinking Room, and a facilitator would assist in a favourable resolution. The focus was on building relationships or repairing relationships. The rationale was not to let past disagreements build up but to allow fellow students or students and teachers to talk through disruptive behavior and to reflect on how the behaviour affected others. Building relationships were vital, and the rationale for positive relationships was because when people care about each other, they want positive outcomes for both parties.

In the Canadian school, if a student were disruptive, the teacher would suggest the student remove themselves from the classroom and go to talk to an Elder or cool down and come back later to discuss the problem. Students had never in past educational institutions been told that they could leave the classroom if they were disruptive. Voices were not raised, and there was no hierarchy based on the teacher’s role. Teacher participants explained the utter shock a student would express when told they could leave when they expected a verbal altercation and possibly be punished or expelled as experienced in previous schools.

In Canada, the students called their teachers or principals by their first name. That was viewed as a sign of friendship, as friends call each other by their first name. In New Zealand, teachers were addressed formally; however, the teachers were mindful that there was no

hierarchy, and they were aware that they could shut down student participation very quickly if they were not respectful of their students. The dimensions that both locations provided within their social systems are what Allodi (2010) described to include, “interpersonal relationships, student-teacher relationships, peer relationships, teachers’ beliefs and behaviors, teachers’ communication style, classroom management and group processes” (pp. 89-90). Allodi (2010) affirmed that all dimensions affect motivation and classroom performance.

6.5.3 School Term Structure

Both schools offered a modified block system. In Canada, the students attended one class for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon for ten weeks. New Zealand has four terms that lasted ten weeks, with approximately a one-week break between semesters. New Zealand classes run 12 months of the year with small breaks between terms compared to Canada having July and August as the summer break. Canady and Rettig (1995, 2013) indicated that longer blocks of time were not effective for some teachers and were too long. The Saskatchewan schoolteachers reported that the extra time allowed them the opportunity to build relationships with their students and vary their instructional approaches supporting the view of Cawelti (1994 as cited in Canady & Rettig). It also allowed the student to concentrate on approximately two subjects at a time over a condensed timeframe versus over a longer timeframe of five months with five or six classes. Students are also able to quickly accumulate course credits (Canady & Rettig, 1995, 2013), which was the benefit of this choice, particularly in the Canadian context. A further benefit identified for the student was:

The provision of opportunities for students to (1) repeat ‘failed courses and still graduate on time, which may encourage some students to stay in school longer; (2) be accelerated in a subject or subjects when appropriate; and (3) focus on fewer classes at any one time. (Canady & Rettig, p. 113)

The Canadian school recognized these benefits in addition to circumstances where the student would need to be away from school for extended periods of time for personal matters.

6.5.4 Active Learning and Student-Centered Pedagogy

Both schools embraced relational pedagogy and introduced a shift in teacher instruction that represented anything BUT transmission learning. The schools and their teachers primarily used inquiry-based learning, discussion-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based

learning, and experiential learning, which contributed to the students' improved educational success (Cajete, 1994; Couture, 2011). Every opportunity was taken to incorporate culture into the curriculum.

Students experienced success with this pedagogical style and teacher instruction. Teachers intentionally changed abstract concepts into tangible concepts to improve student understanding. The class material was selected either by the students or chosen to connect with the students' life, concerns, and interests. In both instances, student learning was student-paced, and the teachers would assist the students at their level. Textbooks were rarely used at both schools except for school reading classes in New Zealand and Mathematics classes in Canada. Students were encouraged to conduct research utilizing the Internet on topics of their choice. Alternatively, in other classes, teachers would create individualized learning units to meet student interest and learning levels. Teachers provided a potpourri of supports to learning to accommodate students at all learning levels.

6.5.5 Teacher Traits and Attributes

All the teacher participants were asked why they wanted to teach at their respective schools, and most responded that they were seeking a challenge and wanted to try new teaching approaches. The teachers aspired to improve their teaching abilities, so their students would succeed. Some of the teachers that were interviewed were invited to join the school while others were there during the *disruptive innovation* and were open-minded and flexible. In some cases, a carte blanche offer was given to the teachers to effect change. This reflected two things; teachers were highly respected and deemed competent in their teaching abilities and that the teachers were willing to try new things and could be described as risk-takers. As found in other research, (Newton & da Costa, 2016) multi-level autonomy offered the teachers agency to be creative and innovative in the classroom and experiment to find teaching practices that would engage their students and improve learning outcomes. It was evident from the conversations and the animation during the interviews that these teachers were passionate about their subjects and teaching their students.

The teachers were culturally responsive to Indigenous culture. Most of the teachers were Caucasian and open to learning Indigenous culture and regularly participating in the Indigenous

ceremonies. Elders were resources, and the teachers sought information with genuine interest and deep respect for Indigenous tradition.

As previously mentioned, teachers were able to relinquish power within the classroom and not present themselves as an authoritarian figure. Teachers were always at the students' level: the teacher would kneel by the desk or sit beside the student. Teachers did not speak from a podium or at the front of the class. Teachers were continuously moving from student to student or group to group, talking to them, and asking questions. The teachers at both locations would pose guiding questions to students so the student would find the answers or reflect on their learning.

There was a democratic leadership; however, students were allowed to provide direction in their learning and select their class projects, creating the ability for students to take ownership of their education. Humour and creativity were incorporated into the classroom

This final paragraph is not intended to be the least important. It quite likely is one of the most important of the teacher attributes and was discussed in the opening chapter of *Who am I?* The teachers genuinely cared for their students as if they were their children. They could be described as compassionate, empathetic, and emotionally present, supporting the research by Allen (2017). The teachers were personable and invested in their students' success. They made it a priority to engage in real conversations with their students as a real person and know them. If there were students who were having challenges, they were there to support them and offer direction to receive assistance. The teachers treated their students, no matter their age, with dignity and respect. In these case studies, a genuine display of compassion and respect surpasses the teacher's skin colour or cultural background.

The next section will provide a recap of the significance this study has for the Indigenous students, improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students, teachers of Indigenous students.

6.6 The Significance of This Study

The significance of this study comes from a multidimensional academic vantage point contributing potentially valuable findings applicable to many perspectives of education for Indigenous peoples. The significance of this study has appeared at the beginning of this

dissertation; however, it worthy of a second review at the point where the themes have been presented.

It should be noted that although the context of this dissertation is primarily Canadian, with comparison to New Zealand, Indigenous Peoples occupy all corners of the world and the education practices instituted for Indigenous peoples and many policies that are linked to education for Indigenous Peoples are in dire need of reform. The 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article 14 established the right to education, control of educational systems, and education in their own culture and languages. (United Nations, 2007). Recognizing that there are many Indigenous peoples in the world, this dissertation does not attempt to generalize across all global contexts and understands that within each county, there are variations of Indigenous cultures. This dissertation does provide insights and presents teacher practices that benefitted their Indigenous students that may be of interest to other Indigenous peoples around the globe.

The significance of this dissertation was to fill a gap in the literature, wherein teachers of Indigenous students identified strategies that engaged Indigenous students that lead to improved academic achievement levels and increased graduation rates. This study has recorded the voices of the teachers of Indigenous students in both Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand and reported the strategies that they animated in their classrooms. The relevance of the teachers' perspective is critical as the teachers are the people in direct contact with the students and the teacher is ultimately the person to make the difference in the education outcomes of their classroom. The teachers' voices have been minimally present in the literature and are viewed as a valuable component to education reform and the actualization of any educational improvements. Teachers are the driving force in implementing policies, creating the learning environment, and are the main catalysts making a difference in students' academic successes.

This dissertation has identified success stories and delineated practices that were implemented in real classrooms. The results were improved academic success for Indigenous students as documented over approximately four years. Much of the previous academic research is speculative, theorizing about what could be implemented to improve outcomes. The distinctiveness of this research is that it builds on pedagogical theory and presents two school-wide reform initiatives, one in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the other in New Zealand, which impacted over 700 students within two schools. This research described how teachers affected

change by presenting case studies documenting theory-to-practice, with robust empirical data demonstrating improved outcomes. This empirical data verified the effects of strategic changes in teacher's actions, attitudes, and intentionally implemented pedagogical strategies.

The originality of this research is the combination of success markers that bring Eurocentric measurements, such as course credits and increased graduation rates together with the Indigenous students' measures of success, such as pride in being Indigenous and their culture, learning Indigenous history and language, and succeeding in school by obtaining course credits and graduating. The Eurocentric measures of success and the Indigenous student's successes are supportive of each other rather than contradictory. The research findings represent teachers that challenged and rejected deficit-thinking assumptions and genuinely expressed that Indigenous students are capable of learning. These attitudes demonstrated that within the Eurocentric educational systems, the teachers are capable of embracing change to improve Indigenous student outcomes within a culturally responsive curriculum and developing caring relationships with their students to transform school contexts.

This research has provided a Canadian, and more specifically, a Saskatchewan context to expand the academic knowledge for education for Indigenous students in Canada. The study includes the New Zealand context, which provides a comparative focus to discover similarities and differences while, in both instances, Indigenous students achieved improved educational outcomes. The comparative inquiry with New Zealand is complementary in following the quest to improve education levels for Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is prudent to consider strategies that have been successful in other countries with Indigenous students. Along with Canada, such countries as New Zealand commonly share the European colonization experience and the marginalization of their Indigenous peoples. Also shared is the consequence that the most disadvantaged people of these countries are the Indigenous peoples with the lowest education attainment levels compared to non-Indigenous people.

Professional development was the focus of the comparative process and has offered insight into the results of intentional professional development within teacher learning communities that impacted Indigenous students (See Papp & Cottrell, 2020). Explicitly, both contexts embraced inquiry-based learning, culturally responsive practices, relational-based pedagogy, and the significance of these findings highlights the positive impact professional development, with this particular focus, has on the educational outcomes for Indigenous

students. The focus on the types of professional development, in both contexts, are supportive of providing insights into the innovative practices that improve the learning experiences of Indigenous students.

In both contexts, the significance of this study offers economic and social justice arguments to support the strategies implemented in the classrooms of Indigenous students. By applying specific teaching strategies to improve retention and learning in the schools, students were able to achieve course credits that ultimately lead to graduation and a high school diploma. From an economic perspective, within the Canadian context, the educational achievement levels of Indigenous students indicate that Indigenous students have incrementally higher dropout rates from school than non-Indigenous students based on the educational attainment levels (CBC, 2017). Without a high school diploma or equivalent, higher education is not possible, and the consequences are significant with regard to employment opportunities and income (Sharpe, Arsenault, Lapointe & Cowan, 2009).

From a social justice perspective, lower levels of formal education, intergenerational effects of the residential school system within Canada, cultural identity struggles, and poverty are cited as the primary factors that contribute to Indigenous people being over-represented in Canadian correctional facilities and psychiatric centers (Government of Canada, 2013). This has been called the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon wherein dropping out of school, low educational attainment levels, and living in poverty have disadvantaged Indigenous students and led to incarceration (Bartlett, 2015; Gebhard, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Ogundele, 2018; Salole & Abdulle, 2015; Stanford University Education, 2011). The students of the two case studies of this research were considered to be demographically defined as students living in poverty by Canadian standards and defined in New Zealand as a decile two school wherein decile one is the lowest economic level and decile ten the wealthiest.

Furthermore, the significance of the findings is accentuated by a pronounced need echoed by Indigenous peoples and their leaders as well as all levels of governments to improve education achievement levels for Indigenous students. This study is noteworthy and timely in guiding governments, policymakers, school directors, teachers, university education departments, and the discourse of teacher education and their instruction and directives.

6.7 Intergenerational Effects of Colonization, Residential Schools, and Poverty: The Outer Circle

In both Canada and New Zealand, Indigenous people were subjected to colonization. The Indigenous students of both schools had parents and grandparents that experienced assimilation. The adverse effects of residential schools and colonization have led to intergenerational poverty, stress, and trauma (IPST). This theme has evolved from identifying that the students of the two case studies of this research were demographically defined as students living in poverty by Canadian standards and defined in New Zealand as a decile two school, where decile one is the lowest economic level and decile ten the wealthiest. Failure to address the systemic causes of lower academic achievement for Indigenous peoples maintains lower education levels. Many Indigenous students experience the multi-layered effects of intergenerational poverty, stress, and racism that results in more mediocre school performance, school absences, and this, in turn, affects learning and result in inequitable learning outcomes.

The students of both schools experienced increased educational attainment levels. They can be described as turnaround schools as the schools offered, not only relational pedagogy in a caring and culturally responsive environment but also support services that collectively contributed to the students' success. As shown in Figure 4.1, all components were necessary for Indigenous students to overcome the effects of poverty and stress to improve their learning environment.

As described in detail, the primary themes of transformative leadership, disrupting the status quo, knowing your students, professional development, raised teacher consciousness of poverty and racism, offering non-academic supports, and the incorporation of culture were primary contributors to the Indigenous students' academic levels of improvement. Reflection on both case studies has identified recommendations that could be incorporated into classrooms that service Indigenous students.

6.8 Limitations

Limitations are situations or factors within the research study that are uncontrollable by the researcher and are to identify potential weaknesses that may emerge during the research and affect the outcomes of the study (Creswell, 2003; Mauch & Park, 2003). Mauch and Park (2003)

stated: “limitations typically surface as variables that cannot be controlled by the researcher and may limit or affect the outcome of the study” (p. 115).

The following limitations apply to this research. As the sole researcher, collector, and analyzer of the data, my perspective may influence the interpretation of the data collected. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews, site observations, and the field notes generated will be solely my responsibility to present in this study, and the nature of qualitative research is mediated through me and hence could be influenced by me. However, in every instance, the transcripts were member checked and verified for accuracy by the participants. In both cases, the principal or division administrator was provided with the interpreted data resulting from data collection.

Also, the nature of qualitative research and the case study allowed me to consider the context. With semi-structured interviews, there is the capacity to ask for clarification of the information given by the participants to capture a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. The animation of meaning to the findings represents a co-construction process between the collection of interview responses and my interpretation.

Another limitation would be that this research represents two case studies of two schools and the teachers within a Canadian and New Zealand context. The sample size of participants is small, and the findings should not be over-generalized but instead represented as specific to the cultures of those schools. Instead of identifying teacher strategies that can be transferrable to other teachers, the dynamics may only be present and effective in particular schools. However, the third manuscript presented *Professional Development, Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP) and Indigenous Student success: A comparative Case-Study of New Zealand and Saskatchewan, Canada* does identify some similarities in approach and strategies implemented in each context (See, Papp & Cottrell, 2019).

As acknowledged above and specific to this research study, in general, education research has limitations. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, “education, as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, has borrowed concepts and theories from psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and other disciplines” (p. 14). The theories associated with the different disciplines affect different parts of the education system, and for this reason, conclusions may be contradictory. McMillan and Schumacher also explained that education is multilayered and is a living organism continually changing as it is affected by the people within

the system, the students, families, communities, and the larger systems. The next section addresses issues of significance and describes in detail the structure of this manuscript dissertation and the chapters that follow.

6.9 Recommendations

Learning environments that are conducive to improving Indigenous students' learning experiences need to look to strategies that improved learning outcomes in the case studies examined in Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand. In this section, further recommendations to build on the earlier identified themes are offered for all Indigenous classrooms that may further improve learning outcomes.

If a change is to occur in Indigenous education achievement levels, a concerted effort needs to be put into effect between the Ministries of Education and school divisions. There needs to be a complete buy-in by the administration and teachers of a school, and if necessary, disruptive innovation that would lead to the selection of culturally responsive leaders and the allocation of comprehensive supports. Specific resources and monetary investments, as well as professional development, would need to be available to staff to institute problem-based and inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based learning, or a similar form of education, need to replace transmission learning as it has been identified as the least effective for Indigenous student particularly, however, still the most commonly used form of teaching.

It is recommended that pre-service teachers have an increased teacher education intentionally focused on student diversity, effects of racism, Indigenous history, and practicums in schools with Indigenous students. A two-day workshop is helpful for third-year education students, but a one-term course that is dedicated to the history of Indigenous Peoples would provide students with more insight. The increase in pre-service education on racism and Native Studies, have been implemented in some provinces of Canada such as Saskatchewan and Manitoba; however, in the broader context of national and international preparation of teachers-in-training and those teachers currently within educational systems would benefit from courses that provide a comprehensive history of Indigenous peoples and a practicum that includes classroom experience with Indigenous students.

There is a strong need for intentional professional development for in-service teachers and teachers-in-training to focus on building skills focused on inquiry-based and problem-based

teaching pedagogies. Another area for professional development is to raise the awareness of the teacher's understanding of the effects of poverty, stress, and trauma on student learning. Teachers would also benefit from professional development and training regarding growth mindsets, the neuroscience of the brain, and how students learn so they could share that with their students. Many students have a belief that they cannot learn based on previous failures in other schools and have accepted a deficit mindset. It is to be noted that the results of this study showed that teacher effectiveness does not require teachers to be Indigenous so that Indigenous students can succeed in school. In the two case studies, the majority of the teachers were Caucasian, and their compassion, respect, and care allowed them to be very effective facilitators of learning.

It is recommended that universities utilize a screening process for prospective students the application to enter into the field of education. The suggestions would be to include student perceptions of poverty, homelessness, the disparity of education levels for Indigenous peoples, cultural and religious practices of different people, and diversity. This recommendation is offered on a national and international context, and it is acknowledged that some universities do currently screen incoming education student. The introductory chapter suggested a course on Positive Memories 101 or Caring for my Students 121. I am not sure how easy it is to teach care or compassion. Care and compassion can come with developed emotional intelligence that includes empathy. I recollected that too many teachers were interested in the power the role of a teacher held. These teachers had effectively relinquished their control in the classroom, and that act was a contributing factor to the Indigenous students' success. Classrooms, for Indigenous students, in particular, need to be caring and compassionate places for healing. Many students internalize their failure in other schools as their incapacity to learn but do not recognize the failure was the result of colonized schools. Schools also need to be sensitive and aware of the effects of intergenerational poverty on the experiences that children have that have created trauma in their life and the impact on learning.

The final recommendation to decolonize the classroom and provide supports would require the solicitation of integrative services assistance. Providing assistance that can be accessed easily should be made available within the schools. The Canadian school offered transit services and support workers to assist students in need of non-academic supports. Students cannot learn if they are hungry or worried about where they will sleep that night. Many local

service clubs may be willing to help with a breakfast or lunch program. The New Zealand school offered medical and educational supports as well as many other non-academic supports. Finally, and foremost is to have Elders, at least one male and female, available for the Indigenous students. In both case studies, Elders offered their emotional support to the children but also guided students and the educators of Indigenous students.

6.10 A New Circle to Unfold: Future Research

The culmination of manuscripts and evolution of thoughts have led to the recognition of another area to explore that antecedes the issue of Indigenous students not succeeding in school and addresses the systemic reasons and concerns experienced by Indigenous students. There are academic papers that present the impact residential schools had on those students that attended them. What appears to be missing from the academic literature is the lingering intergenerational impact the residential schools have on the current generation of Indigenous peoples as it relates to the enduring poverty, stress, and trauma. It is critical to address the systemic causes for Indigenous people's low education achievement caused by intergenerational poverty and inequitable learning outcomes (IPILO) in addition to focusing on *equalizing the opportunity gap* based on a Eurocentric monopoly of determinants, yardsticks, standardized testing, and pedagogy that is not culturally responsive¹ (Battiste, 2013; Claypool & Preston, 2011; Hammond, 2015; Hampton, 1995; Johnston & Claypool, 2010).

A Proquest library search provided initially 26 peer-reviewed journal articles from 2000 to 2019 using the filters of intergenerational poverty, Canadian, Indigenous, learning, and students. Of the results, after scrutinizing each article, only 13 were relevant to Canadian education, and Indigenous context and six studies reflected Australian Indigenous education. This is an under-researched area in the academic education literature within a Canadian Indigenous Peoples context and validates the need for this program of study in the field of education.

Very recent research is establishing that children who experienced poverty, violence, and trauma were incorrectly diagnosed and treated with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) when emotional and behavioural disorders² (EBD) was the reason for the symptoms and linked to learning and behavior problems (Canadian Council of Learning, 2009; Canadian Paediatric Society, 2009; Hunter & Sanchez, 2017; McDonald & Wilson, 2013; McEwan,

Waddell & Baker, 2007; Stanford University Education, 2011; The Conference Board of Canada, 2014). I also take a personal interest in this research. I recognize that one does not need to come from poverty to experience a misuse of power that would affect learning and wellbeing. As described in Chapter 1, I had experienced trauma and stress as a youth that affected me adversely. The findings of this research could benefit more students than initially described.

Recognizing and dealing with early stages of trauma is an essential component of an approach to treatment that employs a multidisciplinary team, including administration, teachers, and paraprofessionals who regularly work with these students within school settings. Therefore, it is paramount that the prevailing mental health³ challenges experienced by children and youth are brought to the forefront within the education profession, especially when dealing with marginalized and low socioeconomic students who are most often afflicted with trauma and stress.

This study will offer empirical evidence to fill the gap in the academic literature on this topic, so that best practices become better understood, enhanced, and scaled up for the improvement in Indigenous educational outcomes and perhaps a wider benefit for all students that live in poverty. Also, what is found to be sparse in the academic literature and desperately in need of research is culturally responsive approaches within an Indigenous context in which culture, care, and healing approaches can potentially assist Indigenous students to triumph over the effects of IPILO through caring and sensitive practices. Research in the United States is slowly merging psychology and neurosciences with education providing data on transformative learning approaches (Allen, 2017; Cole, Eisner, Gregory, & Ristuccia, 2017; Hammond, 2015; Hertel & Kincaid, 2017). While within a Canadian Indigenous context, research is emerging minimally and is fragmented by discipline and focus (Bartlett, 2015; Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Canadian Paediatric Society, 2009; McEwen et al., 2007; Preston, Claypool, Rowluck, & Green, 2017; Whitley, 2010) wherein the disciplines should be amalgamated with educational practices for a better understanding of praxis that translates into equitable learning outcomes.

Poverty is not a lifestyle choice or a culture but a multifaceted web that is not merely a shortage of income (Silver, 2013) but a consequence of intergenerational poverty, stress, and trauma in the wake of residential schools and colonization. Intergenerational marginalized Indigenous people living in poverty survive the “racial and economic caste systems” (Hammond,

2015) through coping mechanisms identified by behaviours that include addictions, violence, suicide, low education levels, high unemployment, high incarceration, physical and emotional abuse (Barnes, Josefowitz & Cole, 2006, Brokenleg, 2012; Carrion & Wong, 2012; Hallett, Chandler & Lalonde, 2007; Hammond, 2015; McQuaid, Bombay, McInnis, Humeny, Matheson, & Anisman, 2017; Sasakamoose et al., 2017, Silver, 2013). These coping mechanisms present additional challenges for those affected by IPST in addition to distressing a students' mental state, ability to learn, and ultimately, they struggle to succeed in school. These challenges are further linked to emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) and the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon (Bartlett, 2015; Gebhard, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Ogundele, 2018; Salole & Abdulle, 2015; Stanford University Education, 2011). Many Indigenous students experience the multi-layered effects of intergenerational poverty, stress, and trauma (IPST) that affect learning and result in inequitable learning outcomes (Battiste, 2013; Claypool & Preston, 2014; Kanu, 2011).

Through a multiple case study approach, utilizing qualitative methods, the intent would be to provide insight into trauma-informed innovations currently beginning to show promise, so that these might be scaled up, expanded, and made more robust to improve educational attainment levels for Indigenous peoples empirically. This future research will explore the administrative, teacher, and community leadership frameworks based on the conviction that both Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge can co-create a culturally responsive environment in the spirit of reconciliation that benefits Indigenous students.

The primary focus of this research is within the urban inner-city schools of Saskatchewan that serve predominantly Indigenous students; however, the implications and findings may be beneficial to all students that experience intergenerational poverty, stress, and trauma (IPST) and reach beyond Canadian boundaries as a multi-faceted approach to alleviating the effects of complex racialized poverty. It is critical to address the systemic causes for Indigenous people's low education achievement caused by IPST in addition to focusing on *improving the opportunity gap* based on a Eurocentric monopoly of determinants, yardsticks, and standardized testing (Battiste, 2013; Claypool & Preston, 2011; Hampton, 1995; Johnston & Claypool, 2010). Future research could provide an opportunity for comparative international study in multiple Indigenous contexts around the world.

6.11 Final Words

Public education is intended for everyone and is open and free for all children to attend. Based on the compelling statistical evidence, it is sad but true that not all students feel welcomed in schools, and not all students succeed in an education system that is intended to benefit all. Some students succeed. And the statistics demonstrate that non-Indigenous students are more likely to have higher academic achievement rates. The other students are not as successful, as research has identified the ongoing impact of poverty, trauma, and marginalization affects learning for Indigenous students. Students, as a result of the enduring effects of colonization, experience racism, segregation, and marginalization that affects the students' educational success in a Eurocentric school environment.

The comparative analysis of two distinctly different locales, Saskatchewan, Canada, and New Zealand offered different contexts and provided rich data and descriptions that shared many common strategies. The schools were selected based on the improvements in learning outcomes for Indigenous students that contradicted the achievement levels found in other schools in their respective countries. The actions taken in those schools addressed racism and created an environment of equality and equity for all students. Although the limitations of this research are that only two schools were analyzed, the impact of the findings affected over 700 students within four years, and, in both cases, it was acknowledged that not only Indigenous, but all students benefited from the changes.

This research has proven that Indigenous students can succeed in decolonized educational environments. Also, the case studies presented demonstrated that leadership was necessary and led to a strategic, transformative change to occur system-wide within each education system that resulted in educational improvements for their Indigenous students. Teacher participants of the Indigenous students challenged and rejected deficit-thinking assumptions and offered supports that genuinely expressed to their students that they were capable of learning. The intentional shift in attitudes and teaching styles demonstrated that within Eurocentric hegemonic educational systems teachers are capable of embracing change. The schools and their teachers demonstrated compassion for their students by beginning a healing process that recognized that students' previous failures were a result of the colonized education system. Through the culturally responsive curriculum, relational pedagogy, and creating a caring environment, schools were transformed to improve student outcomes for Indigenous students. The similarities between the

two schools and strategies implemented were profound; however, it is difficult to confirm if the findings could be transferrable to other schools with large Indigenous populations. Further research is needed.

The originality of this research has combined success markers that bring Eurocentric measurements, such as course credits and increased graduation rates, together with the Indigenous students' measures of success, such as pride in being Indigenous and proud of their history and culture. While learning about Indigenous history and language, the students experienced improved self-esteem and were able to succeed in school by obtaining course credits and graduating. The Eurocentric measures of success and the Indigenous students' achievements are supportive of each other rather than contradictory.

Mainstream ideologies and philosophies dominate the educational system that had excised Indigenous epistemology and pedagogical practices. These two schools and their teachers intentionally initiated a resurgence of Indigenous traditions, values, and teaching practices that demonstrated a teaching model that successfully collaborates Western pedagogy with Indigenous traditional education with resounding success. Attending to the whole student, but providing supports that were both academic and non-academic, provided wraparound supports in a wholistic manner.

I have been a *White woman researching, and a White woman writing*. My journey and quest to improve education for Indigenous students began in 2012, prior to the *Calls to Action* presented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2015. The chair of the TRC, Senator Murray Sinclair, stated, "Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem, it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us" (CBC, 2015). It is hoped that this manuscript dissertation has provided its readers with knowledge and understanding to spark action in education that demonstrates respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility toward Indigenous students, as recommended by Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt in 1991, in the spirit of reconciliation. The research presented addressed the Call to Action 10 (ii) by "improving education attainment levels and success rates" addressing the achievement gaps that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (TRC, 2015b, p. 2) Also, addressed is the Call to Action number 63 under the heading of *Education and Reconciliation*, items ii, iii, and iv. This research has shared information and best practices in teaching Indigenous students' curriculum, build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect, and identified teacher-

training needs (TRC, 2015b, p. 7). As with the general intention of the TRC, all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, need to work together as allies in a coalition to achieve reconciliation.

I offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the educational leaders and teacher participants that were mavericks in making a difference in their classrooms of Indigenous students and providing their passionate narratives that were evident as their voices were recorded. Thank you for sharing your skills and knowledge with genuine compassion for your students in the spirit of collaborating to further knowledge in serving Indigenous students and assisting them to succeed academically. I further extend my respectful appreciation to the Indigenous leaders and Elders for their guidance throughout this research.

It is done. The quilt is complete, and the final chapter concludes the *White Woman Researching, White Woman Writing*. As this chapter completes the dissertation manuscript, a new chapter of research is waiting on the horizon.

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6.13 Footnotes

¹ Culturally-responsive teaching: Culturally-responsive teaching is defined by Gay (2002) “as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the students’ lived experiences and frames of reference, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly” (p. 106). For Indigenous students, culturally- responsive pedagogy should also be connected to the languages and norms of local Indigenous communities (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; McCarty & Lee, 2014).

² Emotional and behavioural disorders: Emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) are broadly defined by external behaviours that can include disruption, aggression, and forms of acting out. EBD also includes internalized behaviours that include anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Bartlett, 2015).

³ Mental health: The absence of mental illness or mental health is described as “a state of well-being, in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community” World Health Organization. (2009). *Mental health: A state of wellbeing*. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/index.html.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background:

1. What is your education background?
2. How long have you been an educator?
3. How long have you been teaching in this school?
4. How does your previous teaching employment differ from your current employment?
5. What classes and grade levels do you instruct?

Teaching Strategies

1. What teaching strategies do you implement in the classroom that you feel have resulted in student engagement and achievement?
2. Which of these strategies do you feel is most effective for students?
3. How do these teaching strategies compare to previous teaching strategies in other schools that you have taught?
4. What teaching theories do you put into practice and why?
5. From your classroom experiences, what effects does the implementation of these teaching theories have on your students' learning and academic achievement?
6. What does an effective learning environment for students to achieve and succeed look like?
7. What best practices do you use to help students succeed academically?
8. What do you perceive are necessary ingredients and/or components to create an effective learning environment, so your students will succeed?
9. What do you believe are key contributors to your effectiveness as a teacher?
10. What criteria do you use as evidence of student success in academics?
11. How do you as a teacher achieve this?
12. What criteria do you use as evidence of student engagement in the school?
13. What do you, as a teacher, do to achieve this?






School Strategies and Support

1. What supports are students offered by the school to attain academic success?
2. What supports do you receive to assure your students attain academic success?

3. What role does culture play in the classroom and in the school as a whole?
4. What do you identify as the key goals of your school and how are they implemented?
5. How does the school promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with the learners?

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION CIE JOURNAL

Re: CIE Journal inquiry Message 2 of 3

 From **Kumari Beck <kumari_beck@sfu.ca>** 
To **Therri <therri@skmconsulting.ca>** 
Date **2020-04-03 10:31 AM**  

Dear Therri

This is to confirm that the permission granted to use your published article in your dissertation still stands.

You can access the URL yourself by going to your article in the Journal and copying the URL from the webbrowser page. This would be the same procedure I would use.

All the best as you near completion on your dissertation

Regards

Kumari

Kumari Beck, PhD
Associate Professor
Co-Director, Centre for Research on International Education
Co-Academic Coordinator, Equity Issues in Education
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby BC V5A 1S6

Honoured to be living and working as an uninvited guest on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Səlilwataʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), Katzie, and other Coast Salish peoples.

From: Therri <therri@skmconsulting.ca> on behalf of Therri <therri@skmconsulting.ca>
Organization: Sterling K. Morghan Consulting
Date: Friday, April 3, 2020 at 7:58 AM
To: Kumari Beck <kumari_beck@sfu.ca>
Subject: Re: CIE Journal inquiry

Good day, Dr. Kumari Beck!

I am reaching out to you today with regards to my manuscript previously accepted for publication in your journal:

Papp, T. A. (2016). Teaching strategies for improved education outcomes for Indigenous students. *Comparative and International Education* 45(3), 1-14. Retrieved from <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1380&context=cie-eci>

This published manuscript will be one of the chapters for my Ph.D. manuscript dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan. Previously, when Marianne Larsen was the editor for the *Comparative and International Education* journal, she suggested that I provide the following statement "Thank you to the editors for allowing me to reprint my article published in the *Comparative and International Education* journal. The full citation is . . ." (as listed above).

Since you are the new editor, I am confirming with you that this remains appropriate, or if you have other recommendations. I do need copyright permission from each of the peer-reviewed journals prior to the submission of my manuscript dissertation. If you have a URL link from this journal or Elsevier that you can provide me that would be much appreciated. I would like your journal's permission to also appear in the manuscript dissertation appendix.

Thank you for your assistance.

Therri

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TAYLOR AND FRANCIS



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A Canadian study of coming full circle to traditional Aboriginal pedagogy: a pedagogy for the 21st century

Author: Theresa A. Papp

Publication: Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

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APPENDIX D: LETTER OF PERMISSION AJER

Dr. Anna Kirova, Editor
Alberta Journal of Educational Research
845 Education South, Faculty of Education
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

Dear Dr. Kirova:

**RE: Manuscript MS 58419
Teacher Professional Learning, Culturally Responsive/Sustaining Practices, and
Indigenous Students' Success: A Comparative Case-Study of New Zealand and
Saskatchewan, Canada**

I am requesting permission to include the manuscript listed above to be included in my Ph.D. manuscript dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan.

Your approval will appear in the Appendix of my dissertation. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Theresa

Theresa A. Papp



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