

WHAT DOES A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INDIGENOUS TEACHER CANDIDATE'S  
EXTENDED PRACTICUM LOOK LIKE: PERSPECTIVES OF COLLEGE FIELD  
SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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## **ABSTRACT**

To increase the educational success of Indigenous students and work towards a just society, it is essential to increase the presence of Indigenous teachers within the teaching profession and school systems in Saskatchewan. By focusing on one teacher education program at a western Canadian university, my research aim was to discover what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate's extended practicum looks like from college field supervisors' and administrators' perspectives. The assumption of the research is that such a discovery will help animate more invitational and culturally affirming extended practica experiences for Indigenous students and assist more Indigenous teacher candidates in joining the teaching profession. Using a constructivist framework, I conducted semi-structured interviews to access the insights of a purposefully-selected group of participants who, as college field supervisors and administrators, had extensive experience working with Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica. A focus of the research was to determine the extent to which the concept of ethical space, as articulated by Ermine (2007), was present in extended practica and school systems. Findings of the study identified an extended practica model undergoing profound change as a response to identified needs for greater cultural responsiveness both within post-secondary institutions and Pre-K-12 schools in Saskatchewan. Findings also delineated varying levels of cultural responsiveness within the schools where Indigenous teacher candidates practice, the persistence of significant barriers to Indigenous teacher candidates' success, and a continued need for cultural and psycho-social supports at the post-secondary levels to maximize the prospects of success for Indigenous teacher candidates. Additionally findings highlight the need for ongoing reflexivity on the part of all those involved in teacher education, to acknowledge and mitigate the persistence of deficit perspectives within education systems.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my family, Rick, Liam and Everett, and my friends for their support. And to my golden retrievers, Charlie, Henry and Duke, who were with me on this journey.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	<i>i</i>
ABSTRACT.....	<i>ii</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	<i>iii</i>
DEDICATION.....	<i>iv</i>
LIST OF TABLES.....	<i>viii</i>
LIST OF FIGURES.....	<i>viii</i>
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH.....	1
Purpose Statement.....	2
Significance of the Study.....	3
Contributions to the Field and Research Questions.....	5
Eliminating the Education Debt.....	6
Operating in a Western Eurocentric Value Set.....	12
Teacher Education and Indigenization.....	13
The Ethical Space of Engagement.....	16
School Climate.....	16
Description of the Study.....	17
Summary.....	18
Definition of Terms.....	18
Delimitations.....	25
Limitations.....	25
My Story, Assumptions and Reflexivity.....	26
Organization of the Dissertation.....	29
CHAPTER TWO.....	31
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	31
Overview of Research.....	33
Culturally Responsive Programming – Prevailing Worldviews.....	34
Background and Definition.....	35
The Need to Move Forward.....	38
Theorizing Teacher Education and White Privilege.....	38
Consciousness-Raising.....	40
Indigenous Pedagogy.....	42

Reconciling Value Sets .....	43
The Role of Adult Educators .....	45
Why Change is Essential .....	48
Teacher Candidate Extended Practica Experiences.....	51
The Role of the Cooperating Teacher .....	51
The Classroom Environment .....	54
The Role of the College Field Supervisor.....	56
Culturally Responsive Teacher Education Programs .....	64
The Need for Indigenous Teacher Education Programs .....	64
Ethical Space.....	69
Summary .....	74
CHAPTER THREE .....	76
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	76
Introduction.....	76
Purpose of the Study .....	76
Research Question .....	77
Conceptual Framework.....	77
Research Methodology .....	77
Constructivist Paradigm.....	80
Qualitative Inquiry: Methodology .....	82
Qualitative Methodology in Relation to Indigenous Methodology .....	83
Participant Selection .....	84
Context.....	87
Data Collection Methods .....	88
Analysis and Collation.....	91
Storage, Organization, and Management of Data.....	93
Trustworthiness of the Study .....	94
Validation.....	95
Ethical Considerations .....	95
Summary.....	96
CHAPTER FOUR.....	97
PARTICIPANTS, CONVERSATIONS, AND THEMES .....	97
Themes.....	97

Challenges.....	98
Changing the Structure of the Extended Practica for Increased Success and Innovation .....	107
Support.....	113
Cultural Responsiveness.....	119
Relationship Building .....	126
Summary.....	126
CHAPTER FIVE .....	134
FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION.....	134
Summary of the Study .....	134
Context of the Research.....	135
Discussion of the Findings.....	138
Challenges.....	138
Changing the Structure of the Extended Practica for Increased Success and Innovation .....	141
Support.....	144
Cultural Responsiveness.....	146
Relationship Building .....	149
Reconceptualization of Themes.....	152
Implications: Moving Forward .....	154
Implications for Research .....	157
Recommendations for Future Work.....	158
Final Comments.....	160
REFERENCES .....	165
APPENDIX A.....	188
Interview Questions .....	188
APPENDIX B.....	189
Letter of Initial Contact and Recruitment .....	189
APPENDIX C.....	191
Letter of Interview Consent .....	191
APPENDIX D.....	194
Interview Format.....	194
APPENDIX E.....	196
Letter of Consent for Release of Transcripts .....	196



**LIST OF TABLES**

**Table1.1** Graduation Rates.....8

**LIST OF FIGURES**

**Figure 2.1** Areas of Interest in teacher candidates' Extended Practica..... 31

**Figure 2.2** Ethical Space..... 72

**Figure 3.1** Conceptual Framework .....77

**Figure 3.2** Data Collection and Coding.....90

**Figure 4.1** Themes.....98

**Figure 5.1** Reconceptualization of the Themes.....154

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Consider for a moment how welcoming for all students the Saskatchewan educational landscape could be if all cultural value sets were openly acknowledged and honoured, rather than “the predominant western Eurocentric value set that exists within some of the Saskatchewan education systems” (Battiste, 2002, p. 16). How would this altered perspective shape Saskatchewan students’ worldviews and educational journeys? Many culturally responsive school systems exist locally, nationally, and globally. In New Zealand, the *Te Kōtahitanga* research and professional development project aims to improve “the educational achievement of Māori students through culturally relevant programs” (Bishop, Berryman & Wearmouth, 2014, p.10). Culturally responsive education may be defined as educational approaches (pedagogy, curriculum, discipline, administration, etc) which use the “cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010, p. 31). This universal definition of culturally responsive education underpins this research.

In Canada, the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), College of Education, University of Saskatchewan (U of S), as described by Arcand (2012), provides students with academic, personal, professional, and cultural support with course adaptation to First Nations culture, utilizing a community education model. Initiatives such as The Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis people (Merasty, Bouvier & Hoium, 2013) and Pelletier, Cottrell, and Hardie’s (2013) supporting research for *Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People* have identified evidence-based public policies and programs that have the greatest impact on

education and employment for First Nations and Métis peoples. Steeves et al. (2014) also identified key factors in Indigenous student success, including the importance of ethical space, culturally responsive pedagogy, and caring teachers. These initiatives provide evidence that change is possible.

With open and respectful conversations regarding the value sets that school frameworks are based upon, it is possible to create culturally responsive programs for students and teacher candidates. My research takes a step in this direction by investigating what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate extended practicum looks like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and program administrators who have supervised teacher candidates from the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), and the Saskatchewan Urban Education Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). The research was conducted as the College of Education was transitioning to a computerized placement process for extended practica, eliminating a process by which teachers could “request” particular teacher candidates for particular schools. Therefore, it is important to note that the data represented a snapshot in time when the participants were experiencing the transition to a new extended practica process during the 2012–2016 period. I hope that building upon their perspectives will help to design more culturally responsive extended practica that allow for greater success for Indigenous teacher candidates with the ultimate goal being the decolonization of educational systems.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of my study was to identify what a culturally responsive extended practicum looks like from the perspectives of Indigenous teacher candidates’ college field supervisors and program administrators. Areas examined included the elements of a teacher candidate extended

practicum that would be considered culturally responsive; whether the prevailing values that exist in school systems are conducive to a culturally responsive environment; the types of environmental factors that welcome Indigenous teacher candidates into non-Indigenous schools to facilitate their success; and the non-academic barriers faced by Indigenous teacher candidates which may pose challenges to their success.

### **Significance of the Study**

My research interest was in identifying what a culturally responsive extended practicum looks like from the perspectives of Indigenous teacher candidates' college field supervisors and program administrators. College field supervisors and program administrators are ideally positioned to provide insight into extended practica challenges because they are hired based on a commitment to create supportive experiences for both the Indigenous teacher candidates and the predominantly non-Indigenous cooperating teachers, with a focus on serving as mentors rather than evaluators (Ralph, 2003). In their role supporting both teacher candidates and cooperating teachers, college field supervisors and program administrators also may perceive dynamics within the cooperating teacher/teacher candidate relationship and in the wider school setting that may go unnoticed by the cooperating teacher or teacher candidate. Additionally, individuals may confide in them information regarding the extended practicum that is not openly shared with others. These findings may assist in increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in school systems by identifying invisible and systemic barriers and by highlighting factors that contribute to greater likelihood of success for Indigenous teacher candidates. Research suggested that Indigenous teachers are likely to incorporate Indigenous worldviews and curriculum into the classroom, encouraging greater school success for Indigenous students, ultimately leading to a more just society (Stelmach, Kovach & Steeves, 2017; Joint Task Force, 2013, Orłowski &

Cottrell, 2019; Peden, 2011). Much literature has demonstrated the difference between the Indigenous and Eurocentric worldviews and the importance of increasing Indigenous teachers in the classroom (Battiste, 1995, 2000, 2013; Orłowski & Cottrell, 2019, St. Denis, 2011). Yet there has been very little research on what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate's extended practicum looks like.

My research may contribute to understanding why Indigenous teacher candidates feel comfortable in certain classrooms and school environments and succeed in their extended practica, but are less successful in others. In a study of Aboriginal teachers' professional knowledge and experience in Canada, St. Denis (2010) reported that:

There is still a lot more that can be done to ensure that Aboriginal content and perspectives are being taught in a meaningful way to all students. The often-implicit hierarchy of school knowledge and subjects typically places a low valuation on Aboriginal subject matter, and this had negative implications on how others received both the Aboriginal teachers and the Aboriginal content that was being taught. (p. 8)

Cherubini's (2011) research on Indigenous communities in northern Ontario strongly supported the centrality of incorporating Indigenous values within the education system. Cherubini reported that Indigenous students' values as they relate to their epistemic needs were, in many cases, not being met. Several groups reported that "mainstream teachers were not adequately prepared to represent Aboriginal values in their pedagogical practice, unintentionally stifling Indigenous students' learning and silencing their voices" (Cherubini, 2011, p. 264). The community made clear that their stories of marginalization had to be heard by educators and it was suggested that greater exposure to Indigenous people's cultures and traditions would benefit all students enrolled in public education. Mueller, Carr-Stewart, Steeves, and Marshall (2011) wrote "that

historically First Nations students have experienced significantly lower levels of educational attainment and suggested that systemic issues need to be addressed in order to improve the educational process” (p. 1). The systemic issues that occur in the educational process and remain undetected may also affect teacher candidates’ extended practica by marginalizing the Indigenous teacher candidates’ cultural and epistemic values within the school environment.

Ladson-Billings (2006) argued that we must address the inequalities in education and what she termed the ‘education debt’ because “it is the equitable and just thing to do” (p. 9). She outlined three primary reasons for “addressing the education debt: (a) the impact the debt has on present education progress, (b) the value of understanding the debt in relation to past education research findings, and (c) the potential for forging a better educational future” (p. 9). Ladson-Billings’ final factor for addressing the educational debt, forging a better education future for all, is one of the motivating forces of my research. St. Denis (2010) recommended selecting, training, hiring, and actively seeking out Indigenous teachers. Contributing to a better understanding of culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates may help mitigate the education debt and lead to increased representation of Indigenous peoples within public education, as differing worldviews and Indigenous pedagogy are incorporated into pre-service teacher education, particularly field experiences.

### **Contribution to the Field and Research Question**

In engaging with this topic I hope to make a contribution to the field of Educational Administration, specifically the administration and development of innovative extended practica within teacher education. Kea and Trent (2013) noted that while culturally responsive approaches have been well theorized and documented, they have not been widely operationalized; they pointed to the paucity of research exploring the application of culturally

responsive principles within teacher education programs, including within extended practica. Given the identified need to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan schools as a means of improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students and enhancing understanding of Indigenous issues among all students, the research also has significant implications for achieving necessary reforms within the K-12 school system identified in the next section. Given the critical role played by college supervisors in the extended practica, and the perceived importance of culturally responsive approaches to the success of Indigenous teacher candidates, the research is underpinned by the following research question:

What does a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate's extended practicum look like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators?

### **Eliminating the Education Debt**

In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its Calls to Action to address the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. The Calls to Action outlined areas in education to be examined including eliminating the education and funding gaps between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people and drafting new federal legislation on Indigenous education and the preservation of Indigenous languages (TRC, 2015). Addressing the funding gap would ensure that there is adequate funding to integrate Indigenous curriculum and learning resources into the classrooms.

Meeting the Calls to Action would help eliminate the education deficit by ensuring all students have the opportunities to learn about their cultures and develop pride and understanding of themselves. It allows for non-Indigenous students to develop an understanding of the historical effects of residential schools and to break down stereotyping through improved understanding. Historically, education was viewed as a method of assimilating Indigenous

peoples. Peden (2011) wrote “that Indigenous people were meant to be saved or salvaged so that they could be taught how to talk, behave and think like colonizers. Education became a primary mechanism for those colonial powers seeking to indoctrinate the people” (p. 31). If the purpose of education historically was to eliminate Indigenous culture, then it is time for education to turn the tide and promote equity for Indigenous cultures. Statistical evidence suggests that this is not yet happening.

As outlined in the 2016 Census, Indigenous people are under-represented among those achieving educational success and workforce participation. Saskatchewan Indigenous peoples continue to have higher rates of unemployment than non-Indigenous people: 18.6 percent (up from 18.2 percent in the 2006 Census) compared to the non-Indigenous unemployment rate of 5.6 percent (up from 4.2 percent in 2006) (Statistics Canada, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2016). The First Nations unemployment rate was 24.7 percent in 2016 while Métis had an unemployment rate of 11.5 percent. In 2006, these groups had unemployment rates of 24.9 and 10.6 percent respectively (Government of Saskatchewan, 2017a). The employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples have not significantly improved over the past decade, despite the economic boom that the province enjoyed.

Table 1.1 provides an overview of the Saskatchewan graduation rates from 2011- 2018. The statistics show that overall the graduation rates for Indigenous students increased; however, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student graduation rates continued to persist. The 2018-19 Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Annual Report outlined the 42.0% disparity rate between non-Indigenous (86.5%) and First Nation, Metis and Inuit (44.5%) students’ 2018 three-year graduation rate. Although this showed improvement from the 2012 disparity rate at 47.0%, the gap is still significant. The 2018 five-year graduation disparity gap at 31.7% is less



than the three-year graduation rate and has fallen from the 2012 rate of 39.4%. This may be an indication that a strategic focus on three- year graduation rates is not ideal. One other significant factor that the Table 1.1 illustrates is the widening disparity from 2017 to 2018 in both three and five-year graduation rates.

Completing Grade 12	Three Year				Five Year			
	All	Non-Indigenous	First Nations, Metis and Inuit	Disparity	All	Non-Indigenous	First Nations, Metis and Inuit	Disparity
June 2011 (Baseline)	72.7	81.8	32.9	48.9	81.3	87.9	48.5	39.4
June 2012	73.7	82.9	35.9	47.0	81.2	88.0	49.7	38.3
June 2013	74.8	83.9	37.4	46.5	80.1	87.0	50.0	37.0
June 2014	74.7	83.4	40.3	43.1	81.4	88.1	54.2	33.9
June 2015	75.2	84.3	40.1	44.2	82.5	89.2	55.9	33.3
June 2016	75.6	84.6	41.8	42.7	83.3	89.5	59.6	29.9
June 2017	76.5	85.4	43.2	42.2	84.0	90.4	59.8	30.6
June 2018	77.4	86.5	44.5	42.9	84.4	91.1	59.4	31.7

Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Annual Report, 2019, p. 19

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education’s goal of increasing the graduation rates of Indigenous students is laudable. However, its focus on statistical evidence of improvement has been questioned by some. Jeff Baker, the former chair of Aboriginal education at the University of Saskatchewan’s College of Education, welcomed the introduction of Indigenous outcomes and indicators to the curriculum, but cautioned that graduation rates are not the only measure of success:

For me, it's important we're not just getting First Nations, Métis students through school, but they go through school with opportunities to understand who they are, their history, to

connect with their ancestors who lived here for a really long time. I'm not sure that's necessarily reflected in the graduation rates. (CBC, 2017a)

Students need role models and authority figures from many cultural backgrounds. Leithwood's research, as cited in Cottrell, Preston, Pearce and Pelletier (2009), stressed the importance of "culturally alike, person centred teachers" in improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal students (p. 83). Culturally diverse students may be more easily and deeply engaged in classroom instruction if they are able to identify with their teachers, something that is more likely when teachers share the same cultural background as their students (Castagno, McKinley & Brayboy, 2008). The motivation of struggling students, in general, is significantly influenced by the quality of the relationships they have with their teachers. Culturally alike teachers may have more purchase on student learning because they find it easier to establish high-quality relationships with their students (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). This speaks to the importance of increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan schools, in part by addressing current challenges within teacher education programs, including those encountered by Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica.

In the provincially funded system, as noted by Rick Johnson, Director of Data Value and Interpretation, Ministry of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, the number and proportion of both Indigenous students and teachers increased steadily from 2011 to 2015 (R. Johnson, personal correspondence June 2015). The ratio of all students to self-declared Indigenous teachers has increased from 283:1 in 2006/07 to 257:1 in 2009/10. In 2015, the number of educators in Saskatchewan's 28 school divisions who self-identified as Indigenous was 771 of 12,913 total educators or 5.97%. This included teachers, counsellors, in-school administrators, consultants, superintendents and directors working in the 28 provincial school division schools

or division central offices (R. Johnson, personal correspondence June 2015). With 28.5% or 32,530 of the 175,895 students enrolled in Saskatchewan school divisions identifying as Indigenous the 5.97% of Indigenous educators does not come close to constituting a representative workforce. More Indigenous educators are needed in Saskatchewan to meet the needs of the growing Indigenous student population. It is unlikely that the Ministry of Education can meet its targets in the area of Indigenous achievement without a significant increase in the number of Indigenous teachers within the provincial school systems. Delineating those factors that contribute to the success of Indigenous teacher candidates in extended practica can contribute to achieving this imperative.

Research in New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2014) highlighted the dominance of non-Māori teachers within the education system, since “9% of teachers were Māori, whereas 22% of the student population were Māori, thus creating a cultural mismatch between the majority of Pakeha [non-Māori] teachers and their Māori students” (p. 4). This mismatch is similar to the Saskatchewan situation. An Australian national program that looked to increasing the number of Torre Strait Islander and Aboriginal peoples in teaching positions, found that this was a key factor in Indigenous student success and engagement. Professor Peter Buckskin, Director of More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative (MATSIIT), stated that, “the learning needs of a culturally diverse population will be better served by a diverse teacher population” (Australian Government, 2014, p. 5). Ideally the cultural background of Saskatchewan teachers should be reflective of the cultural diversity of the province’s student population. If the Indigenous student population is 28.5%, then ideally this should be the minimum benchmark for the percentage of Indigenous educators in the system. Exploring and understanding culturally responsive environments that encourage Indigenous teacher candidates

to seek teaching positions within ‘mainstream’ schools can contribute to the achievement of a more representative workforce within Saskatchewan’s educational systems.

The present Saskatchewan government and other government agencies, in their effort to increase the Indigenous graduation rate, have implemented different initiatives within the education system. The Ministry’s 2018 – 2019 Education Plan has acknowledged feedback from *Following Their Voices* (a Ministry initiative designed to raise educational outcomes for Saskatchewan's First Nations, Métis and Inuit students) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s *Calls to Action* and have implemented three- and five-year graduation targets (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018b). At the school division level, a variety of culturally responsive programming exists across Saskatchewan. Pete (2014) acknowledged the “Saskatoon Public School Division as a model for how best to structure a division to eliminate the achievement gap for FNMI learners” (p. 82). Their best practices include prioritizing the hiring of Indigenous employees to create a representative workforce; providing a structure to support Indigenous culture and language learning; increasing the practice of differentiation in the classroom; ensuring access to resources (human and material) to support culturally responsive teaching; increasing capacity for data analysis and culturally responsive teaching practices through professional development; and valuing culturally responsive learning environments (Pete, 2014). While this division is still a long way from achieving a representative workforce, one might ask, how may these structural changes be incorporated throughout all school divisions?

St. Denis (2010) noted, “a prerequisite for change to occur is the acknowledgement of a problem, but according to many participants, the lack or slow integration of Indigenous content and perspectives was still not recognized as a problem worthy of attention” (p. 35). Increasing

the number of Indigenous teachers through targeted teacher education programming, requiring an understanding of how extended practica can be recalibrated to become more culturally responsive, is an obvious strategy to address this problem.

### **Operating in a Western Eurocentric Value Set**

Levine-Rasky (2000a) observed that teachers can be classified according to the following three value systems with respect to racism and whiteness:

Traditional teachers who deny or dismiss the relationship between social organizations such as schools and racism; progressive teachers who are willing to explore the relationship between schools and racism; and ambivalent teachers who are conflicted about their stance on issues, therefore they express contradictory beliefs about racism and schools. (pp. 268–270)

When Indigenous teacher candidates work with non-Indigenous teacher supervisors who deny systemic racism, it may be difficult for Indigenous teacher candidates to relate to their supervisor or to the larger social group within the school. Indigenous teacher candidates may feel more comfortable with extended practica in non-Indigenous schools if the school environments were open and displayed a willingness to address systemic racism. Encouraging these conversations by discovering what elements comprise culturally responsive extended practica from the perspectives of Indigenous teacher candidates' college field supervisors and program administrators, was the goal of my research.

Many Indigenous students face obstacles within the school systems. Battiste (2000) wrote that:

Given the persistent paucity of trust of Indigenous children in federal and public schools in Canada, the challenge for postcolonial educators is to transform education from its

cognitive imperialistic roots to an enlightened and decolonized process that embraces and accepts diversity as normative. (xxix)

Battiste (2013) identified the need to “decolonize education and re-examine the role of education” in order to address the obstacles that Indigenous peoples face (p. 106). Yet she argued that it is difficult to challenge entrenched Eurocentric values because “few teaching institutions have made Indigenous education a priority. Consequently, when educators encounter cultural differences they have very little theory, scholarship, research or tested practice to draw on to engage Indigenous education in a way that is not assimilative or racially defined” (Battiste, 2002, p. 9). Therefore, in some school divisions, it is often left to Indigenous teachers to transform and decolonize curriculum and other educational processes, highlighting the critical role of Indigenous educators in decolonizing schools.

### **Teacher Education and Indigenization**

Attending to the warranted imperative of increasing the number of Indigenous educators within the teaching profession in Saskatchewan requires the support and cooperation of the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and specifically the College of Education which is tasked with the preparation of teachers. The U of S is committed to indigenization and reconciliation as strategic priorities. President Stoicheff (U of S, 2018) stated “I am committed to walking the path with Indigenous peoples toward reconciliation and working collaboratively with many others to ensure the U of S is a place where Aboriginal students, staff and faculty feel welcome and excel on our campus.” The U of S’s College of Education (C of E) has been home to the ITEP and SUNTEP programs, which are two of the longest-standing and most reputable Indigenous TEPs in Canada. The C of E has been advancing indigenization by making culturally responsive programs a priority by offering courses and programs that examine racism, social justice issues,

critical theory, and Indigenous Studies, while also developing initiatives to prepare students to teach Indigenous languages (U of S, 2018). During the course of this research the College's field placement process was undergoing change to optimize the fit between teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers to ensure as positive an extended practicum experience as possible. The College switched to a computerized evidence-based process to better align teacher candidates with their cooperating teachers. However this system was not utilized by the ITEP, which continued to organize the teacher candidates' placements by matching teacher candidates with cooperating teachers on a case-by-case basis. So the participants engaged with for the purposes of this research were responsible for supervising non-Indigenous teacher candidates in computerized placements and Indigenous teacher candidates whose school placements were determined largely by the staff from the ITEP.

Support and cooperation of increasing Indigenous educators has been provided as well by other provincial universities. The University of Regina's (U of R) Faculty of Education is strongly committed to "building on our work in the development of culturally appropriate curriculum not only in K-12 schools but also in teacher education" (University of Regina, 2015 p. 1). The college's dedication to Treaty Education and their pedagogical and scholarly leadership demonstrates their respect to honour the treaty relationship, in the past, present and future. This is exhibited within the college's actions of "inviting a part-time emerging elder in residence to support faculty, staff, and students in their learning and their understanding of our shared histories with Aboriginal peoples" (U of R, 2015, p. 1). Other initiatives that are outlined in the college's strategic plans include:

The Faculty continues to work collaboratively with First Nations University of Canada and in partnership with the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program, the Nunavut

Teacher Education Program, the Northern Teacher Education Program, and the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program. These collaborations / partnerships are critical in addressing Aboriginal education issues. So too are current and future efforts in undergraduate teacher education within the Faculty of Education some of which involve Education Core Studies content and objectives. (p. 1)

The U of R Faculty of Education's steps in indigenizing curriculum and pedagogy and its efforts to ensure reconciliation is possible are encouraging examples of moving forward to a more equitable education space.

A detailed discussion of teacher education processes is provided in Chapter Two, but for introductory purposes here the critical role of college field supervisors is highlighted. These field supervisors are typically retired teachers and administrators, and are hired because of their knowledge of schools and their capacity to serve as mentors for teacher candidates and cooperating teachers and to act as bridging agents between the college and schools in overseeing the extended practica. In this often ambiguous role they are intimately involved in all aspects of extended practica; they frequently have privileged insights into the experiences of teacher candidates and cooperating teachers; they are tasked with operationalizing the College's mandate and quality standards; and they are also required to be aware of wider dynamics within the school or division affecting the relationship between the teacher candidates and cooperating teachers (Kea & Trent, 2013). They are thus ideal sources of information on the experiences of Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica and can additionally provide unique perspectives on relationships between Indigenous teacher candidates and cooperating teachers and the complex dynamics within provincial schools which have an impact



on whether these extended practica are positive experiences for Indigenous students (Kea and Trent, 2013; Ralph, 2003).

### **The Ethical Space of Engagement**

Bustamante, Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie (2009) argued that for educational institutions to “move ahead a new set of practices will need to be adopted, an emergent approach to change ... in order to develop new tools to articulate new understandings” (p. 806). In articulating a new understanding of extended practica conducive to the success of Indigenous teacher candidates Ermine’s (2007) concept of Ethical Space, which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Two, may be helpful. The Ethical Space of Engagement, according to Ermine, is “formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews are poised to engage each other. It is the thought about diverse societies and the space in between them that contributes to the development of a framework for dialogue between human communities” (Ermine, 2007, p. 193). Culturally responsive extended practica can potentially provide such a framework which brings Indigenous teacher candidates and non-Indigenous cooperating teachers together to share worldviews and become the “appropriate place from which to transform knowledge because it offers a view of alternative knowledge systems in simultaneous fashion...and can enhance the human capacity to create new knowledge” (Ermine, 2000, pp. 122-123). Consequently a focus of this research was to determine the extent to which the concept of ethical space, as articulated by Ermine (2007), was present in extended practica and the school systems in which they were housed, based on the insights of college supervisors and administrators.

### **School Climate**

Lawrence (2005) discovered in her research on anti-racist multicultural professional practices “that it was the school climate that influenced the implementation of multicultural

practice and that school and district leadership seemed to have a profound effect on setting the tone for school climate” (p. 350). Further to these findings of how leadership impacts school climate, St. Denis (2007) discovered that solely focusing on cultural awareness “lets those in position of dominance off the hook to be accountable for on-going discrimination” (p. 1085). Gebhard’s (2018) study placed the onus on administrators and schools to invite conversations which confront racism within schools. This allows for educators to reflect upon their practices through professional development on anti-racist education and not just on implementing cultural awareness approaches. As further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, appropriate school climate is critical for Indigenous students and teacher candidates having positive experiences. To provide voice requires leaders and those on the margins to meet on equal space. Critically reflecting on the systemic racism within our education system may get to the root of establishing equal space for discourse. This may entail educators examining themselves, their practices, and their values in order to achieve more culturally responsive educational spaces. Here too the insights of college field supervisors and Ermine’s concept of Ethical Space will be helpful.

### **Description of the Study**

Qualitative inquiry was my chosen methodology as it aligned with my post-positivist ontology and epistemology and also resonated with Indigenous epistemologies. Using a constructivist framework, semi-structured interviews were conducted to access the insights of a purposefully-selected group of participants who, as college field supervisors and administrators, had extensive experience working with Indigenous teacher candidates. Data were transcribed and subjected to inductive analysis to identify patterns, codes and themes. Themes were then analysed to establish findings from the research.

## **Summary**

Historically, many Indigenous students have experienced difficulties in Canadian schools and Tunison (2007) noted that “schools, themselves, have also been found to damage the learning spirit” (p. 11). Cardinal (1969) wrote that “the eighty years of educational neglect has hobbled our young people for generations and our gutless politicians who have knowingly watched us sink in the quicksand of apathy and despair and have failed to extend a hand” (p. 2). As a result of transformative initiatives such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and compelling demographic imperatives, there is an emerging consensus within Saskatchewan that significant reforms within the education system are necessary in order to ensure more equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Addressing the accumulated education debt is increasingly seen as critical to the social cohesion and economic viability of the province in the near future (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). Whiteness and other anti-racist theories highlight the symbiotic relationship between developments at the post-secondary and K-12 levels of education and centers teacher education as a compelling site of change. By drawing on the insights of college supervisors my hope in this research is to develop a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics operating within extended practica which impact Indigenous teacher candidates. These insights will help to delineate more culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates, accelerating the desired outcome of encouraging more Indigenous teachers within provincial schools, contributing to the decolonization of our educational systems.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Aboriginal Education:* As defined by Laramée (2008) “Aboriginal education is a concept that may be characterized more by the currency of its usage than any consensus as to its meaning or practice” (p. 1). There are three distinct conceptual meanings: i) the education of Aboriginal

students, ii) education that is about Aboriginal worldviews, cultures and experiences, and iii) educational purposes and practices that reflect Aboriginal values and aspirations (Laramee, 2008). For this research, Aboriginal education encompasses all three conceptual meanings.

*Aboriginal Peoples:* The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous people—Indians, Métis and Inuit (FNMI). These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, legal rights, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. For this research, *Indigenous* will refer to Aboriginal Peoples and peoples of Aboriginal ancestry.

*Administrators:* Used interchangeably with program administrators, the term refers to the school principals and division superintendents who are in contact with the cooperating teachers and teacher candidates within extended practica.

*Anti-racist:* For this paper, is defined by St Denis & Schick (2003) as the “need to look at the discursive practices of individuals and institutions as well as at the ideological assumptions that underwrite these practices” (p. 67).

*Anti-racist Teaching:* Defined by Brookfield (2014), as teaching that “typically focuses on helping learners identify and counter racist ideas and actions they detect in themselves and others” (p. 89).

*College Field Supervisor:* The College of Education’s employees who oversee the teacher candidate’s extended practica. Used interchangeably with College Field Supervisor and Extended Practica Facilitator.

*Color-Blind:* As defined by Shields (2004),

People do not see difference; they are tolerant; they treat everyone alike. But when others ignore obvious differences in appearance, it is likely they are also negating more

fundamental differences in worldview, culture, and tradition. Color-blindness perpetuates a situation in which educators not only ignore color but also culture. (p. 119).

*Cooperating Teacher:* The teacher who oversees the teacher candidate during their extended practica and is employed by the school district in which the extended practica takes place. This term is used interchangeably with *supervising teacher*.

*Critical race theory (CRT):* A theory rooted in the belief that:

Racism is normal, not aberrant, in ... society. Because racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. CRT acknowledges that racism is a constructed entity that is comprised of multiple co-influencing parts rather than an attitude or belief or action that is perpetuated by an individual person (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xv).

*Critical Whiteness Studies:* As stated by Page (2009),

Like CRT, Critical Whiteness Studies theories understand the way race is constructed in a culture and it examines the systematic underpinnings of racism. A central feature of Critical Whiteness Studies is to challenge white privilege and the systems that perpetuate and undergird it. Researchers in the field of Critical Whiteness Studies seek to address the issue of working toward social justice through the study of Whiteness. (p. 2)

*Culturally Responsive Education:* These are educational approaches (pedagogy, curriculum, discipline, administration, etc) which use the “cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010, p. 31).

*Custom:* A traditional Indigenous practice. For example, First Nations peoples sometimes marry or adopt children according to custom, rather than under Canadian family law. Band councils

chosen "by custom" are elected or selected by traditional means, rather than by the election rules contained in the *Indian Act*.

*Ethical Space*: Ethical space “is formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews are poised to engage each other. It is the thought about diverse societies and the space in between them that contributes to the development of a framework for dialogue between human communities” (Ermine, 2007, p. 193). Furthermore:

Ethical space therefore can establish itself as the appropriate place from which to transform knowledge because it offers a view of alternative knowledge systems in simultaneous fashion. Working towards the respect and understanding of different and multiple readings of the world captured in alternative worldviews can enhance the human capacity to create knowledge. (Ermine, 2000, pp. 122-123)

*Eurocentrism*: The practice of viewing the world from a European-centred or Western-centred perspective.

*Extended practica*: Unique to the University of Saskatchewan’s College of Education:

Teacher Candidates will be placed in a school for sixteen weeks possibly with a cluster of other Teacher Candidates and their cooperating teachers, where they will work closely with the cooperating teacher(s) and extended practicum facilitator. This collaborative work is intended to be holistic in nature, meaning that Teacher Candidates are encouraged to focus on finding a balance in their intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being when choosing and setting professional goals and in meeting the goals of the program. When possible, clusters of teacher candidates and cooperating teachers can form a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in the school, which can

also serve as an advisory group working together to enhance student learning. (U of S, 2019).

*Field Supervisor:* The College of Education's employees who oversees the teacher candidates' extended practica. Used interchangeably with College Field Supervisor and Extended Practica Facilitator.

*Field Experience:* Field experiences are those experiences that take place within classrooms in schools for the purposes of teacher education. This term is used interchangeably with *extended practica* or *student practicum*.

*First Nations:* Used to connote the first inhabitants of Canada who remain sovereign nations.

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word 'Indian,' which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nations is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community. (Indigenous Services Canada, n.d.).

*First Nations Pedagogy:* As stated by Kaminski (2011),

Include[s] teaching in a way that learning includes respectful relations, building on experiential learning, listening well, allowing space, story-telling and storying-making, supporting quaternity, dialogue, positionality, relevance, reciprocity, reflectivity, and utilizing strong Elders-informed, ecologically situated, creative, visual-auditory learning space within a self-governance philosophy and natural world context. (n.d.)

*Habitus of Education:* As defined by Shields (2004), "Habitus constructs the persistence of deficit thinking not simply as an individual problem but as a structural and societal one, requiring

new approaches and enduring change if it is to be overcome” (p. 112). Habitus as defined by Bourdieu (1984) is “structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices” (p. 170). For this research, habitus of education is used to convey how whiteness perspectives have contributed to deficit thinking, shaping the education system on ways of being and doing based on colonial practices.

*Holistic Approach:* The holistic approach examines all areas affecting an individual, which includes emotional, physical, social, familial, environmental, and spiritual.

*Indian Act:* “The *Indian Act* is a Canadian federal law that governs in matters pertaining to Indian status, bands, and Indian reserves”. (Indigenous Foundations UBC, 2009). As stated by Leslie (2002) the “*Indian Act* is a complex piece of legislation that has evolved in scope, content, and sophistication ... the philosophical principles and practices of Indian policy are reflected in legislation of this period” (p. 23).

*Indigenous or Indigenous Peoples:* A collective adjective referring to a collective noun for First Nations, Inuit, Aboriginal, and Métis peoples and will be used in this paper unless indicated otherwise in a referenced quotation (Indigenous Corporate Training, 2016). For further clarification Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them (Sanders, 1999, p. 6).

*Oral History:* Evidence taken from the spoken words of people who have knowledge of past events and traditions. This oral history is often recorded on tape and then put in writing. It is used in history books and to document claims.



*Preservice Teacher:* Refers to an undergraduate education student undertaking their school extended practicum. Used interchangeably with *teacher candidate*.

*Student Success:* Student success is open to multiple definitions and interpretations, often dependent on cultural perspectives. Reyhner (2018) stated that the Navajo Nation's "Diné Cultural Content Standards [for schools] is predicated on the belief that firm grounding of native students in their Indigenous cultural heritage and language, is a fundamentally sound prerequisite to well developed and culturally healthy students" (p. 33). In addition, Deyhle's (1995, 2009, 2012) research, as cited in Reyhner (2018), found that Navajo and Ute students with a strong sense of cultural identity could overcome the structural inequalities in American society and the discrimination they faced as American Indians. These wider, holistic perspectives of student success are acknowledged within this research whether it is determined by a passing grade, graduation, a feeling of accomplishment, or empowerment.

*Support:* Support within the extended practicum may have differing meanings for each candidate but may include acts of encouragement, helping to succeed, and/or understanding and caring, or other forms of support that contribute to students' success.

*Teacher Candidate:* Refers to an undergraduate education student undertaking their school extended practicum. Used interchangeably with *preservice teacher*.

*White Privilege:* McIntosh (1990) drew on critical race theory to identify benefits and advantages which confer privileges on White people that non-Whites do not possess by virtue of their skin colour. She described this as "an invisible package of unearned assets" (p. 5) that includes cultural affirmation, social status and acceptance, and general freedom from discriminatory treatment (McIntosh, 1990). This research aligns with Levine-Rasky's (2000a) lens in that a "revised approach to whiteness shifts to the discourse, the culture, the structures, the

mechanisms, and the social relations of whiteness that produce radicalised subjects including whites” (p. 1).

### **Delimitations**

Creswell (2003) suggested using delimitations to narrow the scope of a study. The delimitations of this research included the data collection methodology and choice of participants. The data were gathered from six college field supervisors and one principal (administrator) who had experience in supervising Indigenous teacher candidates in a teacher education program within a College of Education in Saskatchewan.

### **Limitations**

The identified limitations included those stemming from the qualitative study design, the cultural composition of the participants, the fact that participants supervised teacher candidates from different program routes, the unnatural settings of interviews, and the definition of *cultural responsiveness*. In anticipation of potential weaknesses, I considered that the study may be limited by the following:

1. I was the sole research instrument for all aspects of the research and all data were mediated by me. The limitations of subjectivity and bias are acknowledged in qualitative research, and may have affected aspects of data collection and analysis.
2. The composition of the participants. Only one Indigenous participant could be recruited for the study, so the majority were Caucasian former educators, mostly of retirement age. Although all articulated good intentions and offered rich insights, lack of knowledge of various Indigenous cultures among the college field supervisors and administrators prevented the collection of data specific to individual Indigenous cultural groups.

3. The definition of student success is contested and open to multiple different conceptions. For this research I refer to “student success in the extended practica, whether it is determined by a passing grade, graduation, a feeling of accomplishment, or empowerment.”
4. As the participants had supervised teacher candidates from differing program routes, it was impossible to generalize prior experiences or coursework that may have prepared them (or not) for the extended practica, and therefore may have influenced their success.
5. My place as a non-Indigenous instructor within the research study.

### **My Story, Assumptions and Reflexivity**

My personal interest in this research is related to my actions of unintentionally hurting a group of Indigenous adult learners when I was instructing at a post-secondary Indigenous institution. I hope my research will reduce the possibilities of others making the same mistake. I was cognizant of my role as a non-Indigenous instructor but felt that I had developed sufficient cultural responsiveness to instruct in an Indigenous classroom. I participated in cultural events, had lifelong Indigenous friends, and incorporated culturally responsive curriculum and learning styles into my courses. I grew up in Regina, Saskatchewan, surrounded by friends of European-Canadian origin but did connect with a few Indigenous friends from my elementary school. I recognized as a child the disparities and differences between myself and my Indigenous acquaintances but did not fully understand the underlying causes nor appreciate the importance of my white privilege. Throughout university, I worked with Indigenous youth at inner-city gyms and upon graduation in 1991 began a two-year position in Cumberland House with a Métis post-secondary educational institution. I could have stayed in the city of Regina and worked with non-Indigenous, non-educational institutions but felt that the field of education was a pathway to a

more socially just society. I immersed myself in the community, created many lifelong friendships, and was sad to leave when the program ended. Following my work at Cumberland House, I began a position with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT).

Being raised in a largely white neighbourhood I held some assumptions regarding Indigenous peoples. Travelling in Northern Saskatchewan for family vacations, my childhood vision of Indigenous peoples was a romantic, wild vision. They were the people that boated us to our cabin, were very friendly and were lucky to live by the lake. As I entered grade school other assumptions and unconscious biases formed, including their involvement in criminal activity and that they were a group of people I was not to interact with. The few Indigenous students that attended my school I ignored until Grade 6 when twin Indigenous sisters, Carol and Donna, were adopted by a neighbour. I admired their worldly ways and attitude and became friends until they relocated the following year. I was completely ignorant of their First Nations or if they had any other family. During my childhood, I never felt superior; only that Indigenous peoples were of a different culture who did not fit into my world. As the years went by, I became aware of their socio-economics problems and that tragically both Carol and Donna had passed away under violent circumstances. When I started university I was offered opportunities to learn more about the Indigenous cultures and welcomed the opportunities as I recognized the inequities in our society. When I began working, I still held the assumption that Indigenous peoples were to be helped, though along my journey, recognized that they were to be a culture to learn from.

My true awakening to contradictions within my worldview and cultural values occurred after instructing for a few years. I was part of a wonderful class and had a great relationship with the students. There was trust, friendship, and a strong environment for learning. In one of our classes, we started a discussion on praise and intrinsic/extrinsic rewards in the workplace and I

asked for an example of praise. None of the 30 students looked at me, so I said, “come on someone please give me an example of when you have been praised in your life.” The room was dead silent and everyone was looking at their desks. After about a moment I asked “what’s going on?” and a student, Jeannelle, looked up with tears in her eyes and said, “Leslie, some of us have never received any praise growing up.” I was stunned at my ignorance and carelessness for placing the students in such a vulnerable spot. I apologized for the question, changed the subject, and carried on with the class. After a lengthy reflection on how I was brought up, my cultural values, and bringing my white middle-class values into the classroom with good intentions, I realized how wrong I was. At the time I thought I had an understanding of Indigenous cultural values. I thought at first the students were just embarrassed as they may have been culturally taught to be modest, and did not want to sound boastful. After a time of reflection I realized that the group of students may have been children of parents affected by the devastating effects of residential schools and that they may not have received praise due to many systemic issues arising from the abusive and demoralizing effects of the residential school experience. I was well aware of racism and residential school abuse but I obviously needed to be more aware of how my everyday actions and cultural values had unintentionally affected these students. This experience taught me how important strong reflection is for teachers, teacher mentors or teacher supervisors, as these individuals must be able to provide support and prevent dissonant values from surfacing and hampering the learning environment.

As an educator, I have come to realize the necessity of looking deeply at the underlying effects of racism to ensure that my actions never again hurt a group of learners. Fortunately, the students recognized that my mistake wasn’t intentional and we continued with a trusting classroom relationship. However, I am still amazed at my lack of awareness and hope through

my research to prevent others from making my mistakes. Educators must recognize what culturally responsive practice truly means and gain the understanding that is required to foster culturally responsive environments. From my position of privilege as an educated middle class Canadian, I count myself as very fortunate to have this research opportunity. I strive to ensure the research contributes towards culturally responsive environments such that educators can take a lead role in reconciliation towards a more just world. Although my research documents ongoing race-based challenges within education systems, it also leads me to see the College of Education's initiatives as a strong example of reconciliation, providing leadership in preparing teachers for our diverse society and leading the way in educational research. I recognize this with admiration. Although I attempted to remain neutral and be self-reflexive, I acknowledge that I have certain assumptions about race and power within schools. I have done my best to bracket my biases to respect the voices of the participants in the creation and analysis of data.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This study examined what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate extended practicum looks like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators. The study consists of five chapters in which Chapter 1 introduced the purpose of the study, provided background information on challenges within Saskatchewan school systems, outlined limitations and delimitations and introduced the researcher. Chapter 2 contains the literature review which synthesized secondary research pertaining to the culturally responsive programming prevailing worldviews, culturally responsive teacher education programs, Indigenous pedagogy, and teacher candidate experiences. The concept of ethical space was explored as an underpinning of a culturally responsive extended practica. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology. This is followed by a description of the interview process and the participants'

comments in Chapter 4. The themes that emerged from the interviews are further examined in Chapter 5. The study concludes with a reconceptualization of the themes, implications for research and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

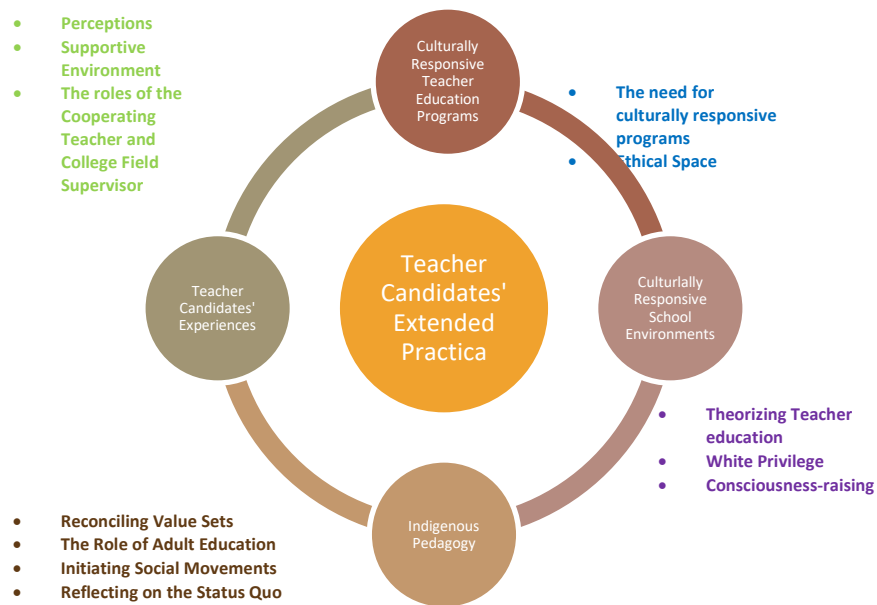
The purpose of this research was to discover what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate's extended practicum looks like from college field supervisors' and administrators' perspectives. A basic assumption of the research was that acquiring a greater understanding of the extended practica process through the insights of college field supervisors and administrators would help to delineate and animate more culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates, accelerating the desired outcome of increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan schools as a critical contribution to the wider imperative around decolonizing education systems.

The literature review provided a sense of the extant research within this field of study and was organized around areas impacting teacher candidates' extended practica. Figure 2.1 delineates the bodies of literature that informed my research as I attempted to understand the complex array of factors affecting extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates. The extent to which extended practica provide levels of cultural responsiveness, including a sense of community and ethical space to support teacher candidates, was explored. As depicted in Figure 2.1, the research areas synthesized within the literature review included: culturally responsive teacher education programs, culturally responsive school environments, Indigenous pedagogy, teacher candidates' experiences, the evolution of teacher education programs with a focus on the roles of college supervisors, and the concept of ethical space. Each of the research areas were broken down into subsections to review as illustrated within Figure 2.1. Types of literature included in the search included applied and peer reviewed academic journal articles and research reports, scholarly books, workshop



information, video power point presentations, and government publications. Search engines and resources utilized included ERIC, the U of S IPortal (Indigenous Portal), Indigenous Knowledge Learning Centre, PAWS library tools, and Canadian Network for Innovation in Education. The key words used included Indigenous pedagogy, Indigenous teacher candidate, Indigenous teacher education programs, adult education, culturally responsive programming, ethical space, First Nations pedagogy, holistic design, inclusive education, and white privilege.

The framework of the literature review is presented in Figure 2.1 as a circle that will only be complete when worldviews are in balance. It is the intention of this study to contribute to the favourable change conditions for Indigenous teacher candidates by investigating culturally responsive elements within extended practica. Research into the dynamics of K–12 school systems is essential, since culturally responsive school environments are critical to enabling the conditions where Indigenous teacher candidates are most likely to flourish within extended practica.



**Figure 2.1** Areas of Interest in Teacher Candidates' Extended Practica

## **Overview of Research**

The following research question guided this study: “What does a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate’s extended practicum look like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators?” Understanding the elements that comprise a culturally responsive extended practicum may lead to the development of programming and practices that better assist Indigenous teacher candidates to succeed during their extended practica. Culturally responsive programming may help meet learning needs and ensure an empowering learning environment for Indigenous teacher candidates. Increasing the success of Indigenous teacher candidates may contribute to the end result of facilitating more equitable educational outcomes for Indigenous students within K-12 systems through the development of role models, and culturally responsive classrooms and school environments. As Peden (2011) noted, “an increase of Indigenous teachers within the educational system benefits all stakeholders through a stronger understanding of Indigenous students and a breaking apart of the Eurocentric perspective that may pervade our education system” (p. 113).

The Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People (2013) reported:

Hearing from the communities that all early childhood programming must recognize the importance of local knowledge to the development of a child’s identity. The child must know about self, her/his place and culture before learning about others. Professionals and family should use child centred partnerships in formal settings, in the home and the community. (p. 31)

A strong representation of Indigenous teachers may increase culturally responsive programming, contributing to a stronger educational environment for Indigenous students through the

development of cultural identity. As one participant in the report commented, “It’s important for First Nations and Metis students to have heroes and role models in their schools. It’s important that they see people in front of them every day who are First Nations and Metis” (Joint Task Force, 2013, p. 45). Indigenous pedagogy differs from the European-based pedagogy and these differences should be acknowledged through educational structures, environments, program design, instructional design, and instructional techniques. This study is aimed at researching Indigenous teacher candidates’ extended practica for elements that support culturally responsive programming and field experiences.

### **Culturally Responsive Programming – Prevailing Worldviews**

Cooper’s (2009) research on school principals suggested that as demographic changes alter school populations there “is a dire need to reframe education accountability discourse and policies” (p. 695). Cooper’s (2009) research concludes that due to changing demographic landscapes, schools need to move past standardized approaches and be better prepared to meet the varied educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Cooper (2009) stressed that though principals, as leaders, are equity driven, “they have not adequately addressed the cultural tensions and separatist politics that marginalize ethnic and linguistic minority students and their families” (p. 695). Cooper emphasized the importance of culturally responsive programming within educational institutions. This section provides an overview of culturally responsive programming, identifies aspects of culturally responsive programming for Indigenous peoples, explores the links between cultural responsiveness and educational success and considers what components are necessary for culturally responsive programming to exist within K-12 or post-secondary institutions.

## **Background and Definition**

A variety of research has explored culturally responsive programming at various levels of education. Gay (2002) explained that culturally responsive teaching uses “the cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for more effective teaching” (p. 106). Understanding students’ cultural background allows for connections to be developed within the teacher-student relationship which shifts teachers’ behaviour to creating learning activities that value culture as an asset to student learning. In this way opportunities for students from minority cultures to achieve success are enhanced. Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko & Stuczynski (2011) defined culturally responsive programming as:

Programming that requires teaching that infuses customs as well as community culture and expectations—throughout the teaching and learning environments. Culturally responsive teaching is built on a foundation of knowledge and understanding of your own and your students’ family and community culture. In order to become culturally responsive it is essential to examine one’s own culture, to have an open mind to what one doesn’t understand; and be ready to learn new ways of looking at and doing things. (p. 9)

Battiste (2000) stated, “that no force has been more effective at oppressing Aboriginal cultures than the education system” (p. 163). Anyon (2005) suggested that minority achievement gaps are not primarily a result of failed education policy or urban families but “rather, an unjust economy and the policies through which it is maintained creates barriers to educational success” (p. 2). She outlined a new social movement that links educational reform to larger macrostructural reforms, such as the transition from the present colonial style of education to programming and policies that are culturally responsive and not based solely on Western value systems. Eliminating structural barriers surrounding educational institutions is a step towards

allowing for creative and culturally responsive approaches to education, including a commitment to eliminating poverty, as part of larger macrostructural reforms.

Kanu (2007) suggested that increasing culturally responsive curricula and pedagogical approaches for Indigenous students was a “strong variable in their success” (p. 26). Kanu’s research demonstrated that, by implementing certain processes in classrooms, teachers can ensure superior performances for students. These processes included the following:

(a) enhanced conceptual understanding through the use of learning scaffolds (e.g., examples, demonstrations, and illustrations from Native culture, which drew in part on the knowledge of Aboriginal research assistants); (b) inclusion of Aboriginal content/perspectives and counter-stories, which added depth and breadth of understanding for all students; (c) inclusion of Aboriginal pedagogical strategies, such as the use of stories to teach and reinforce content, talking/discussion circles to share views and ideas, inviting Native guest speakers, and field trips to Indigenous communities; (d) small-group work in which students felt supported, including group projects that provided opportunities for ownership and decision making; (e) ensuring opportunities for one-on-one interactions with the teacher and (f) minimization of complex language on tests and in teaching concepts. (p. 33)

Kanu (2007) recommended that when school curricula and teaching/learning processes are compatible with students’ cultures and cultural socialization patterns, the chances of academic success are higher. She noted that “successful integration requires sensitive, caring teachers who are knowledgeable about Aboriginal issues and topics and pedagogical strategies and value them sufficiently to integrate them into their curricula on a consistent basis” (p. 37). Her research suggested that the culturally responsive programming increased school success among

Indigenous students: “Integrating Aboriginal culture and perspectives into student learning outcomes, instructional methods and resources, assessment, and as part of the philosophical underpinning of the curriculum, results in positive outcomes” (p. 38). Therefore, both the federal and provincial governments need to provide sustainable funding and encouragement for programs that improve teachers’ capacities to be effective integrators of Indigenous perspectives and to support Indigenous teacher candidates to enter into non-Indigenous school systems. Other structural variables, including chronic absenteeism or dropout rates among Indigenous students, need to be examined as pedagogy alone cannot reverse achievement trends. Kanu (2007) stressed the importance of understanding all factors impacting student achievement to ensure more positive outcomes: “Implications for policy and practice, therefore, include the need to explore the relationships between micro and macro level variables affecting schooling and the realization that meaningful and lasting intervention requires a systematic, holistic, and comprehensive approach” (p. 39). The current educational system must be reconfigured to allow for a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the impact of socio-economic and political factors on Indigenous students’ achievement.

Other impactful elements of instruction identified by Gay (2002) included “culturally responsive instructors helping students understand that knowledge has moral and political elements and consequences that obligates them to take social action to promote freedom, equality and social justice for everyone” (p. 110). Friedel (2010) suggested that to move forward we need to interrogate “systems of power in Canada” (p.186) such as the educational system: “Needed are studies that look at the benefits of anti-racist education approaches to improving outcomes for Indigenous students and research that examines the potential narrowing of the education gap” (p. 186). Research into Indigenous teacher candidates’ extended practica may contribute to the

discussion, helping new teachers to create invitational and culturally responsive classrooms. The preceding analysis points to the need for fundamental change within classrooms and the critical importance of increasing the number of Indigenous teachers to effect these changes. Responding to this need also requires exploration of teacher education programs, particularly the extended practica experience, to ensure the greatest possible chance for success of Indigenous teacher candidates.

### **The Need to Move Forward**

What types of actions are needed to integrate culturally responsive programming into Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica? What type of structural reframing will need to occur in order to change an institutional mindset from one based on a foundation of Eurocentric values, to one that infuses cultural inclusiveness? How can schools and extended practica continue to evolve? Habitus as defined by Bourdieu (1984) is "structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices" (p. 170). Shields (2004) stated "that the habitus of education constructs the persistence of deficit thinking as a structural and societal one. Educators and policy makers need to find new ways to eradicate the erroneous beliefs and take accountability for student failure" (p. 116). A move towards equitable outcomes for all learners requires culturally responsive approaches that build the confidence and self-efficacy of diverse students.

### **Theorizing Teacher Education and White Privilege**

The study of whiteness examines the ways that white privilege has been constructed and institutionalized and identifies the systemic factors that maintain the continued dominance of Caucasians within culturally heterogenous societies (Page, 2009). In the field of teacher education, the focus on whiteness seeks to interrogate the connection between race, power, and

education to understand how these are linked to oppression (Levine-Rasky, 2000b). According to Levine-Rasky (2000b) the failure of equity education initiatives is attributable to a misidentification of the change that is needed.

Traditional solutions to inequitable educational outcomes for racialized groups of students have been directed to the putative problems of these racialized others ('them') and ...the space between 'us' and 'them', rather than to the workings of the dominant culture itself. (p. 272)

Levine-Rasky (2000b) suggested that the study of whiteness seeks to have teachers and teacher candidates examine their overall understanding of their racial identity and the ideologies with which they enter the classroom. Together, they then explore the impact of those ideologies on their teaching practices and their interactions with students. Additionally, according to Levine-Rasky (2000b), the turn to whiteness in teacher education reflects a "problematization of whiteness as an active participant in systems of domination rather than of racialized differences as effect of domination" (p. 272). Examining the power structures underpinning the design of teacher candidates' extended practica may make power inequities more visible. An exploration through consciousness-raising and value identity may lead to a better understanding of attitudes and practices. Galman, Pica-Smith, and Rosenberger (2010) suggested that "although attention has been focused on transforming teacher candidates' beliefs and developing practice with antiracist pedagogy, similar attention should be paid to teacher educators' beliefs and practice" (p. 225). These researchers illustrated the problems that may arise when white privilege is not examined in teacher education, as this allows systems of oppression to continue to permeate our schools (Page, 2009). McIntyre, as cited in Page (2009), suggested that "white educators who engage in self- and collective-reflection and critique about their racial identities can rework their



pedagogy and disrupt racist teaching practices, thereby reinventing teacher education programs" (pp. 3 - 4). However, Page (2009) acknowledged, as confirmed by Delgado and Stafancic (2000), that "there is a risk that such a curriculum might serve to recenter Whiteness, reinscribe White people as the standard, norm, or deserving of attention, and usurp attention from enhancing the achievement of students of color" (p. 4). Therefore, to avoid placing whiteness in the centre, it is essential to situate the study of whiteness through the lens of an anti-racist framework in order to achieve equity (Page, 2009). Page (2009) further reiterated that "a central feature of Critical Whiteness Studies is to challenge white privilege and the systems that perpetuate and undergird it" (p. 4). Only through recognition of the underlying causes of racism within the school system can discussions to create culturally responsive teacher extended practica begin. Examining teacher extended practica through the lens of Critical Whiteness Studies will assist in understanding "the way race is constructed in a culture and ... the systematic underpinnings of racism" (Page, 2009, p. 4).

Morcam and Freeman (2018), noted that by "presenting alternative narratives and perspectives, particularly on historical and modern inequities, we are able to help our students unpack and examine underlying assumptions and biases in education" (p. 821). Unpacking our biases may help teacher educators and college supervisors to develop an understanding of privilege and its effect on curriculum content and instructional approaches. Unpacking biases may also allow for questions to emerge that bring awareness to educational stakeholders and consciousness-raising within educational and government systems.

### **Consciousness-Raising**

Consciousness-raising is a step towards transformation within educational systems. Hart (1990), in her critique of Mezirow's transformation theory, examined his failure to address the

issue of domination and power in education. She stressed that “educators need to be concerned with the causes of academic failure not just the symptoms” (p. 127). Hart proposed that educators need to understand the non-individual causes of distortion they are trying to correct, since power enters the interactional structure of the educational relationship. She noted the learning dialogue can result in a dichotomy of indoctrination. Hart (1990) identified that educational enlightenment can result from education and reflection, but argued that it is up to the individual to engage in action.

A stronger emphasis on critical pedagogy in the teacher extended practica will allow teacher candidates to assess the curriculum to determine if it is meeting students’ and society’s needs. Critical theorist, Welton (2005) argued that the “power of critique lies not in a new vision of humankind far away from the reality but rather works close to the ground to detect where potential for a new more just way of ordering our lives is breaking into being” (p. 19). Consciousness-raising may focus attention on education and government systems to determine the underlying causes of educational disadvantages. Friedel (2010) stated “that anti-racist education can be seen as a precursor to instituting Indigenous philosophies in the educational realm, a major shift that requires us to examine how we think about schooling, its organization, curriculum, pedagogy and even its purpose” (p. 186). Consciousness-raising informed by anti-racist approaches can help to initiate the shift, recognizing that learners, including teacher candidates, do not all learn in the same way. According to Welton (2005), the “best of adult education research traditions affirms that human individuation requires structures that permit human beings to express their many-sided potentials” (p. 216). The extent to which extended practica allow Indigenous teacher educators to express their many-sided potentials is a primary focus of my research.

## **Indigenous Pedagogy**

Battiste (2002) stressed that there is a “distinctive art and science of teaching from an Indigenous perspective, and that Indigenous people have a distinctive pedagogy, one that is knowledge based in orality” (p. 7). As Indigenous youth constitute a growing percentage of the school-age population, it has become increasingly imperative to ensure their educational needs are met through appropriate pedagogical approaches. This section will provide an overview of Indigenous pedagogy and investigate some of the barriers that may be inhibiting the infusion of Indigenous pedagogy into educational systems and into teacher candidates’ field experiences.

Battiste (2002) noted that experiential knowledge is the first principle of Indigenous learning, and that “the heritage of an Aboriginal people is a complete knowledge system with its own concept of epistemology” (p. 7). Given that the current Eurocentric focus within schools is failing Indigenous people, she stressed that “Aboriginal knowledge is seen as an educational remedy that will empower Aboriginal students if applications of their Aboriginal knowledge, heritage, and languages are integrated into the Canadian education system” (p. 9). She also acknowledged that the educational institutions that have incorporated Indigenous pedagogy have had a higher success rate for Indigenous learners by encouraging students’ and communities’ engagement in learning (pp. 17 – 21).

Techniques to include Indigenous pedagogy necessitate that educators accept responsibility for being more culturally responsive in their own actions. Kaminski (2011) offered a variety of techniques for incorporating Indigenous pedagogy, including “respectful relations, inclusion of Elders, building on experiential learning, listening, story-telling and story-making, multiple intelligences, relevance, and reflectivity. These activities are taught in an ecologically situated, creative, visual-auditory learning space within a self-governance philosophy and natural

world context” (p. 1). Indigenous pedagogy has been described by Kulchyski, Angmarlik, McCaskill, and Newhouse (1999) as:

Holistic learning where everything has the capacity to provide teaching. Everything we look at is teaching a lesson; a tree is teaching a lesson; grass is teaching a lesson, everything is teaching a lesson....We will grasp the lesson if it is brought to us in an interesting way and when we can feel comfort we are part of its whole. (p. 87)

Indigenous pedagogy builds on respectful relationships between educators and the communities they serve. As Paulsen (2003) stated, “significant learning occurs beyond the school walls. Learning—and the developmental process of literacy—is never finished; it is a part of everyday living; a lifelong process and a living language” (p. 23). Additionally, Indigenous learning is also considered collaborative. It aims to serve the needs of the community in addition to the needs of individuals: “Traditionally learning occurred within the specific context to which the learning was related. From the traditional Aboriginal perspective, learning is never finished; it is a treasured part of everyday living and a lifelong process” (Paulsen, 2003, p. 26). Indigenous pedagogy has been defined by many as experimental, relational, story-based, lifelong learning (Kaminski, 2011; Kulchyski, et al., 1999; Paulson, 2003). The structure of our educational institutions and teacher candidate extended practica need to be re-examined in order to affirm and foster Indigenous pedagogical approaches.

### **Reconciling Value Sets**

Eurocentric thought has foundations in Western theories of knowledge and pedagogy while Indigenous epistemology has foundations in theories, philosophies, histories, ceremonies, and stories as ways of knowing developed by various Indigenous groups over millenia (Battiste, 2000). As Battiste (2000) noted, Indigenous pedagogy is found in talking or sharing circles,

dialogues, experiential learning, modeling, mediation, prayer, ceremonies, or story-telling. Battiste (2000) further explained that “Aboriginal knowledge and pedagogy accepts students’ cognitive search for learning processes they can internalize. It is both empirical (based on experience) and normative (based on social values)” (p. 19).

I believe that both sets of values may exist within post-secondary educational systems and teacher education programs and both may complement, support, and enhance each other if necessary openness and respect exist. Diouf, Sheckley, and Kehrhahn (2000) stressed “there is a remarkable similarity between conceptual frameworks set forth by Western theorists within adult education, although these are described in varying terms such as: reflection, dialogue, experiential learning, and active learning” (p. 42). They argue that these methods may not differ across cultures, but rather cultural norms may influence how these methods are contextualized to a specific culture (Diouf et al., 2000). How we take up these methods is exceedingly important. Upon reflection on Indigenous approaches to learning in university settings, Lambe (2003) observed “that Aboriginal and mainstream approaches are different, but this historical, epistemological and pedagogical divide can be overcome if there is a willingness to accommodate each other” (p. 320). It may be possible as demonstrated by the U of S’s commitment to reconciliation identified in the University Plan 2025 that includes as one of its foundational pillars the goal to “uplift indigenization” (<https://plan.usask.ca/courageous-curiosity.php#indigenization>). However, this requires reflective and proactive educators who understand various educational paradigms and truly appreciate the transformative potential of their role as educators. The initiatives that create a space for such reflection and change are further explored in Chapter Five.

## **The Role of Adult Educators**

Different interpretations of the role of adult educators has been advanced by a variety of scholars, with some suggesting that adult educators' primary responsibility is to be agents of change. Brookfield and Holst (2011) recommended that the role of adult educators should include the creating and extending of political and economic democracy. Cervero and Wilson (2001) argued that adult educators were "knowledge-power brokers who see what is at stake and are willing to act to change who benefits and who should benefit from adult education" (p. 276). They stressed that "it is essential to understand the politics of practice as founded on the struggle for knowledge and power, that the practice of politics is concerned with what we actually do to shape that distribution of knowledge and power" (Cervero & Wilson, 2001, p. 279). Defining the role for an adult educator as one that shapes the distribution of knowledge and power, places great importance on their capacity to effect change within society (Cottrell et al., 2009). As Wallin and Peden (2014) stated, "Educators and students need to be taught to utilize their voices to question, explore and critique the status quo as a means of making changes that will provide a more equitable and realistic playing field for all students" (p. 64). Allowing the space for conversations to grow is crucial in moving forward.

Brookfield and Holst (2011) expressed that the "most significant concern for adult educators and adult learning has been learning how to extend participatory democracy into the economic sphere" (p. 2). Ast (2011) identified that "as educators we must confront class bias in our schools, our classrooms, and ourselves. Accepting a culture of poverty as an excuse for students' failure emanates from a culture of classism which creates barriers to access, opportunity, and outcome" (pp. 19–20). The tendency to hide behind this classist culture absolves educators of the responsibility for identifying and addressing the barriers to students'

success within schools and classrooms and from critiquing the origins and impacts of poverty. Instead of blaming the students, their families, and “their poverty” as the cause for “their own failures,” educators must identify and challenge classist institutional practices and power relations within our schools that maintain these historical inequities (Portelli et al., as cited in Ast, 2011).

Manglitz (2003) examined how adult learning theories contribute to harmful approaches by not acknowledging whiteness. Her research found that by positioning whiteness as the invisible norm against which all others are measured creates inequalities and deficit thinking (Shore, as cited in Manglitz, 2003). In their analysis of the historical and contemporary understandings of race in adult education, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero as cited in Manglitz (2003), suggested that as educators we may “fail to acknowledge white privilege and power in education” (p. 128). This omission of white privilege “has led to educational responses reflected in how we write, research, and teach and has deleterious effects on other disenfranchised groups” (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, p. 128 as cited in Manglitz (2003)). The authors examined how power relations existing in the wider social context play out in the teaching and learning dynamics of adult education classrooms and recognized that the “positionality of the professors, in particular the racial category of whiteness, emerged as a key power relationship mediating classroom dynamics” (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998, p. 389). The authors called for further research on power relations’ effects on teaching and learning and white privilege’s effect on adult education. In her examination of the literature on white privilege, Manglitz (2003) found that educators can learn from those who have recognized and challenged their own white privilege and the social and cultural bases that support it, and additionally have found ways to put into practice many of the suggestions made by adult educators to date.

Many authors have acknowledged that adult education theories offer valuable opportunities for questioning belief systems about the role and purpose of adult education. Edwards (2005) wrote that “two significant forces occurred in the 1990s that influenced the conceptualizing of adult education” (p. 616). The first was the backlash to formal institutional structures while the second was framed around the view that adult education was holistic. This resulted in “encouraging learners to be self-directing and valuing the process of a learner’s educational experience” (Edwards, 2005, p. 616). Other theorists have suggested that adult education (andragogy) may be viewed as a social science separate from pedagogy, yet connected through the discipline of education (Savicevic, as cited in Draper, 2001). These theorists and their differing views allowed for a wider perspective to be considered, providing room for adult educators’ roles, responsibility, and capacity to effect emancipatory change.

Understanding ourselves and our roles as adult educators is an important exercise. Pratt (2005) believed that “we teach who we are—the effective teacher is one who moves adeptly from technical knowledge to craft knowledge—how they use their self in concert with the tools of teaching” (p. 614). Negative consequences may result through ineffective instructional techniques (Pratt, 2005). Nesbit, Leach, and Foley (2004) viewed “teaching as artistry and suggested great teachers are those who bring honesty, compassion, humour and passion to their work” (p. 95). These attributes will help contribute to a trusting and inviting learning environment. However, they cautioned that “one must be aware of the deeper dynamics of institutional education as it often reproduces relationships of exploitation and oppression” (Nesbit et al., 2004, p. 79). The importance of understanding our role as adult educators cannot be overstated as educators directly impact a student’s learning and can encourage or discourage



student voice in questioning the status quo. While not designated as formal educators, college field supervisors also have significant influence in this regard.

### **Why Change is Essential**

Reflection is needed in the field of education in order to move the initiative of culturally responsive education to the forefront. It will encourage engagement with change theories and demonstrate how change strategies and strong leadership have helped to advance other forms of change in post-secondary education. Noguera, as cited in Saifer et al (2011) stressed the importance of change:

All the evidence shows that unless we change the culture of schools, nothing changes.

That is – no matter what curriculum we introduce, or how many structural changes we make to the organization – if we do not transform the beliefs, the norms, and the relationship....nothing will change. (p. 9)

Reflection upon the foundational values of teacher candidates' extended practica will assist with animating more supportive culturally responsive extended practica processes. Bustamante et al, (2009) suggested that those advocating for culturally responsive practices point out that change must be system wide and happen at all levels. However, the development of culturally responsive environments require that principals and teachers serve as agents of change. Supervising teachers in particular, given the extensive amount of time spent with teacher candidates and their role in evaluating teacher candidates' performance, are integral in adopting practices that support cultural diversity. An important step in effecting change happens through professional development that incorporates self-awareness activities and reflection, as well as invitations for on-going discussions about diversity and how culture impacts instruction and management of the classroom. As identified by Bustamante et al, (2009) to "examine effectively

how culturally responsive a school is to diverse groups, schools and leaders need frameworks and tools to assist them in identifying these underlying organizational values and beliefs that contribute to inequitable policies and practices” (p. 798).

Due to engagement in systemic hegemonic organizational practices, members of institutions frequently and unknowingly engage in unintentional discrimination. Cambron-McCabe, as cited in Bustamante et al (2009) argued that:

If schools are to evolve, the traditional organizational structure of schools must be transformed to reflect a new set of assumptions that epitomizes social justice. To do this, many educational leadership scholars contend that it is crucial for school leaders to review policies, practices, and organizational structures to remove potential barriers that disadvantage people on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and other characteristics (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Lugg, 2003; Noguera & Blankstein, 2007; Skrla et al, 2006a in Bustamante et al, 2009 p. 798).

Others have also stressed that “once barriers are identified, leaders must then ensure that new policies and practices are created that reflect the experiences of traditionally marginalized groups” (Banks, 2002; Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000, in Bustamante et al, 2009, p. 798).

Strong leadership is required to address the values constraints within educational institutions. Shields (2004) suggested that “one of the central interventions of educational leaders is the facilitation of moral dialogue and that transformational leadership is based on dialogue and strong relationships” (p. 110). These relationships may extend beyond the institution to “help eliminate pathologies of silence; the misguided attempts to act justly” (Shields, 2004, p. 117). An effective leader will acknowledge ethnicity and work to create a community that values diversity and is truly inclusive. This may be achieved through reframing the current teacher candidate

extended practica program from one that is based primarily on Eurocentric values to an educational structure that is built on a foundation of diverse cultural values (Casey, 2016).

Work is underway within some Saskatchewan school systems. As acknowledged by Pelletier, et al. (2013) the First Nations and Metis Education Provincial Advisory Committee (2012) stated that “ethical space is the place between members who agree to set aside individual or competing agendas to work together to accelerate the pace of positive change for the benefit of learners” (p.11). Pelletier et al. (2013) agreed that “authentic partnerships require ethical space in order to find solutions to complex problems” (p. 53). A recent example is the Saskatoon Public School Division (SPSD) partnership with the Whitecap Dakota First Nation:

Our community and our children have certainly enjoyed the benefits of our partnerships with Saskatoon Public Schools to date and we look to build on that,” said Chief Darcy Bear of Whitecap Dakota First Nation. “The agreement we are signing today is a product of our recent efforts, with the support and involvement of the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, to ensure Whitecap children have access to the same range of services as kids in Saskatoon, while continuing to receive Dakota language and cultural teachings. (SPSD, 2016 p. 1)

Other examples include the SPSP division’s A3 plan that looks at alternative teaching methods, including numeracy coaches and cultural events, to assist Indigenous students in graduating. As well, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division commitment to reconciliation is notable and encouraging (GSCS, 2017). However, further change may be needed for Indigenous teacher candidates to feel comfortable and welcomed into all school environments. Universities, provincial schools divisions and First Nations school divisions must work together to create

culturally responsive environments in which Indigenous students and teacher candidates can flourish.

### **Teacher Candidates' Extended Practica Experiences**

Rozelle and Wilson (2012) documented a six-year study of teacher candidates in the secondary school system to examine changing beliefs and practices in response to field experiences. Their research found that all teacher candidates are strongly influenced by cooperating teachers' practices and that changes in teacher candidates' beliefs are dependent on enacted practices. Rozelle and Wilson's (2012) research demonstrated the influence of the cooperating teacher on the teacher candidate and the importance of a supervisor's role in ensuring a teacher candidate's successful extended practica. This section will review research related to field experiences in teacher education programs to understand the importance of extended practica in teacher candidates' educational journey.

### **The Role of the Cooperating Teacher**

Teacher candidates' extended practica require a variety of developmental activities including observing the cooperating teacher, developing goals with their supervisor for a professional growth plan, affirming dignity and respect for students and eventually taking over full time teaching for an extended period. Hersh, and Waxman (2009) found that the "extended practica is an important rite of passage in a teacher's career" (p. 241). Student teaching is eagerly and anxiously anticipated by pre-service teachers, and is remembered as a significant milestone by practicing teachers. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) reported that student teachers have always regarded practicum experience and work with college field supervisors as the two most important elements of their professional preparation, but many indicate inadequate levels of preparation for the realities they experience in classrooms.

Wimmer, Arcand, Legare and Cottrell (2009) reported that ITEP teacher candidates during their field experience or extended practica “wished that there were more hands on experiences and a wider variety of educational settings” (p. 834). Some indicated that the ITEP program “placed too much emphasis during student teaching on observations, while [teacher candidates] wanted more hands-on time with students, teachers, and teaching assistants” (p. 834). Wimmer, et al.’s (2009) research discovered that teachers experienced what could be a “sense of loss of collegial support when they left ITEP cohorts for their new lives as beginning teachers. With this loss they see a need for more support when they left the ITEP cohorts for their new lives as beginning teachers” (p. 840). It was recommended that for “Aboriginal teacher education there should be more and varied field experience and as well a life skills training program” (Wimmer et al., 2009, p. 841).

Ralph’s (2010) research (as cited in Ralph, Walker & Wimmer, 2010) in Canadian schools found that positive aspects of extended practica included the supportive relationships that teacher candidates developed with groups of individuals with whom they worked. These included the entire staff of their placement location who welcomed and accepted them as colleagues, their immediate site-based supervisor(s) who helped them grow professionally, their faculty-based supervisor, the individuals they served, and their fellow students placed in the same or neighboring locations (pp. 8–9).

Research on the supervision of teacher candidates has demonstrated the importance of the quality of the relationship that is established between the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate. The nature of this relationship can be connected to the development of negative attitudes towards the profession or positive perceptions towards a teaching career (Ibrahim, 2013). As well, Bates, Drits, and Ramirez (2011) found that supervisors have a powerful effect

on the identity, self-perception, and quality of future teachers. Cooperating teachers' and university supervisors' approaches to supervision are therefore of great importance in the student teacher development process and research has examined cooperating teachers as key players in the teacher education process (Bates et al., 2011). Bates et al. (2011) focused on the concept of supervisor stance (a supervisor's professional knowledge, perspective, and conceptualization about how student teachers learn to teach) and examined how stance influences supervisory practice. They argued that "the student teachers' learning opportunities could result in substantive improvements to the process and experience of student teaching and that the supervisor's stance towards practice has a direct influence on what they do and how they do it" (Bates et al., 2011, p. 70). Supervisory stance influenced the learning opportunities available to teacher candidates and directly informed what and how they learned about teaching. As Bates et al (2011) noted "encouraging supervisors to become aware of and develop stances that are responsive to student teachers' learning needs will increase the quality of supervisory experiences" (p. 86). This research demonstrated the importance of further investigating the cooperating teacher role and inquiring how cooperating teachers' stances impact the creation of culturally responsive extended practica. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) found that an important element in "understanding how cooperating teachers construct pedagogical relationships with student teachers is in understanding the teaching perspectives that guide their practice as educators" (p. 66). Exploring the teaching perspectives of cooperating teachers and the significance of these perspectives "give shape and meaning to educational practices including supervisory practices" (Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005, p. 66). These perspectives may assist in gaining a better understanding of how an extended practica may be shaped towards cultural responsiveness.

Bleicher (2011) found that when teacher candidates were placed into extended practica within unfamiliar settings, they felt anxious: “Thirty percent stated explicitly that their anxiety was not solely about teaching strangers, but rather trying to relate to people who are not like me or who come from a different background” (p. 1174). Yang and Montgomery (2013) revealed an attitudinal gap between students in teacher education programs with their comfort level in dealing with diversity. The findings allowed discussions to develop that addressed diversity and reflection assignments for teacher candidates. Yang and Montgomery (2013) stressed that “by learning from one another with a less judgmental approach, both teacher candidates and teacher educators can be more open to change, hence turning the gaps into bridges in multicultural education” (p. 36). Yang and Montgomery (2013) stressed that “teacher educators and teacher candidates may have more meaningful dialogue, bring about attitudinal change toward student diversity, and enhance the effectiveness of multicultural education to help close the gap of homogeneous teaching force and increasing global student diversity” (p. 36). Peden (2011) reported in her research “that when students attend provincial schools the teachers usually have no idea of their past educational history” (p. 39). Peden (2011) found that though “student teachers were sympathetic to inequity they were still ignorant or minimized the social constructions that caused structural inequity” (p. 51). Deep conversations are important for an understanding of structural inequities and the creation of supportive extended practica (Falihi & Cottrell, 2015).

### **The Classroom Environment**

Two components critical to the success of teacher candidates’ experiences, are the cooperating teachers who guide and support students and the sites where the experiences occur. A supportive classroom environment is important to model to teacher candidates as it

demonstrates the commitment that is required to meet all students' needs. In New Zealand, Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, and Richardson (2004) reported on:

A model of professional development— Te Kotahitanga—designed to improve the learning environment for Maori students in mainstream secondary schools. Te Kotahitanga engages teachers in learning from student narratives in a non-confrontational environment, followed by professional training, classroom-based coaching, and teacher-led classroom-based inquiry. The project documented a pattern of improvements in Maori students' achievement and other indicators of school experience (p. 1950).

This initiative demonstrated how working collaboratively through co-teaching and inquiry-based learning contributes to the development of more beneficial interactions between teachers and Indigenous students. This collaboration results in developing stronger teachers and stronger students.

Entwistle (2012) stressed “that to achieve effective teaching and learning in post-secondary institutions faculty have responsibilities to set up learning environments that act synergistically to encourage and support a deep engagement with the subject” (p. 44). To meet the diversity of students and student backgrounds, multiple inclusive approaches are needed in order to encourage deep learning. Ensuring a welcoming learning environment provides the foundation to student success and supportive teacher candidate extended practica.

Opening up the space for classrooms to become inviting for Indigenous teacher candidates requires embracing concepts of intercultural teaching. MacPherson (2010) suggested that to achieve culturally responsive teaching requires attitudes, cultural knowledge, instructional style and ensuring that the teaching environment reflects families it serves. MacPherson (2010) stated that the teaching profession in North America continues to “attract native-born, White



females of Christian European backgrounds who teach in proximity to the neighbourhoods in which they were raised” (p. 271). This implies that the teacher may not reflect all the students in which they are teaching and the teacher candidates who they are mentoring. How does this situation offer a culturally responsive classroom environment in which teacher candidates may thrive? Eberly, as cited in Macpherson (2010) found “that combining intercultural university course work with supportive field placement in supportive classrooms generated more culturally responsive teachers” (p. 274). The importance of an inclusive classroom environment not only for the students but for teacher candidates cannot be overstated. The classroom environment in which the teacher candidate is learning is a foundational aspect in the development of their instructional and teaching skills. Immersion within a culturally responsive environment is not only welcoming for all teacher candidates but instills the necessity of providing culturally responsive education.

### **The Role of the College Field Supervisor**

For more than half a century educational researchers including Briggs (1963), Ralph (2003), Graham (2006), Haines (1960), Jones (1970), Morris (1980), Pungar (2007), Sosland and Lowenthal (2017) have recognized both the importance and the complexity of the role played by the college field supervisor in teacher education, especially highlighting their centrality in the teacher candidates’ extended practica. That research delineates continuities and changes in the role of college field supervisors and in their relationships with teacher candidates and school-based cooperating teachers, in tandem with larger cycles of reform and innovation in undergraduate teacher education programs. Ironically, a consistent theme in the research is persistent vagueness and ambiguity surrounding the actual role and responsibility of the supervisor, leading to confusion for all three parties involved in the extended practica—college

field supervisors, cooperating teachers and teacher candidates. This confusion further complicates what is always a fraught and sometimes an adversarial relationship between the teacher candidate and his/her cooperating teacher. Another significant shift noticed in the literature is a move away from a prescriptive, adversarial and evaluative stance for college supervisors to a position of support and mentorship as an ally of teacher candidates and as a broker in the relationship between the teacher candidate and his/her cooperating teacher (Sosland & Lowenthal, 2017). Ironically also, the evolution of the role of the college supervisors has led to demands both for the abolition of the role and for the transfer of ultimate responsibility for all aspects of extended practica to the person occupying that role (Pungar, 2007).

The complexity of the college field supervisor's role was identified and documented by Haines, as cited by Briggs (1963), in identifying the following responsibilities:

As liaison and public relations person, they (he) helped (s) to promote greater understanding of our participation in the [teacher candidate] education program. As a supervisory instructor, they (he) assumed (s) responsibility for encouraging the student teacher's continued professional growth and personal adjustment. As a co-worker in the public school they (he) collaborated(s) with the principal and cooperating teacher in improving the quality of preservice practical experience. The coordinated action influences and, in turn, are influenced by the participation of other key personnel who work closely with student teachers. (p. 291)

To perform these various roles Briggs (1963) outlined certain personality traits that the college field supervisor should possess. These included “ sincerity, empathy, tact, open-mindedness, intellectuality, good personal appearance, creativity, objectivity, inspiration, habits of good workmanship, and a respect for people” (p. 292). Briggs (1963) further suggested that

individuals playing this role should have a “genuine interest in and a respect for public school teaching, and a firm conviction of the serious responsibility in preparing young people to enter the teaching profession” (p. 292). According to Briggs (1963) the single most important asset of a college field supervisor was having years of experience as a classroom teacher and teacher-educator.

Stratameyer, as cited in Briggs (1963) highlighted that expectations for college supervisors included acting as a liaison between the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher, school and university, to guide the [teacher candidate], help the cooperating teacher and more specifically to “practice sympathetic and creative supervision” (p. 293). Briggs (1963) observed that though the success of the student teacher program depended on many factors and individuals, the role of the college field supervisor was critical since they were required to “observe, counsel, and finally evaluate the student” (p. 295). Given this analysis, Briggs (1963) concluded that sole responsibility for the teacher candidate be given to the college field supervisor.

Subsequent research advocated for a change in the role of the college supervisor from one thought to be prescriptive and evaluative or supervisory to one that focussed on guidance and mentoring in supporting personal and professional growth both for teacher candidates and cooperating teachers, while also attending to the learning of students in the classroom. Following Haines’ and Briggs’ research, Jones (1970) concluded that the work of college supervisors should support “the learning of students by teaching and by helping the student teacher and the classroom teacher to grow professionally” (p. 433). According to Jones (1970) the most important role of the college field supervisor is the leadership role, followed by the

interpretative and cooperative roles. Jones' (1970) research also pointed to the benefits of a more humanistic and holistic outlook among college supervisors:

They (He) are (is) sensitive to the attitude of the student teacher, knows when to initiate severe action or to provide sympathetic understanding in allaying nervousness and fears frequently arising within the student teacher. The supervisor also recognizes and attempts to understand the subtle relationships that develop between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher-relationships which can enhance the process of teaching and learning or can be destructive of the whole process if not understood by all three constituents in the program. (p. 435)

Morris's (1980) highlighted the continued importance of the college supervisor and further distinguished between their contribution to the teaching and learning process and their status as a visitor to the classroom and school, privileging social skills that include empathy and moralization. Morris (1980) concluded that the perceived ineffectiveness of many college field supervisors was the result of their role not being properly defined and communicated:

The primary reason why much research cites such a large number of ineffective supervisory practices is because of attempts to apply broad, general supervisory roles and practices to specific situations. In each supervisory program, needs of the field-based consumers must determine primarily supervisory effectiveness. We have all experienced firsthand the consequences of serious conflicts between campus-based and field-based personnel over role expectations. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to provide the leadership to identify and eliminate these conflicts. (p. 149).

Morris' (1980) concluded that increasing the effectiveness of the college supervisors required a formal process of evaluation which should grow out of "ongoing in-service improvement

programs provided by the university and seminar sessions with the student teachers” (p.150). A significant contribution of Morris’ (1980) research was a new attention to the situational aspect of the role of college supervisors, suggesting that a one size fits all approach was not likely to be successful.

Potthoff and Kline (1995) researched field experiences as an important component of the practicum placement and concluded that field experiences have often been seen as ineffective and “while it is unlikely that field experiences will become less common, these criticisms do suggest a need for improving field experiences” (p. 104). The necessity of a renewed model was stressed and three possible strategies were highlighted: Public Relations, Student Growth/Learning Model and the Traditional model in “which supervisors provide principals with an introduction to the field experience” (Potthoff & Kline, 1995, p. 105). The results of their study yielded that there was not much difference in the teacher candidate attitude regardless of the model; however, in all models the teacher candidate’s attitude towards teaching became less positive, with some of the students leaving education. They concluded that shorter field experiences that typically preceded the extended practica are important to observe as they directly affect dynamics within the extended practica. Teacher candidates enter into the extended practica with preconceived attitudes from their early field experience sessions. Potthoff and Kline (1995) stressed that “the best hope for improving field experiences is to radically alter traditional school structure and climate” (p. 110). Zeichner, as cited in Potthoff and Kline (1995) argued that “immersing teacher candidates, practitioners, teacher education faculty, and administrators in environments which are changing from within and which ground theoretical studies in practice should be the goal” (p. 110). The authors concluded that “over the past two decades, early field experiences have become a commonplace program feature. Implementing

models appropriate for supervising early field experiences should follow” (Potthoff & Kline, 1995, p. 110).

In Beck’s and Kosnik’s (2003) four year study of a teacher education program, they implemented an action research model that entailed the faculty having heavy involvement in preservice practica. Their research identified that extensive faculty involvement was found to “strengthen the school-university partnership, enhance both the practicum and the campus program, and help faculty grow in knowledge and understanding of schooling. However, the approach was time-consuming and presented some other challenges for faculty” (Beck & Kosnik, 2002, p. 6). The authors suggested that there is a need for more faculty involvement within the preservice practicum as “it links practicum supervision closely with building school-university partnerships, provides extensive support for faculty in their supervisory work, and integrates supervisory activities both across supervisors and with the campus program” (Beck & Kosnik, 2002, p. 17). They concluded their research by documenting that more faculty involvement in preservice practica will benefit all parties involved. As well, Petersen’s and Treagust’s (2014) research presented that it is crucial for partnerships between universities and schools to develop in order for teacher candidates to develop self-efficacy and mature into strong teachers. Other researchers have echoed similar findings of the importance of including faculty involvement either as college field supervisors or being directly involved in the development of teacher candidates in their extended practica. Graham’s (2006) findings highlighted constructivist dynamics in the relationship between college supervisors and cooperating teachers in that “together, through careful observation, interpretation, analysis, and discussion of the classroom dilemmas encountered during the internship, they will co-construct knowledge for

teaching” (p. 1128). In the changing environment, the mentor role required great commitment to realize the vision of collaboration between universities and extended practica placements.

Ralph (2003) argued that some cooperating teachers and college supervisors articulated an “aversion to using the term supervision (Glickman, 1992; Paris and Gespass, 2001) because of the negative connotations, and because the term may have been misused or abused” (p. 29). Rather he suggested that the terms “mentoring, coaching or facilitation” (Ralph, 2003, p. 29) be used instead. Additionally Ralph (2003) advocated moving towards a Contextual Supervision (CS) model which offered the flexibility needed for supervisors to adapt and adjust their supervisory approaches to the needs of those teacher candidates being supervised. These recommendations reflected further attention to the contextual nature of the extended practica, a recognition of the diverse strengths and needs of pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers, and a recognition of the need for college supervisors to adjust their approaches so as to best meet the needs of all parties.

Pungar’s (2007) research highlighted the importance of communication in the role of the college field supervisor. “The reciprocity of communication should give university personnel insight into the practical teaching requirements, and mentor teachers and school coordinators knowledge of the new innovations they need to keep current” (Pungar, 2007, p. 280). She described the role of the college field supervisor as involving liaison, communicator, evaluator, and resource person (p. 278). Pungar (2007) explained that maintaining a close relationship between the practicum personnel and the university will “ensure that the practicum experience stays fresh and relevant” (p. 280). As the role of the college field supervisor evolved over the years, communication and faculty involvement were identified as necessary components to

ensure collaboration between schools and universities to ensure the best experiences and outcomes for teacher candidates.

Dakhiel's (2017) research outlined six recommendations advanced by college field supervisors to improve supervision of practica. These included that "training courses should be held for the supervisors in order to raise their efficiency, and a special guide for the practicum supervisors should be developed" (Dakhiel, 2017, p. 1021). Dakhiel's (2017) recommendations acknowledged the importance of the role of the college field supervisor but the paucity of intentional training for those taking on that important role. Dangel and Tanguay's (2014) research confirmed that "professional development that scaffolds and supports supervisors is critical for quality field experiences and is our responsibility as teacher educators" (p. 1). Likewise, Sosland and Lowenthal's (2017) research demonstrated the importance of greater university involvement within extended practica through their survey of internship supervisors, acknowledging that more faculty presence and engagement would be welcomed.

In the teacher education program that is the focus of this study, the roles of the college supervisor have been defined as follows:

To act as a guide and support for the teacher candidate, to facilitate the relationship between the teacher candidate and cooperating teacher, to support the teacher in his/her mentorship of the teacher candidate, to act as a representative of the College of Education and as a liaison with the school division. (University of Saskatchewan, 2019)

The major components of the role of the Facilitator's role as outlined in the Facilitator's Guidebook include communication, collaboration, supervision and support. This innovative approach recognizing the need for greater collaboration between the college supervisor, teacher



candidate and cooperating teacher is reflected in the title of the *college supervisor* being changed to *college facilitator* as noted in the title of the guidebook and throughout the document.

This synthesis of research suggests that role of the college field supervisor has evolved from one of evaluator and supervisor to one of mentor, facilitator and collaborator. These innovations have provided the opportunity for more authentic partnerships between school and universities to develop and have also animated more supportive environments for teacher candidates to develop their expertise within extended practica. Increased attention to the contextual dynamics of extended practica and to the diverse strengths and needs of teacher candidates, highlights the importance of culturally responsive educational spaces to ensure the success of Indigenous pre-service teachers. My proposed research seeks to deepen our understanding of these dynamics by highlighting the critical role of college supervisors in advocating for, and creating, culturally supportive extended practica experiences for Indigenous students.

### **Culturally Responsive Teacher Education Programs**

This section provides a discussion of Indigenous teacher education programs and the growing need to ensure all extended practica programs are culturally responsive. A brief introduction to some Canadian Indigenous teacher education programs is provided, followed by an elaboration of the concept of ethical space and its importance within extended practica.

#### **The Need for Indigenous Teacher Education Programs**

Prior to the 1970s, there were few Indigenous people within the teaching profession and little attention was paid to the potential impact of this on schools and learners, especially Indigenous learners. It was only after the policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education* (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972), which called for the “creation of First Nation-controlled schools and

Indigenous teachers, that a significant number of Indigenous people were able to enter the teaching profession” (St. Denis, 2010, p. 23). Wimmer, et al. (2009) suggested that, “as part of the national and international trend, Indigenous groups within Saskatchewan asserted the right to control their own education” (p. 1). These initiatives were needed for Indigenous groups to continue their path to self-determination through education. As St. Denis, Bouvier and Battiste (1998) wrote, “thus began the development of Aboriginal teacher education programs across Canada. In particular, Saskatchewan became the site for at least four distinct Indigenous teacher education programs” (p. 4). Peden’s (2011) research demonstrated that the development of Indigenous teacher education programs in Canada in the 1970s and 1980s significantly increased the capacity of Indigenous communities to staff First Nation controlled schools. King (1995), as cited in Peden (2011), stressed the development of such programs was premised in the belief that Aboriginal teachers employed in band-controlled school systems would help to “reduce the dropout rate and low achievement of students” (p. 39).

The four Indigenous teacher education programs in Saskatchewan began because of the recognized need for additional Indigenous teachers within the school systems. Cottrell et al. as cited in Pelletier et al (2013), found that “a cadre of committed, young teachers of First Nations ancestry provided positive role models for Indigenous students which contributed to a positive school climate” (p. 33). The Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, as cited on its website (<https://education.usask.ca/itep/>), was created in 1973 as a culturally responsive and holistic program designed to offer Indigenous students academic, personal, professional, and cultural supports. These supports include extended practical support, a community education model, regular meetings with advisors, Elder’s programs, connection with the community, culturally relevant personal counselling, support services, First

Nations staff, and First Nations/Indigenous course content and perspectives (ITEP, n.d.). Other types of culturally responsive supports as outlined by Arcand (2012) included allowing students to complete their extended practica in their home community, reinforcing cultural awareness and identity, and inspiring them to be role models. The ITEP environment allows for students to learn in a worldview that reflects their values and history that reinforces their culture, identity and general resilience and maintains a 90% student retention rate (Arcand, 2012).

The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) was established in 1980 as part of the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI). SUNTEP offers a four-year, fully accredited Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) offered by GDI in co-operation with Saskatchewan Learning, the U of S, and the University of Regina (U of R). The program is available in three urban centres—Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon—and has been designed to meet the educational needs of Métis students and to address the need for trained, qualified Métis educators (SUNTEP, n.d.). The SUNTEP program includes Indigenous Studies and cross-cultural education with an emphasis on Métis and First Nations history and culture. It also provides a solid foundation in the theories and skills of teaching. A substantial amount of time is spent in schools working with teachers and students. Since 1980, close to 1,000 students have graduated with a B.Ed. from SUNTEP. As reported by Howe (2017) “the most relevant economic benefit of an Indigenous teacher arises when the teacher is a role model: when Indigenous students see themselves in their teacher and decide to persevere in education” (p. 33). SUNTEP’s goals are to ensure that people of Métis ancestry are prepared for teaching positions and to ensure that SUNTEP graduates are educated to be sensitive to the individual educational needs of all students (SUNTEP, n.d.).

The Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) was a four-year, off-campus program for northern residents who were pursuing a B.Ed. Degree offered in co-operation with the U of S and the U of R. NORTEP was administered by the NORTEP Council Inc. made up of representatives from the three northern school divisions and two tribal councils. In April 2017, the Saskatchewan Minister of Advanced Education, Bronwyn Eyre, announced that NORTEP would be transitioning into Northlands College and funding for both programs would cease in July 2017. Reasons behind the transition ranged from financial to credit transferring (Hunter, April 12, 2017).

NORTEP had strong success in northern Saskatchewan since it was formed in 1977. The program was recognized across the country and internationally as one of the most supportive First Nations and Métis education programs in Canada. Prior to 1977, 97% of the teaching staff in the north were English-speaking teachers from the south, while 75% of the students were Indian and Métis, many with Cree or Dene as their first language (U of S, 2016).

NORTEP graduates have become principals and vice-principals, education directors and administrators, university and college instructors, language instructors, and consultants. They have played an essential vital role in helping to ensure that school programs meet the needs of Indigenous students and are consistent with the aspirations of the Indian and Métis people by carrying into the schools Indigenous values, languages, concepts, and encouraging and preserving the students' cultural heritage (CBC, 2017b). Many community members expressed opposition to the closure of the NORTEP program after 40 successful years and Keith Goulet, a former Saskatchewan MLA and NORTEP developer believed the closure of the program was a financial decision by the government (CBC, 2017b). A new program aiming to train Northerners as teachers in their own communities through the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Lac La

Ronge Indian Band began in 2019. The program aims to fill the continued shortage of Indigenous teachers in the north since NORTEP closed. Simon Bird, Education Director from the Lac La Ronge band stated that “I think what was missing was having our own First Nations perspective, our own First Nations local instructors really take the driver’s seat and attract our Indigenous teachers” (CBC, 2019).

Other First Nations teacher education programs across Canada have had similar successes. The University of British Columbia’s Native Indian Teacher Education Program “began as an elementary education program in 1974 in response to demands by Indigenous people for a more effective and relevant teacher education program” (NITEP, 2018, p.1). The program is successful because its core foundation was built upon the cultural heritage and identity of the professionals in training (NITEP, 2018, p.1).

In an address to the graduates of the Program of Education of Native Teachers at Brandon University, Kirkness (1979) discussed why Indian teacher education programs are essential. Kirkness explained that years of effort by missionaries, government officials, and non-Indian educators had failed to identify a meaningful education for Indians. She suggested that Native teachers will make the difference because Native teachers can shape the educational world as Native people want it to be:

In the world as we want it to be, the teachers: will be of the particular nation (tribe) they are teaching; will be thoroughly knowledgeable about the past and present of the particular community in which they live; will be thoroughly knowledgeable about the past and present of the nation (tribe) they teach and of other nations (tribes) in this country, of immigrant peoples and peoples of other lands. In the education world as we

want it to be, teachers will deal in ideas, emotions, cultural differences and will help children to develop intellectually and spiritually. (Kirkness, 1979, p. 4)

The number of Indigenous teacher education programs and their success in increasing the representation of Indigenous teachers in the classroom and in improving graduation rates for Indigenous students speaks to the impact and ongoing need for such designated programs.

### **Ethical Space**

In this section I elaborate on the concept of ethical space developed by Ermine (2000) to foster more positive cross-cultural interactions, which was introduced briefly in Chapter One. Processes are then delineated to facilitate the creation of ethical space which may help support culturally responsive extended practica through reciprocity and mutual reconciliation of value sets that allows for cross-cultural engagement, the transfer of knowledge and the creation of new knowledge. Ermine (2007) wrote that “ethical space is formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews are poised to engage each other. It is the thought about diverse societies and the space in between them that contributes to the development of a framework for dialogue between human communities” (p. 193). Ermine (2000) further stated:

Ethical space therefore can establish itself as the appropriate place from which to transform knowledge because it offers a view of alternative knowledge systems in simultaneous fashion. Working towards the respect and understanding of different and multiple readings of the world captured in alternative worldviews can enhance the human capacity to create knowledge. (pp. 122-123)

The concept of ethical space speaks to contexts where knowledge may be transferred within a learning environment, such as extended practica, enabling new knowledge to be created, thereby contributing to a more equitable and just learning environment. As Ermine (2007) noted,

“engagement at the ethical space triggers a dialogue that begins to set the parameters for an agreement to interact modeled on appropriate, ethical and human principles” (p. 202). Ensuring the existence of space to facilitate the intersection of Indigenous ways of knowing and Canadian epistemic systems, such as within extended practica, can allow for new knowledge to emerge and the process of reconciliation to advance (Cottrell & Hardie, 2019; Pelletier, et al, 2013; Steeves et al, 2014).

Building on Ermine’s work, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) conceived the ‘middle ground’ as a place where two systems (First Nations and Western) could engage as “equals to work together in a way that would be to the benefit of all” (FSIN, 2013, p. 6). The FSIN proposed a Culturally Responsive Framework (CRF) to achieve this. However, for a model of culturally responsive teacher extended practica to be developed in schools that are currently based predominantly on Western values, difficult conversations will need to take place (Cottrell, et al., 2009). But these conversations are necessary in order to create the conditions for cross-cultural negotiation in which knowledge is exchanged and new knowledge is created.

Kanu (2011) also acknowledged the significance of the concept of a ‘third space’ as a guiding principle when integrating Indigenous perspectives in Social Studies curriculum. Drawing on the work of Bhabha (1990, 1994) she suggested that in order to “produce significant change in perspective and understanding implied in the call for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, integration itself would have to be viewed as existing in a ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1990,p. 97). Bhabha, as cited in Kanu (2011) wrote:

All forms of culture are constantly in a process of hybridity – this third space between two originary moments displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which we inadequately understood

through received wisdom. The third space, far from being a site for the re-inscription of essentialist narratives of culture, is a liminal space for interaction, conflict, and mutual assimilation that every encounter between cultures involves (p. 97.)

Kanu (2011) explained that the third space has moments of dislocation and negotiation where “pre-given ethnic or cultural traits are disrupted” (p. 97). This disruption allows for teachers and students (including supervising teachers and teacher candidates) to open themselves to differing perspectives and concepts, to gain an understanding of what it is like to live with ‘others’, to appreciate the knowledge created by others and to imagine new knowledge emerging from the synthesis. Kanu (2011) also referred to Nakata’s (2002) insights on the third space as follows:

The intersection of Western and Indigenous domains...the place where we live and learn, the place that conditions our lives, the place that shapes our futures, and more to the point, the place where we are active agents in our own lives— where we make decisions— our lived world. (pp. 97-98)

Kanu (2011) acknowledged that attending to these negotiations is challenging and that genuine transformation would only occur if Indigenous perspectives were formulated in collaboration with Indigenous communities. An innovative space is seen as a necessary starting point in order to move towards authentic conversations and understandings. Within Indigenous teacher candidates’ extended practica, ethical space may be realized with mutual engagement through respectful dialogue and intentional exchange of knowledge between the Indigenous teacher candidate and the supervising teacher, with the ultimate possibility of new knowledge being created in the interaction.

Insights from other scholars can also be mobilized here. Cross-cultural engagement and dialogue may be facilitated through *kiskinaumagehin* (teaching one another) as illustrated in the



Model of Effective Teaching for Indigenous Students developed by Goulet and Goulet (2014, p. 87). Other essential insights from the Goulet's (2014) research are the Cree social relations concepts of "*otootemitowin* (respectful openness and acceptance of others) and *weechiseechigemitowin* (alliance for common action)" (p. 70). Both of these have the potential to foster engagement and strengthen social relations, making it possible for dialogue to allow genuine cross-cultural learning and knowledge production to occur.

Deep self-reflection may enable individuals to reach a place within themselves that allows for the concepts of *otootemitowin* and *weechiseechigemitowin* to be realized. As Zinga (2019) wrote of her experiences in higher education: "Many Indigenous students find universities to be places where their identities are defined by others and subsequently challenged and/or discounted" (p. 277). Zinga (2019) explained that as a non-Indigenous faculty member she "often felt unequal to the task of supporting Indigenous students on campus" (p. 278). Informed by Ermine's concept of ethical space she examined what it is like to be a non-Indigenous faculty member teaching Indigenous studies within contested post-secondary education spaces by articulating the "concept of teaching as the creation of ethical space" (p. 278). Zinga's (2019) research explored the hegemonic views rooted in colonialism as it required non-Indigenous individuals to discover and come to terms with how they are implicated in the perpetuation of colonialism. She posed the question to non-Indigenous individuals regarding the perpetuation of the colonial educational system for Indigenous students: "Now that you know how you are implicated, what are you going to do about it?" (Zinga, 2019, p. 286).

Madden (2016) also applied the concept of third space to "re-conceptualize teacher education and pedagogy for decolonizing and offering new ways of supporting Aboriginal students and communities" (p. 36 - 37). Madden (2016) suggested five decolonizing processes

for teacher engagement in Aboriginal education:

Positioning of oneself in relation to Aboriginal peoples and land; honouring their relations and Aboriginal knowledges through cultural protocols and ceremony; understanding that colonization and racism are produced by, and reproduce, systems of power that marginalize particular groups, while privileging others; integrating Aboriginal wisdom in their classrooms grounded in traditional approaches to teaching and knowing that deconstruct the assumptions and organizing principles of colonial systems and creates space for Indigenous ways-of-knowing and –being. (pp 39 – 40)

The partnership model of ethical space, third space or middle ground envisaged by Ermine (2010), Kanu (2011), Zinga (2019) and Madden (2014), and the approaches proposed by Goulet and Goulet (2014) have the potential to transform Indigenous interns' extended practica. Instead of traditional hierarchical and hegemonic dynamics characterized by the transmission of Eurocentric knowledge and pedagogical practices, culturally responsive internships characterized by relationships of reciprocity and respect between interns and supervising teachers could be animated. The cultivation of ethical space within the extended practica could create a set of circumstances where engagement and understanding would facilitate knowledge transfer in both directions; and through reciprocity, reflexivity and negotiation, allow for the creation of new curricular and pedagogical knowledge and the animation of more socially just relations.



Figure 2.2 Ethical Space of Engagement (Roger Poole, 1972)

### Summary

The literature synthesized here documents profound demographic changes which confirm the need to decolonize schools through greater attention to culturally responsive approaches, including a significant increase in the number of Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan. Teacher education programs as a dimension of adult education are thus centered as critical sites of innovation as part of larger post-secondary indigenization processes. Research on teacher education documents' evolution over time highlights the importance of classroom teachers and college supervisors as crucial to the success of teacher candidates and also demonstrates a greater appreciation for context and for differentiation among teacher candidates as a product of growing diversity within the larger society. A review of Indigenous Teacher Education Programs documents their positive impact over 50 years, especially in developing instructional capacity within First Nation controlled schools. Attention to whiteness and anti-racist theory and engagement with the work of Ermine and others suggests the usefulness of the concept of ethical space as a means of reimagining extended practica to allow for respectful dialogue and intentional exchange of knowledge between Indigenous teacher candidates and Caucasian

supervising teachers, with the ultimate possibility of new knowledge being created in the interaction. These insights were mobilized in developing the research methods elaborated on in Chapter Three and in the data analysis presented in Chapter Five.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 3 was comprised of a restatement of the purpose of the study and the research question, followed by an articulation of the conceptual framework and a description of the research methodology, the constructivist paradigm that framed the research, and approaches to data collection and analysis. The final section of Chapter 3 outlined how the trustworthiness of the inquiry was established and concluded with a description of the ethical considerations relevant to this study.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

A noticeable concern within Saskatchewan school divisions is the under-representation of Indigenous educators, given that Indigenous students are the fastest growing school-age demographic. A qualifying step in becoming an educator in the K-12 school system is the teacher candidate extended practicum. The purpose of this study was to explore what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate's extended practicum looks like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators. A basic assumption of the research is that acquiring greater understanding of the extended practica process through college field supervisors' insights will help to delineate and animate more culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates, accelerating the desired outcome of increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan.

## **Research Question**

The research question for the study is, “What does a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate’s extended practicum look like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators?”

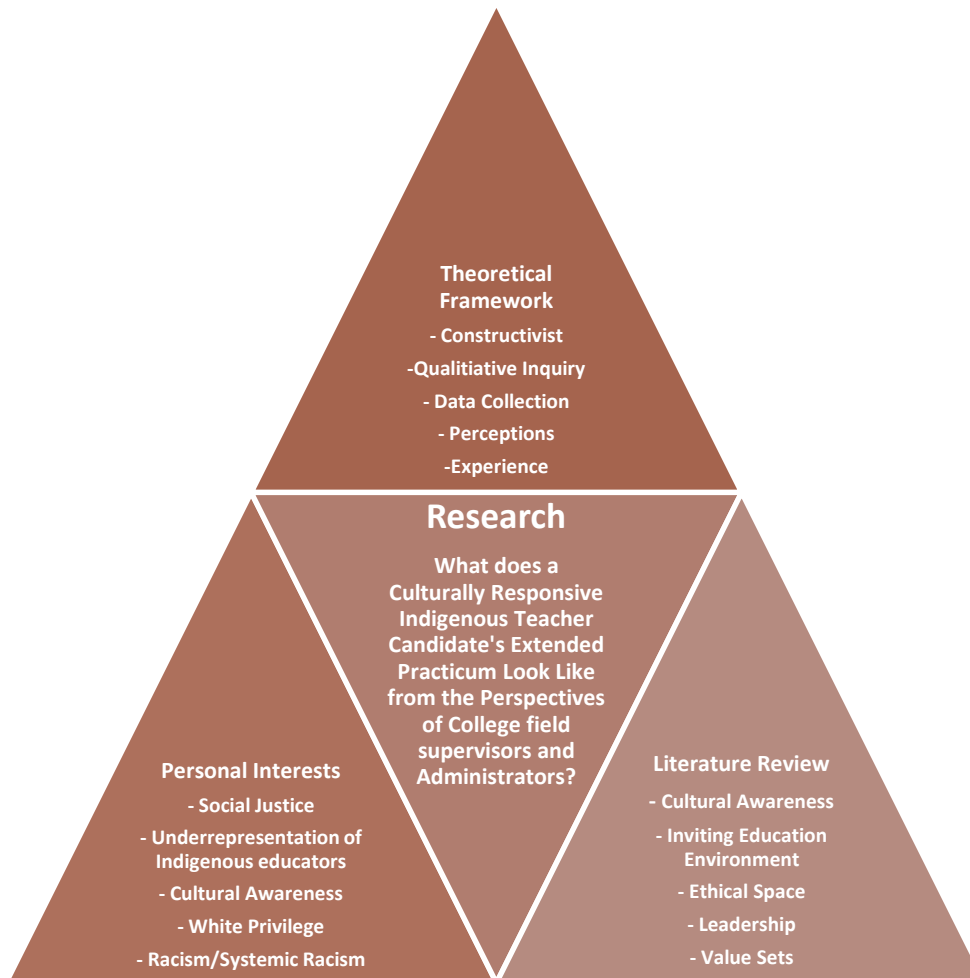
## **Conceptual Framework**

Anfara and Mertz (2006) defined *theoretical framework* as “any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes that may be applied to the understanding of a phenomenon” (p. 22). A conceptual framework is a type of intermediate theory that attempts to connect all aspects of the research. As noted by Steeves, Carr-Stewart & Marshall (2011), a conceptual framework “provides a sense in which to construct reality” (p. 28). The visual illustration of my conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) is based on the insights gained from the literature review and has helped to define the shape of the research.

Multiple insights emerged from the literature review, allowing for a widening and deepening of the question base to examine what a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate’s extended practicum looks like. The inquiry strongly emphasized reflection and dialogue in shaping the research from the participants’ perspectives. A reflective perspective allowed for “the concepts to relate events and cluster high order level of thought expressing constructs and propositions” (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. 10). Therefore, the interview questions were designed to encourage the participants to reflect on incidents that stood out within the extended practica, to consider the underlying factors that may have led to the incident and to consider its implications for cultural responsiveness. This process “forms the building blocks of design” (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. 10). Posing questions designed from the literature review and

the conceptual framework gave the participants specific aspects to reflect and comment upon that may support or build upon further inquiry.

My literature review informed the conceptual framework by uncovering convergent areas within the existing research. As Creswell (2003) wrote that the purpose of a literature review within a dissertation is to “summarize broad themes in the literature” (p. 33). The broad themes or areas that came together from my literature review provided direction and allowed for sense-making in framing my research. This included a deeper understanding of the complexity of extended practica including the impact of socio-economic factors, the changing educational landscape and the importance of key relationships in determining teacher candidates’ success. The conceptual framework organized my study, assisted with the development of an appropriate methodology, informed the development of interview questions for data collection and guided approaches to data analysis.



**Figure 3.1** Conceptual Framework

### **Research Methodology**

The research method I chose to employ for this study was determined by my epistemological assumptions as a researcher and by the nature of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate what a culturally responsive extended practicum looks like from the perspectives of Indigenous teacher candidates' college field supervisors and program administrators. After reviewing various theoretical options, the constructivist approach appeared to be most appropriate. *Constructivism* is defined by Creswell (2007) as follows:

The constructivist worldview is to seek and understand the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed



towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or facts. The goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' view of the situation. (pp. 20–21)

The key idea behind qualitative research is to discover participants' lived experiences and to address the research to obtain that information. The constructivist paradigm was employed to allow for the research to evolve from multiple perspectives and insights. I asked the participants to help me explore and construct features of a culturally responsive environment for Indigenous teacher candidates while delineating current barriers to the achievement of cultural responsiveness. This approach allowed the participants to take an active role in nominating questions of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

The constructivist paradigm allows a trusting relationship to develop between the researcher and the participants. The epistemological assumptions underlying the constructivist paradigm are based on the potential of co-created findings. The constructivist worldview seeks to understand the world in which we live and work and to develop subjective understanding of the meanings we assign to our experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba, 1990). These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than narrow the implications into a few categories or facts.

### **Constructivist Paradigm**

The starting point in determining what my research was, how it was to be practiced, and how it would contribute to new knowledge was formulated in three questions posed by Guba (1990):

(i) Ontological: What is the nature of the “knowable”? Or what is the nature of the “reality”? (ii) Epistemological: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)? (iii) Methodological: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge? (p. 18)

In determining what is real, the ontological assumptions are based on relativism— local and specific co-constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195). The epistemological assumptions underlying the constructivist paradigm is that truth is based on co-creation of understanding: the nature of truth is highly subjective and based on interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195). Constructivism is a post-positivist paradigm that aligned with my beliefs as a researcher. As a researcher, I believe that research is fluid and shaped into new knowledge through perceptions and conversations. This belief directed my reasoning for choosing interviews to help understand participants’ perceptions. Green (1990) in Guba (1990) wrote that:

Knowledge has been equated with theory, where theory comprises a precise testable network of universal, law like relationships among clearly defined variables. Knowledge is interpreted and then integrated into the audience’s way of perceiving, believing, acting, and evaluating everyday life in the context of practice. (p. 212)

My choice to use the constructivist paradigm was influenced by my belief that research is value-bound while positivist approaches assume that the research is value-free. Not recognizing the impact of values on the inquiry is unethical because the knowledge may become contaminated or slanted to suit a purpose. If the values within research remain hidden or go unquestioned, hegemony, power, and dominance that one social group holds over others may prevail. Researchers need to openly discuss their values, so that they do not go unquestioned, and become systemic and integrated into social norms and assumptions. As a researcher, I openly

discussed my values and background to develop trust with the participants. However I also humbly acknowledge my own limitations as a novice researcher.

My research investigated culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates. The research was formulated by my interest in understanding the current state of cultural responsiveness within extended practica and the assumption that the insights of college field supervisors and program administrators would provide appropriate data to increase that understanding. This interest guided me to use the constructivist paradigm from Guba and Lincoln's (2005) framework because the constructivist paradigm gives control to the researcher and the participants, allowing the participants to take an active role in nominating questions of interest. The participants led the research into other areas that were not originally considered. The constructivist paradigm allowed for the research to evolve from multiple perspectives and insights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba, 1990).

### **Qualitative Inquiry: Methodology**

My research aim was to co-construct the findings from multiple participants' perspectives and insights. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were deemed the optimum means of accessing participants' perspectives. St. Denis et al.'s (1998) notion of informal yet direct conversations allowed for the information to be created as the conversations proceeded. Qualitative inquiry as a methodology was my chosen methodology as it aligns with my post-positivist ontology and epistemology: "Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). I asked the participants to help me imagine and construct a culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates. As my study was an inquiry into culturally responsive

extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates, the distinct approach to the research was inquiry through interviews and conversations with college field supervisors and program administrators. My study entailed discovering culturally responsive elements from the participants' stories of their experiences with supervising and managing preservice extended practica.

My study gathered data from conversations within semi-structured interviews. My aim was to converse with the participants and engage with them through their stories and narrations. I asked each participant a set of loosely framed questions. If conversations during the semi-structured interviews expressed differing stories at various times, I posed questions that allowed participants to reflect on how they were feeling in the moment of the conversation. Was there a certain type of action that was needed that day to support the teacher candidate? Can the participant describe the action in which they engaged or observed that contributed to candidates' success? To secure rich data I strove for a natural flow of conversations but with some encouragement to the participants to focus and describe all of their feelings as they considered and shared their insights on culturally responsive factors in extended practica.

### **Qualitative Methodology in Relation to Indigenous Methodology**

Open conversations that allowed for flexibility within each topic brought richness and depth to the qualitative inquiry. As a non-Indigenous researcher and recognizing that my study examined what a culturally responsive extended practica looks like for Indigenous teacher candidates from the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, I ensured that my research was respectful of Indigenous protocol. I felt that a strength of the qualitative inquiry methodology was that it provided a holistic context from which individuals reflected upon and reconstructed the social, personal, and cultural experiences of themselves and others. I felt that

developing a connection with the participants was a respectful method of encouraging them to share their insights.

Indigenous methodologies as described by Kovach (2009) is “the theory and method of conducting research that flows from an Indigenous epistemology” (p. 21). Kovach (2009) explained that “Indigenous methodologies are guided by tribal epistemology and tribal knowledge is not Western knowledge” (p. 30). As a non-Indigenous person, I did not feel comfortable using an Indigenous methodology. However, I did feel very comfortable listening to participants’ stories and engaging in conversations. Weenie (2003) stated “that the use of narratives is particularly relevant to First Nations philosophies and is significant to the development of decolonizing methodologies. In First Nations worldviews we access knowledge through the stories we hear and tell (p. 43). As qualitative research is filtered through the eyes of the researcher, I attempted through conversations to be open to the insights of participants as having great value in helping to understand the dynamics of extended practica. With the Indigenous participant and in conversations with Indigenous researchers, I integrated Indigenous cultural protocol by first offering tobacco for the gift of sharing knowledge. I felt that this approach was respectful of my Indigenous participant, allowing for deep reflection on his part on the elements that may contribute to a culturally responsive extended practicum.

### **Participant Selection**

I used purposeful sampling to select participants who would be able to share in-depth stories as they had the deepest knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon being researched. Palys (2008) expressed that qualitative researchers are interested in why particular people (or groups) feel particular ways, the processes of how the attitudes are constructed, and the role they play in the dynamic processes. Embedded in this idea is that not all research

participants are created equal; one well-placed participant may advance the research far more effectively than a randomly chosen sample (p. 697).

To ensure the best data would be collected from the interviews, I used purposeful sampling to seek out the participants. Patton (2002) described purposeful selection as a strategy for accessing appropriate data that “fit the purpose of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked, and the constraints being faced” (p. 242). I deliberately chose individuals who had extensive knowledge of extended practica processes and expectations through their supervisory role, who had significant experience working with Indigenous teacher candidates, which afforded a unique appreciation of the challenges and opportunities faced by these individuals and who had insights into what culturally responsive extended practica may look like from the breadth of their experience in schools. The participants were selected from a list of 20 extended practica college field supervisors who had experience in supervising Indigenous teacher candidates from the years 2012–2016. The list was compiled by the U of S College of Education’s Field Experience Coordinators and forwarded to my supervisor.

I sent an email and letter asking the 20 participants if they would be interested in participating in the study. Seven of the individuals responded and six of these were chosen, as one potential participant had a medical surgery scheduled during the interview times. In addition, once ethics approval was given by the two divisions, a call for participants was advertised on the SPSD and the GSCSs websites, to which one school administrator responded.

In total seven people agreed to participate in the study. They ranged in age from their early 50s to their late 60s. Only one participant self-identified as Indigenous. All had lengthy careers in education and had direct contact with Indigenous teacher candidates. A brief description of the seven participants follows below. All names and locations are pseudonyms.

Participant 1: George worked as a principal within a large school division in Saskatchewan. He had been with the division for the past 23 years in the role as teacher, vice-principal, and principal. Previously, he had worked for two years as a science teacher at an Indigenous community school. George had predominantly worked in urban high schools with higher Indigenous student populations. He had never supervised Indigenous teacher candidates, but he had a role in the supervision of cooperating teachers and organizing the extended practica in his role as principal.

Participant 2: Kevin had worked in a Saskatchewan school division in a variety of roles as teacher and as assistant director. He was teaching part-time at an Indigenous college. He had been an extended practica college field supervisor for several years directly working with Indigenous teacher candidates.

Participant 3: Sara was a retired principal from a large school division in Saskatchewan. In her 25 years with the division, she had taught and worked with Indigenous students. More recently, she had been an extended practica college field supervisor with a Saskatchewan university supervising Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher candidates.

Participant 4: Jack was completing his doctorate degree at a Canadian university. Jack had supervised Indigenous teacher candidates at two separate universities in Saskatchewan. He was a former chief of his First Nations community and a former teacher. He had completed his education degree at a Saskatchewan university in an Indigenous teacher education program.

Participant 5: John had a variety of roles in the education field. He was a school principal in a large school division in Saskatchewan and had spent two years as an extended practica college field supervisor at one of Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions.

Participant 6: Tom was an extended practica college field supervisor for four cohorts over four years in rural Saskatchewan. Tom supervised approximately 25 to 30 teacher candidates each year from many rural and First Nations communities. Tom had previously worked for many years as a teacher and administrator until his retirement from a large Saskatchewan school division.

Participant 7: Judy had previously taught undergraduate classes at a Saskatchewan college and then as a seconded teacher from 2009–2012. She spent the previous two years as an extended practica college field supervisor where she supervised Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher candidates. Once she retired from her teaching position from her school district, she continued with the role of extended practica college field supervisor for a number of years.

### **Context**

The interviews represented a snapshot in time when an old extended practica placement process was being phased out and the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan was shifting to a new computerized placement process for some of its programs. In addition to the use of placement software, a decision was made that field experiences would become more diverse to include placements in urban, rural and First Nations contexts, and teachers and administrators were no longer allowed to request particular candidates for their schools. The participants had experienced the transition from the old to the new process and spoke of their work during this timeframe from 2012 to 2016. In addition to personnel changes that were driving change within the college placement process and within schools, demographic changes, in particular a dramatic increase in the Indigenous population, were shifting school priorities. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education was also devoting more attention to increasing the



graduation rate of First Nations students and was placing a new focus on the importance of data collection as a mechanism for improvement. When the participants were being interviewed, they noted that the extended practica process and school environments were shifting towards greater cultural responsiveness. Consequently, the data collected during this research is a snapshot of a particular moment in time within a dynamic environment.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Once the participants submitted their consent forms, I set up interview times at their convenience and emailed them a list of the interview questions. The interview process consisted of semi-structured discussions of the 12 questions, with each interview lasting approximately one hour to one and a half hours. I interviewed all seven participants, although my supervisor also attended the interview for Participant 2, to ensure that the interviewing process was sound. All conversations took place in coffee shops throughout Saskatchewan.

To ensure that the participants were comfortable to speak freely, I first asked if I could buy them a coffee/tea and engaged in light conversation explaining who I was, my intentions behind the study, and how their interviews would contribute to the research. I offered a brief overview of the concept of cultural responsiveness and Ermine's conception of ethical space, to ensure that they were familiar with these constructs. I presented myself professionally but not too formally to ensure the process was relaxed but professional. Once I felt we were ready to begin, I explained the process, asking if they were fine with being recorded and explaining that they could stop the interview at any time. If they consented and had no questions, I started the recorder and proceeded to discuss the questions in numerical order. Following the last question, I asked if they would like to add any information before I turned off the recorder. I also assured them that they could contact me with additional information if they wished.

The data collection consisted of having one in-person semi-structured interview with each of the participants and follow up emails. The conversations were approximately one to one and a half hour in length to allow for a depth of engagement to develop. The conversations were digitally recorded, transcribed, and sent to the participants for their review. Follow up emails took place a few weeks later to review the transcripts and to ask if the participants had any other comments to add. Creswell (2007) suggested that qualitative inquiry is for the researcher “who spends hours in the field, collects extensive data, and labours over field issues of trying to gain access, rapport and an insider perspective” (p. 41). For my research, the data collection through semi-structured interviews allowed for rapport to be developed and insights to be gained. The conversations were arranged individually to capture the stories of the participants. This was achieved by spending time with the participants in various locations through Saskatchewan to gather their stories from multiple types of information including conversations. Other artifacts, including journals, correspondence and notes were accepted to obtain the context of each participant’s story regarding their experiences with the Indigenous teacher candidates. However, the participants mainly just shared their stories.

The semi-structured interviews were a combination of loosely structured and unstructured inquiries. Throughout the semi-structured interviews, the seven participants were asked the 12 interview questions as outlined below and in Appendix A. The questions were posed as the conversation flowed and were typically posed in numerical order. The participants received a copy of the interview questions before the interviews. The conversations varied depending on the participant’s position in the teacher candidates’ extended practica, but included the following questions:

1. What role do you play in supporting Indigenous teacher candidate extended practica?

2. Describe the current extended practica process and the process for the placement decisions.
3. How receptive have schools and teacher candidates been to recent innovations in the placement system?
4. To date, can you describe how the process has been beneficial to the Indigenous teacher candidates and schools?
5. Describe a story about your experience with extended practica.
6. Holistic support may encompass emotional, spiritual, psychological, family, and financial support. How have these supports been available for the teacher candidates?
7. Describe the types of culturally responsive practices within extended practica that support Indigenous teacher candidates' success. These practices could include school selection; choice and preparation of the co-op teacher; preparation of the co-op placement; the selection of College supervisors, etc.
8. What is your understanding of *ethical space* in education and do you feel it is possible for ethical space to be developed within the extended practica placement?
9. Describe how it has been possible for the Indigenous teacher candidate to share their culture within the school environment or classroom.
10. What are some of the challenges or barriers faced by Indigenous teacher candidates?
11. What unique strengths do Indigenous teacher candidates bring to their extended practica?
12. In your opinion, what would a perfect culturally responsive extended practica look like?

The conversations were loosely structured by informally posing or bringing in the questions as the conversation developed. This allowed me to discover perceived elements of cultural responsiveness within the extended practica process. I developed a trusting relationship

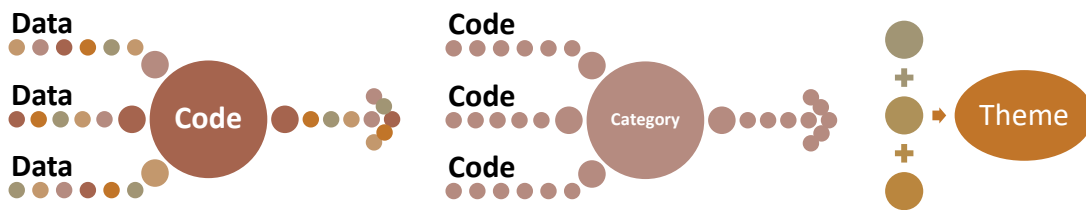
with the participants for them to feel safe sharing their story. Confidentiality was maintained to ensure that their identity was not disclosed.

### **Analysis and Collation**

The first step after the data collection was to read through the conversation transcripts and to organize the files for data into multiple units. I began the coding process by first reviewing the audio recordings to ensure the interviews were clear. After each interview, I reviewed the recording and then sent it to the U of S Social Science Research Laboratories for transcribing. Participants' identities were protected by only referring to the participants by numbers. The turnaround time for the transcripts was approximately one week. Upon receipt of each transcript, I forwarded it to the appropriate participant to ensure they were satisfied with what was transcribed. In two interviews, there were minor changes which included only date and number of cohort changes. All the participants granted approval to proceed with data analysis.

The first read-through required making notes in the margins as I did some initial coding. This process is considered analytical coding and led to emergence of themes. I coded the data manually, discovered themes through patterns, and broke those themes into sub-themes guided by the conceptual framework and the interview questions. Using an inductive process, I mined the data for themes, looking for the frequency of similar patterns of comments, feelings, experiences or insights. As Creswell (2007) noted, "The inductive process is from the ground up, allowing for the research questions to be modified, to accompany new questions" (p. 19). I started with reviewing general themes that developed from the interview questions then added in sub-themes as the transcripts, journals, and other information were reviewed. The qualitative inquiry as a methodology was appropriate for my research as I wanted to ensure the participants' voices were heard to describe culturally responsive experiences within teacher candidates'

extended practica. The data from the transcripts were organized by the 12 questions. Each participant gave a response to the 12 interview questions. The data were condensed from each participant’s response to each question. The next step was to take each question and organize the data. The questions were organized by grouping the responses that were repeated a few times or had similar responses until a pattern emerged. This process is indicated in Figure 3.2



**Figure 3.2** Data Collection and Coding

The frequency of a response to the question formed a code. Saldaña (2009) defined a code as “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). For example, if two or more participants mentioned financial support or assistance, this would be considered a code. After the initial coding process was complete, the data were encoded by looking for patterns. Hatch as cited in Saldaña (2009) offered “that you think of patterns not just as stable regularities but as varying forms. A pattern can be characterized by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence and causation” (p. 155). As the data were collected from the set of questions that were posed to each participant, patterns emerged. The patterns reflected frequent or similar comments on such issues as financial support or moral support. These patterns were then categorized under the broad category of supports. I analyzed and coded the data for three cycles, looking for links and similarities.

The initial cycle, which had the data organized according to participants 1–7 loosely resulted in ten broad themes. As Coffey and Atkinson proposed (as cited in Saldaña, 2009) “coding is usually a mixture of data [summation] and data complication...breaking the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data” (p. 8). After the second cycle, I went through the data and codes and recoded the categories to collapse the ten themes into seven themes. Saldaña (2009) stated that “when the major categories are compared with each other and consolidated in various ways, you begin to transcend the reality of your data and progress toward the thematic, conceptual, and theoretical” (p. 9). The codes formed into the patterns that created the categories, which developed into the seven themes through their connections. After further examination within the third cycle of coding, looking for categories and connections, five main themes emerged from the interviews. There were ample data from the interviews; however, due to the abundance of comments, only the strongest data were used to support the themes as presented in Chapter Four. The data were summarized in my words, but I quoted the participants within the summaries.

### **Storage, Organization, and Management of Data**

The data from this study were derived from the interviews, which were recorded and transcribed into Word documents. Each of the participants’ files were recorded in Word and included an audio recording that was password protected. Password-protected copies of the participants’ files were stored on my computer’s hard drive and back-up drive. The interview recordings and paper copies of files were locked in a filing cabinet in my supervisor’s office at the U of S as per U of S ethics requirements.

## **Trustworthiness of the Study**

Data trustworthiness has four key components: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, I used thick description, including direct quotes, to fully explain the data analysis and ensure its accuracy. Thick descriptions as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are “essential for the judgements of transferability. It is the responsibility of the inquirer to provide a sufficient base to permit a person contemplating application in another received setting to make the needed comparisons of similarity” (p. 360). Ensuring this transferability brought credibility to the research. As well, member checking was used to ensure credibility. This was achieved by sending to the participants their interview transcripts to read in order to confirm their accuracy.

To ensure trustworthiness of the data I engaged in self-reflexivity to ensure biases did not enter in the analysis. This was achieved by developing self-awareness of my thoughts as I analyzed the data. The self-reflexivity as well allowed for credibility and dependability of the data through a conscious effort to critique any biases that I may hold and ensured they were acknowledged. The process of self-reflexivity was a learning journey in which the reflexivity became part of the research. In addition, my critical self-reflection throughout the data analysis allowed me to watch for any systemic biases and ensure they were acknowledged with the analysis.

To ensure confirmability, I kept an audit trail that included the following: the raw data; data analysis including the notes, memos of how the data were laid out, and the process notes to keep track of procedures. In addition, I kept two sets of research journals: one for bracketing and one for field notes and the transcript confirmation letters approved by the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed that it is important to be consistent with the data collection and

analysis and to have taken measures to avoid instrumental decay (p. 299). By confirming the data and allowing for the knowledge to emerge from the research in a value-oriented, truthful framework, the data contributed to and expanded the research.

### **Validation**

Angen (2000) suggested that “the term validation rather than validity is used deliberately to emphasize the way in which a judgment of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research is a continuous process occurring within a community of researchers” (p. 387). Angen (2000) discussed two types of validation: ethical and substantive (p. 388). Ethical validation means that the researcher needs to question their moral values and political assumptions. Substantive validation means understanding the researcher’s own understanding of the topic through self-reflecting. This was achieved through constantly questioning my assumptions or any judgements that may have occurred within the interviewing and writing process. My research assumed the validity of the results rests on the accuracy of the data collection and the design of the questions. Collecting from multiple sources and bracketing aided in validating the data.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Interviewing participants and ensuring their confidentiality and well-being involved ethical considerations. Because this research involved human participation, the research required a formal application, review, and approval by the U of S Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The application required that attention be given to safeguarding participants from harmful results and to participants’ informed consent, voluntary participation, and privacy protection. My research process ensured that all of these concerns were met.



Participants were informed of the study's nature, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and data storage. The participants were given the transcripts to read and were advised that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Ongoing ethical concerns throughout the process included ensuring that the participants remained anonymous and protected from any repercussion from their interviews. I made every effort to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and did not include the names of schools, colleagues, administrators, or participants in this study. Because of this it was impossible to identify which participant disclosed particular statements or data.

There was no power differential between myself and the participants. The participants were made aware that they could stop an interview at any time in order to safeguard them from potential harmful results. They were also assured they could withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. Given the potential sensitivity of the data, all data were stored securely and destroyed five years after the research study concluded.

Copies of the consent and participation forms are found in Appendices B to D.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 described the conceptual framework and the research methodology proposed for the study. The constructivist paradigm and qualitative inquiry methodology were presented to explain why they were chosen and relevant for the research. The participant selection and data collection methods, including the interview questions, were outlined, with an overview of the anticipated outcomes. The data from the participants' interview questions were reorganized to constitute codes. The codes formed into the patterns that created the categories, which developed into the themes through their connections. Chapter 3 concluded with a description of strategies to ensure trustworthiness and a discussion of ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PARTICIPANTS, CONVERSATIONS, AND THEMES

*I wish we had more Indigenous teachers*

—Judy

Chapter Four is comprised of a presentation of the data and a delineation of the broad themes that emerged in response to the interview questions and other data created in the manner described in the preceding chapter. Wherever possible the themes are illustrated or supported by direct quotes from the participants. Given the abundance of data provided by participants, only the most salient quotes were included here.

#### **Themes**

Saldaña (2009) defined a theme as “an outcome of coding, categorization and analytic reflection” (p. 13). After transcription, the data was analyzed using the inductive process. I first looked for commonalities that emerged from the interview questions, in particular focussing on key statements within the participant’s reflections of their experiences with supervising Indigenous teacher candidates. The reoccurring words and statements were reorganized to constitute codes. The codes formed into the patterns that created the categories which, framed by insights from the literature review, developed into the themes through their connections. The next step involved identifying sub-themes as the transcripts were continuously reviewed looking for key words, patterns or phrases. The data was coded for three cycles, looking for links and similarities. The sub-themes were collapsed into major themes. Five major themes emerged from the analysis and coding: challenges; changing the structure of the extended practica for increased success and innovation; support; culturally responsive practices and relationship building. These five themes are presented visually in Figure 4.1 and are elaborated on in the following pages.



Figure 4.1 Themes

Figure 4.1 illustrates the connection between the five themes necessary to achieve culturally responsive extended practica. Recognizing that some Indigenous teacher candidates may be facing more obstacles than others, offering increased support may assist in creating a successful extended practica experience. This may be gained through relationship-building and the opportunity to share culture. Allowing for innovation within the extended practica creates conditions for sharing new ways of instruction, culture and curriculum. The five themes are necessary to create the conditions in achieving a culturally responsive extended practica.

### **Challenges**

Participants in this research had all worked with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica and so had an extensive knowledge base from which

to comment on aspects of that experience that were common to all teacher candidates and aspects that were unique to those from Indigenous backgrounds. Throughout the interviews, the participants suggested that there was typically a diversity of experiences among all cohorts of teacher candidates and that it was not unusual for virtually all teacher candidates to encounter some difficulties in successfully negotiating the extended practica. However, while acknowledging heterogeneity among Indigenous teacher candidates, all participants felt that in general Indigenous teacher candidates faced additional and significantly greater challenges than their non-Indigenous counterparts within extended practica.

Participants suggested that many Indigenous teacher candidates experienced dissonance in adjusting to provincial schools because the culture and climate of many of those schools was at best not welcoming and at worst alien to Indigenous peoples. George commented that, “Some schools are pretty suburbia, you know, white, if you want to call it that. Walking into a school like that when you don’t really see very many First Nation people or First Nation teachers, for sure there’s a sense of isolation that comes with that”. He went on to note that racism, though veiled or unacknowledged, was a part of the dynamic that made this adjustment more difficult:

I would say that many teachers that I’ve observed they would say they’re not racist and they would say that they have very open values and yet their action doesn’t match what they say they believe. If this program had been established for two or three years, some of my candidates last year would have gone through this process and certainly there was some mismatch there.

Racism also manifested itself in deficit assumptions and stereotypes among teachers and administrators in provincial schools regarding the capacity of Indigenous teacher candidates to

meet expectations. Kevin felt that a major challenge for the Indigenous teacher candidates was in dealing with stereotypes. He stated:

I think anybody that's in a visible minority grouping faces sort of a complexity relating to the stereotype that is from a variety of demographics. Not just am I Indigenous or not? Am I young Indigenous or not? Or old Indigenous or not? Am I male Indigenous or female Indigenous? So there's an added set of complexities there, where maybe the intensity is a little greater. They need to overcome assumptions.

John reflected on an Indigenous teacher candidate's experience where the cooperating teacher and school administrator made assumptions early on, judged her negatively and let her fail by piling on too much work. He stressed that he didn't think that people were trying to help her, but rather had judged her and ensured that their deficit views prevailed: "But this teacher candidate was trying, was working really hard, and I think instead of helping her people just sort of you know judged her and were pretty negative about having her teach in their school."

Another Indigenous candidate was subjected to the same behaviour from school administrators, but the cooperating teacher was Indigenous and provided appropriate support to the teacher candidate, so she was successful in her extended practica. John felt that, in his view, the two candidates were equally gifted but one of them could not survive the pressure coming from the classroom teacher and the principal, clearly indicating systemic racism within the school environment.

George mentioned that an example of the stereotypes Indigenous teacher candidates may face is the school asking them to teach Native or Indigenous Studies courses rather than other academic subjects. He suggested that while this often may stem from positive motivations it also conveys a sense of tokenism or pigeonholing Indigenous teacher candidates as having only one

culture-specific area of expertise. George also noted that differences in the teaching styles or approaches of Indigenous teacher candidates, with many of them preferring quieter approaches which came across as lacking confidence or being intimidated:

So they needed to, instead of being looked at negatively, like you know they're not cutting it, maybe it's can they be a good teacher and what do they need to do to develop their craft? Just because they're maybe a little bit more intimidated or quiet or shy or you know, it's just who they are.

Sara noted that Indigenous teacher candidates from non-urban areas may be unfamiliar with how urban high schools work, impacting their self-confidence:

Sometimes and this again is seen through conversation with those teachers, the confidence level. Those who came from a non-urban background themselves often feel somewhat hesitant at the beginning of the extended practicum about knowing about how an urban high school works.

Tom commented that Indigenous teacher candidates have a tougher journey when placed in a predominantly Eurocentric school because “systemic but veiled racism” was often present. Judy shared the story of one of her teacher candidates who struggled because she had a teacher supervisor who did not understand Indigenous culture or have any appreciation for integrating it into curriculum. Tom stressed that while acceptable standards had to be maintained, school and college personnel also had to recognize that not all teacher candidates came from similar backgrounds:

I think it has to have as its basis acceptable pedagogical rigor. You know like I think it has to have that. It can't abandon that. And then I think it has to be open to all of these legitimate journeys, right? All of those acceptable and yet non-typical journeys that

teacher candidates follow to get there. That at least has to be a component. It has to somehow recognize that individual's cultural profile sometimes presents barriers that have to be investigated, like you said. Financial, familiar, pedagogical. Like those barriers, we can't just be blind to them. We have to somehow try to work within that context so that we respect all of those things.

George equated the experience as having to learn to walk in two worlds and that some Indigenous teacher candidates may be better at doing that than others. In this sense George suggested that the performance of Indigenous teacher candidates in extended practica may have more to do with their capacity to adjust to an alien environment, than their innate abilities as educators or their knowledge of curriculum.

A number of participants suggested that the way in which extended practica were organized sometimes posed challenges for Indigenous teacher candidates. George stated that:

In my first year [2011] with the candidate program, I didn't think it was very good at all. It wasn't well organized, in my opinion. The candidates were left in our building with very little guidance with what they were required to do. There was no concern or effort to meet with administration or school staff around what the expectations were. The teachers that were taking the candidates didn't know really what the expectations were.

Many participants observed that non-academic barriers, including financial hardship and childcare support, affected Indigenous teacher candidates' ability to succeed far more than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Judy explained:

Childcare, transportation are two big issues. For students who are coming from rural areas, or the reserve, to the city and are adjusting to the city life. I suppose, for other [teacher candidates], there can be the same adjustments, but maybe not quite as big of an

issue for them...Academically they were strong and had a lot of advantages that minority people don't have....they don't have to overcome those kinds of barriers or challenges.

All of the participants noted that the capacity of the vast majority of Indigenous teacher candidates to perform at their best within extended practica was constrained by the acute financial challenges they faced. As Sara explained, one of her teacher candidates was in financial crisis—"he didn't even have money for a bus pass"—and needed time away from the extended practica to go to the bank during working hours. She reflected further, "I think of one student who was coming late all the time, and it turned out to be a financial situation. Unless that person will share with you what the difficulty is and I know something is going on, but if you're not a trusting enough person to them yet because you don't have that relationship, there's little that you can do."

Sara as well mentioned that:

There's little that the cooperating teacher could do for financial support, other than refer them on. The one student that I mentioned, that had a financial issue, it was finally at the point that the student loan hadn't come through, and so they had been an independent adult living on their own, so it wasn't like, "I can go home and live with my parents."

There wasn't money to pay the rent.

Tom shared the story of how a teacher candidate was ill-prepared for the different standards in his extended practicum in a provincial school, because the overall approach was different from what he was used to in a First Nations school. This situation may be due to First Nations schools' lack of connection with the STF. Tom explained to the teacher candidate that the standards are necessary to maintain as the college field supervisor is required to sign off that the teacher candidate is qualified. A clearer process to educate the Indigenous teacher candidates who are



not familiar with the provincial school curriculum may better prepare them for their extended practica in provincial schools. Other participants also stressed the need for more intentional preparation of Indigenous teacher candidates in the area of assessment, with lesson planning and with understanding the teacher supervisor's expectations. Ensuring that conversations with the teacher supervisor occurred before the extended practicum began would help to better prepare Indigenous teacher candidates and enhance prospects of success.

Stories of success were also shared by participants in reflecting on their experiences working with Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica. Success factors identified included the individual attributes and strengths of the teacher candidates, varied types of support that they received from family and university programs, their fit with the cooperating teacher, a welcoming school environment and their capacity to adjust to an unfamiliar environment. Sara reflected on a strong student candidate as follows:

Was a very strong individual, a very strong teacher, and a very aware person. She seemed to come with a skillset, she was confident, she was knowledgeable from the very first observation that I did with her in her classroom. She integrated First Nations ways of knowing in with technology.

Sara explained that other teacher candidates and teachers within the school asked for her teacher candidate's advice regarding where she got her resources and her website information; and she was regularly invited to share her expertise beyond her own classroom.

Success also came from the support that the students received from their family, with assistance in childcare being especially critical. Teacher candidates who were able to enrol in their extended practicum in their home community were more likely to have this additional support. Students who had children often required extra support in the event of child illness.

They were required to communicate that this additional time may be needed to their teachers and supervisors. Participants agreed that there was virtually no capacity for teacher candidates to take time off from their extended practica to deal with personal appointments or emergency family situations.

Tom shared the story of a successful extended practicum due to the supports the candidate received:

From the very start she had a very successful extended practicum. And from the very start it was clear to me, from what she shared, that being able to take her extended practicum back in her home community where her mother could help support her childcare was vitally important. Where the cooperating teacher, I don't think it was a relative but it would have been someone that she knew—you could just tell that she was having a more successful experience because of that.

John commented that, with respect to Indigenous teacher candidates, “what doesn't kill you makes you stronger”, and he went on to state: “so if we see a successful Indigenous [teacher candidate] and a successful non-Indigenous [teacher candidate], we could generalize that the Indigenous [teacher candidate] had demonstrated more resilience to achieve the same work given some of the obstacles that they faced.” He felt that the school would expect the same outcomes from Indigenous teacher candidates but with massively different inputs. The severity of the obstacles and the ability to deal with these was much more pronounced among Indigenous teacher candidates. Their unique strength would be their resilience to achieve the same outcomes while facing far greater challenges in many cases.

In summary, participants described a wide variety of experiences working with the Indigenous teacher candidates, with the majority being successful, while a minority were

unsuccessful in the practica. Participants agreed however, that Indigenous teacher candidates experienced more challenges than their non-Indigenous counterparts and were required to demonstrate greater resilience in order to be successful. Candidates who were very well prepared, who were confident, who had positive relationships with their supervising teachers and school principal, and who had adequate personal support, especially with childcare, were more likely to be successful. These conditions seemed more likely to be met when the extended practicum placement occurred in the teacher candidate's home community. In provincial schools Indigenous teacher candidates were more likely to be successful in the extended practica when their cooperating teacher was personally invested in their success, when the school's leaders went out of their way to acknowledge and communicate with them, and when the wider school environment was invitational and affirming to Indigenous cultures and peoples. However, when the teacher candidates were less well prepared, when positive relationships were not present, and when Indigenous teacher candidates faced stereotyping and racism and the absence of personal supports and challenges, success was more elusive.

Participants agreed that many of the challenges faced by Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica stemmed from the history of colonization in Saskatchewan and the resulting intergenerational disparities and widespread racism which continued to create an uneven playing field. In reflecting on this in the interviews participants acknowledged that the achievements of Indigenous teacher candidates were even more remarkable and worthy of celebration. In applying the concept of ethical space to extended practica they suggested that such disparities and challenges to success for Indigenous learners would continue until colonization and its continued legacies were honestly acknowledged and adequately addressed both within schools and within the college.

## **Changing the Structure of the Extended Practica for Increase Success and Innovation**

While data for the study were being collected, it was obvious that significant changes were occurring within the extended practica structure and that the change was ongoing. Importantly, since all participants had occupied those roles for some time, they were able to speak with authority in the interviews about aspects of extended practica in the past, their experiences of current innovations and their sense of the future direction planned for the College's teacher education program. The most pressing immediate innovations for many participants were the recent introduction of a computerized placement system which sought to find the best pairing of cooperating teachers with teacher candidates based on a system of matching values; and discontinuing the practice of allowing schools or individual teachers to select a specific teacher candidate to be placed in their school. This last change was designed to interrupt or discourage potential for nepotism or other forms of privilege which would subsequently give certain teacher candidates an unfair advantage when it came to hiring. As noted in Chapter One, the computer matching system was not used within the TEP program or its extended practica; but participants made reference to its potential applicability to ITEP teacher candidates. Other comments were based on the decision by the College to not allow local schools to request individual teacher candidates, as it was felt that this afforded unfair advantages when it came to subsequent employment opportunities.

All participants spoke of seeing and being involved in very dramatic changes within the extended practica, as the College sought innovations in their entire approach to teacher education to align with Ministerial and federal guidelines. Participants felt that the Ministry's Strategic Sector Plan, particularly its commitment to increasing graduation rates for FNM students, was a major influence on College initiatives as was the University of Saskatchewan's commitment to

respond to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some participants described the changes as a “generational shift” in terms of personnel involved in all aspects of the teacher education program. Kevin stated:

There was a clear shift even in the composition in the folks that were [teacher candidate] supervisors .....and that there was almost a sense that the college itself without saying so we’re not going to reemploy these folks. My impression was it was because maybe a kind of an old model they were trying to break out of, right? Including the practice of how the field experience was being done. And to me it didn’t matter whether we were talking about Indigenous [teacher candidates] or non-Indigenous [teacher candidates”

Sara reflected on how the extended practica process had evolved positively over the past decade, with greater attention to the needs and dynamics of individual school divisions:

In terms of the process for placement, the other layer that I really feel strongly has been successful in that each school division is choosing their own facilitators, at the moment. The school divisions recommend the names of the facilitators they would like, and they’re all people who are either on leave, seconded or retired from that school division, so they have intimate knowledge of how the school division works, the personnel, the people, the policies. That’s been very helpful for me, personally, because I have not had to work in a school division that I am not familiar with. I find that I can use my experiences to assist the students I’m working with in a better capacity, and that’s been a really strong aspect.

Participants expressed mixed feelings about specific recent changes, with George commenting negatively on the decision to not allow schools or divisions to request specific teacher candidates:

I also heard that the university is now in the [teacher candidate] placement, not allowing us to request teacher candidates anymore. And that has been changed this year due to what I understand to be concern amongst teacher candidates that those that are placed in Saskatoon public school had an unfair advantage to being in employment. So now we are not able to request candidates and the general feeling, I think, I would say around our principals' groups would be that that's a disadvantage. We liked being able to have our teachers request candidates because we found that quite a great success—in fact, I can name a number of teachers that have been candidates and then have come to do their extended practica at our building.

Tom, however, welcomed this change:

Teachers won't be able to request due to the fact that there's an unfair advantage, is one reason that I've heard. Which does make a certain amount of sense to me too, that the candidate that gets placed in our division does get a bit of an edge up when it comes to getting to have an extended practica and then applying for a job within the division.

The development of the computerized system to ensure a better fit between teacher candidates and cooperating teachers was also generally welcomed by participants, based on their insight that the greater the alignment between these two individuals, the more likely the experience would be positive for all. However, some participants questioned the efficacy of the new system to deal with the systemic racism that was still prevalent within schools. John, for example, reported that he heard teachers and a principal openly talk about not wanting Indigenous candidates; and he wondered how the new system screened for this, as teachers would not openly admit to being racist: "I'm not sure about the new system to see ... if teachers

somehow indicated they don't want that [an Indigenous teacher candidate]. I would imagine they wouldn't, because they would sound racist".

Other participants also felt that the fit between Indigenous students and cooperating teachers was not always ideal, including in placements within First Nation schools. It was noted that high rates of teacher turnover occasionally posed challenges for Indigenous teacher candidates to develop prior relationships with cooperating teachers or plan lessons in advance of their extended practicum beginning. More preplanning or consultation ahead of the extended practica could help to eliminate random placement. Comments that some cooperating teachers did not know the teacher candidates personally or care to know about them personally may indicate that some supports are lacking and the school system needs to change.

While agreeing on the importance of a good fit between the teacher candidates and cooperating teachers, other participants felt that too close an alignment prevented opportunities for growth. Judy expressed this concern in the following terms:

It was important to ensure that while, yes, computer matching [teacher candidates] and teacher supervisors through the values could be really good. It can also work the other way around so that the result is not much growth – meaning that if you have a combination of two people who are apt to think outside of the box or who are not risk-takers and are traditional in their views of education there may not be much growth.

In general participants expressed approval of recent changes within the college's teacher education program and extended practica, and most agreed that the new directions would improve the efficacy of extended practica and be beneficial for Indigenous teacher candidates. However participants also expressed a number of criticisms of the change process and identified resulting challenges. The most common criticism was the observation that, while extended

practica constitute a collaboration between the college and school divisions, recent changes were initiated primarily by the college, often with inadequate consultation or communication with school divisions and individual schools. For example, George felt that, as a principal, he was required to be both the teacher candidate's and the cooperating teacher's supervisor and to monitor progress within the extended practicum. However, he felt that he had little to no involvement in placement decisions and received very little information or support from the college regarding his role. He felt that principals being involved from the beginning with the college placements would be beneficial. Other participants also thought that the process could be more collaborative, with a better orientation for the school and cooperating teacher where the teacher candidates were placed and clearer communication processes established between schools and the college. The need for better preparation and support for college supervisors was also noted, and one participant confided that he was chosen as a college field supervisor at the last moment, with no opportunity for advance preparation. Tom had heard that some teachers would not take a teacher candidate if they didn't know them because they felt it was a lot of work, and he posed the question "Is there a better process to match the [teacher candidate] and the teacher so that a working relationship between the [teacher candidate] and the cooperating teacher begins prior to the extended practica?"

When questioned about their role as college supervisors, participants expressed a range of opinions about role clarification. Some participants were confident that they were chosen based on their experience in and knowledge of schools and their ability to provide necessary support both to teacher candidates and cooperating teachers to ensure the best experience for all. Kevin described his role as follows:



At that time, I had pretty good familiarity because of work that I was doing with the federation. There was actually a number of individual school principals that I would have known directly. It was basically to play that role of making sure the placements were working well for both the [teacher candidate], co-op teacher, and the staff of the school.

Sara felt that she was hired as a college supervisor primarily because of her expertise in First Nations education:

In particular, to First Nations issues, I'm familiar with the people in the First Nations, Inuit and Metis unit at the school division. I can direct my students to resources, so some of them had questions: 'I don't know how I should be integrating First Nations content.' I was able to give them specific names and how they work, so that resulted in some of them having traditional knowledge keepers come out to their classrooms and support them in their work. Those kinds of things, I think, have been particularly helpful for making sure that the best resources are able to be accessed.

However other participants expressed less certainty regarding aspects of the process. The repeated use of phrases —“as I understand it”, ‘from what I understand’ and ‘I also heard’ — indicates some level of ongoing confusion among participants regarding their role and expectations and a lack of clarity around how extended practica were organized for various streams within the college's teacher education programs. There was a significant lack of clarity around how college supervisors were matched with Indigenous teacher candidates. A few of the participants commented that they were unsure if they had a TEP student, as it wasn't communicated clearly. John commented, “I was told that TEP students often had their own facilitators. But from time to time, through circumstances that I wouldn't fully be aware of, I could get a TEP student.” Tom indicated a similar lack of clarity around how Indigenous

community-based programming worked. He stated, “From time to time I would find that a cohort group of students who had... gone through and taken their schooling, their education degree through a community-based program. I don’t know exactly how this works.”

The overall feeling among participants was that a necessary generational shift was underway within the College’s teacher education program, embracing the potential of digital technology to improve placement processes. An increased attention to cultural responsiveness was also noted and welcomed. However, while participants identified the need for change and welcomed that change was happening, they also suggested that more needed to be done. The need for more robust logistical planning and training and a more collaborative approach between the college and schools, supported by ongoing reflection and evaluation, was highlighted. Participants also identified the need for greater flexibility on the part of college staff. As Kevin wryly noted “it was an interesting point that was made about the college not being as accommodating as they require the [teacher candidates and the schools] to be.”

## **Support**

A notable change welcomed by participants was in a shift in the role of college supervisors away from an evaluative stance towards a guiding/liaison/mentorship role, with a focus on providing support both for teacher candidates and cooperating teachers to ensure that both parties derived maximum benefit from extended practica. Participants defined *support* in a variety of ways, including pedagogical, personal, environmental, psycho-social and just “having the student’s back”. Most participants felt that Indigenous teacher candidates needed more supports because of the myriad challenges identified previously, and especially because many were required to operate in a different world than they were used to. Participants’ responses to the question of holistic support varied. Some felt that adequate supports were in place, while

others believed that significant additional levels of support were needed to maximize Indigenous teacher candidates' prospects of success. George commented that; "No, I don't think the supports were there. I think most people in their school if they were asked, particularly administrators, might say yes they are there if they need them. But I don't think they are overt in any way".

Kevin felt that the teacher candidate supervisors provided organic support in that the support was provided and evolved as it was needed. He stressed that it was important to understand the jurisdictional complexity of the extended practica, where teacher candidates had multiple needs and multiple players were potentially involved in addressing those needs. For example, Kevin noted that emotional support was provided by having two Indigenous teacher candidates at the school, but the school provided no culturally responsive practices to support them. He expressed that:

There was more of a practice from the cooperating teachers themselves and from the school principals who got it. I think the ones that got it, cooperating teachers and administration in those particular buildings were very positive in just the way they model how they dealt with the [teacher candidates]. That was a really good signal to the [teacher candidates] themselves and certainly the rest of the staff. And anybody else was kind of watching what was going on.

Kevin commented that school administrators needed to be role models in order to encourage culturally responsive practices and support for Indigenous teacher candidates. Supports were available to the candidates by their supervisors; however, he suggested that because they were adults, it was up to the candidates to provide those supports for themselves or to know how to ask for the supports.

A number of participants noted that it was very difficult for the students to receive any supports from university supervisors because the teacher candidates were teaching during the days. Sara stated,

It was a challenge to find the support during the daytime and a bigger challenge for some of the students who don't have anyone else from their home community here, perhaps going to university or whatever—they don't have those supports in place. Yet, having said that, those students—almost all of them—made it through, so the pure grit in the end and that's a credit to them for surviving in difficult circumstances, whatever the particular situation.

She also found that students who had a healthy relationship with their cooperating teacher were able to get support from them. The participants commented that the supports were there but some teacher candidates, especially those who took the program off-campus, had a more difficult time to access the support. For example, Tom mentioned that teacher candidates had difficulty accessing the on-campus supports when their education programs were not physically at the main campus.

Judy commented that, because teachers and administrators seemed to be involved with the teacher candidates, the support was there. She stressed that “it seems that in a situation where the administrator is more involved in what's happening in classrooms as a rule, there will naturally be more of a connection with the [teacher candidates].” Tom felt that the support had to be navigated as it was informally available but was not discussed until needed. He explained that the support system was not clearly identified to the student teacher candidates and that as a supervisor he wasn't sure himself of the process. John explained that he thought that most

teachers valued the added knowledge that the teacher candidates brought to the classroom and ensured that they were supported.

The participants described an array of supports within the differing school systems that would help teacher candidates succeed. Existing supports included the college field supervisors, cooperating teachers, other teacher candidates, and in some instances the school administration. Sara described how time constraints were critical. Some of the principals would make time to visit classrooms whereas other principals would not. When the principal took the time to visit and provided support, the teacher candidate typically experienced greater success. She noted other supports, including giving her student candidate feedback about the kinds of things that she was doing in the classroom. Sara also felt that support was given through a trusting relationship with the college field supervisor, an extended practica in a school context that had a high population of Indigenous students and through other teacher candidates with whom they can communicate their challenges. George described a situation when no support was provided to the teacher candidate:

I think there are subtle differences that they should be aware of in supporting students.

And this candidate did happen to have I believe family barriers. I think a child. But this teacher that took on this [teacher candidate] had no empathy towards that or even caring of the need that student had.

Participants also noted that some teacher candidates struggled and were not adequately supported if their cooperating teacher did not understand or value Indigenous culture. The culture and environment of the school was particularly significant. Tom described that as a college field supervisor he had to provide both personal and pedagogical support to the students:

With one [teacher candidate], the [teacher candidate] without prior notice, he just didn't show up for the afternoon. And didn't even really explain it to the cooperating teacher until afterwards. We had to kind of navigate that. Like, I don't recall personally doing anything to provide support. But I do recall providing some personal counselling to kind of say you know you've got to find a way to figure this out. Who else might be able to provide support?

The comments from the participants indicated that some of the Indigenous students needed different supports because they faced challenges related to poverty, low confidence, an inappropriate placement, and a lack of family support.

All the participants felt that ensuring Indigenous teacher candidates were placed with others in the same school was an effective means of generating support. George suggested that additional culturally responsive practices in the extended practica would help to support the teacher candidates. He felt that the College should take more time at their end to work with the cooperating teachers so they may have a better understanding of the Indigenous teacher candidate. As well, he suggested the teachers should look at their own core beliefs and values when working with First Nations candidates. He also felt that more time should be spent with the teacher candidate on the school's end and the College's end. He commented, "I think supports in all those aspects would probably help. Particularly from the college's end. I think the college should spend more time with the teachers that have taken on these [teacher candidates] so that they have a better understanding." George's comments stress the importance of allowing space for reflection and knowledge exchange within extended practica.

Kevin expressed that moving culturally responsive extended practica forward depended on whether it was a ministry or school division mandate: "I think the college and the ministry

and school divisions, there's always a difficulty when things come across as this is going to be a mandate." He also explained that classrooms and schools needed to be inviting so people were happy to see Indigenous teacher candidates:

In terms of culturally responsive practices, I think the ones that got it, co-op teachers and administration in those particular buildings that understand why they would go to these kinds of lines, were very positive in just the way they model how they dealt with the [teacher candidates], was a really good signal to the [teacher candidates] themselves, and, certainly the rest of the staff.

Participants also highlighted the importance of principals being role models and the leaders of the change: "It was very important for principals to move culturally responsive and supportive extended practica for all teacher candidates, including the Indigenous teacher candidates." John also identified the need for the principal to be a role model: "How can we have a school division that knowingly has teachers and principals saying, 'I don't want students from this program?' Hopefully we don't have that anymore."

In summary, all the participants felt that Indigenous teacher candidates required greater support than their non-Indigenous counterparts because of the unique challenges stemming from circumstances of colonization. In applying the concept of ethical space to supports within the extended practica participants suggested that the creation of this space required a deeper understanding and empathy on the part of the college and schools of the unique circumstances, such as poverty and cultural dissonance, that constituted obstacles to Indigenous teacher candidates' success and a willingness to do what was necessary to ensure those obstacles were addressed. Participants expressed varying views on whether current levels of support were adequate, with a majority feeling that support of an informal nature was more readily available

than formal supports. They stressed that there was more support available when the administrator was actively involved, when there was knowledge about Indigenous culture in the school setting, and when there were no unrealistic expectations or judgements placed on the teacher candidates.

Participants felt that adequate support required additional flexibility, including time off to deal with personal or family appointments. As the teacher candidates teach during the day, it is difficult to access necessary supports at that time. Participants noted that better communication was required to ensure that Indigenous teacher candidates were aware of the available supports in the event that they were reluctant to ask for help. The bigger challenge for some Indigenous teacher candidates was that teaching away from their home community deprived them of their family support group, as many have families and children who require childcare. Extended practica organizers need to recognize the jurisdictional complexity and the need for support to be fluid or organic. Participants agreed that applying the concept of ethical space to extended practica would enhance appreciation for Indigenous teacher candidates' knowledge-creation capacities and would also encourage the kind of self-reflection necessary to animate the kinds and levels of support necessary to maximize their prospects for success.

### **Cultural Responsiveness**

References to the term *cultural responsiveness* was prevalent in all of the interviews, either overtly or implied within the responses. Participants described cultural responsiveness as the capacity among educators to see the value and beauty of diverse cultures and a willingness to mobilize cultural assets to support learning and equitable outcomes for diverse students.

Participants pointed specifically to initiatives such as teaching treaties that the Ministry and school divisions are presently undertaking to infuse Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding into curriculum, and also noted the University of Saskatchewan's commitment to



indiginization, including within teacher education, as examples of cultural responsiveness. Kevin felt that this shift to cultural responsiveness was part of a long-term trend he had witnessed within his school division:

Because of having been in the classroom myself and working right up to I was an assistant director of [School Division] for a couple years on that side of it. And just seeing the pressure that was there to be much more inclusive, to operate in ways that are sort of very responsive to cultural imperatives. First Nations requirements from the ministry was intensifying with respect to curriculum.

All the participants felt that the concept of ethical space was extremely helpful in imagining culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous students, as these placements represented spaces where disparate cultures encountered each other and where respectful engagement enabled knowledge exchange, offering the potential for the creation of new knowledge in a third space. They felt that applying the concept of ethical space to the extended practica required recognizing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous teacher candidates and administrators at the college and school levels, demonstrating the courage and creativity to change structures to mitigate those challenges, to afford Indigenous teacher candidates the best prospect of success. However the data revealed significant diversity among participants regarding the degree to which ethical space had yet been animated within Saskatchewan schools and specifically within extended practica.

There was an overwhelming response from participants to the question of what unique strengths Indigenous teacher candidates brought to extended practica. Participants noted that most Indigenous teacher candidates possessed highly valued cultural knowledge specific to each of the First Nations and linguistic groupings in the province and had deep and authentic

relationships with those communities. In this sense participants commented that Indigenous teacher candidates were “real,” and that they possessed a body of knowledge that was increasingly valued within K-12 schools and the post-secondary sector. Indigenous teacher candidates also became role models for Indigenous students, and that positive relationship helped the students. John reflected on the effects of these relationships: “In schools where there are low numbers of Indigenous students and suddenly you have an Indigenous teacher coming in, the relationship is incredible how that positive role model helps the students.” He shared a specific example about an Indigenous boy in grade two who had difficulty building relationships because he had been bounced around in foster homes. The Indigenous teacher candidate had long black hair like his mom, so he would stroke her hair. Because of the trusting relationship he developed with the teacher candidate, over time he developed the capacity to better manage his own behaviour and his academic performance improved dramatically.

Other participants focused on the creativity and knowledge that the Indigenous teacher candidates brought to the classroom, especially with Indigenous practices and issues, providing understanding of Indigenous content in a way that most non-First Nations teachers could not. Tom described one example where an Indigenous teacher candidate covering a novel about racism brought his own experience of dealing with racism to the discussion. This made racism a human issue and had a profound effect on the students. As well, some of the Indigenous teacher candidates had a wealth of curriculum resources that other students didn’t bring from their college. Participants also highlighted the ways in which cooperating teachers benefitted from the presence of Indigenous teacher candidates. Sara noted: “For those non-Indigenous teachers, quite often they find it enriching to their own teaching practice by having a First Nations [teacher candidate]. They’re learning more and adding to their practice.”

Participants agreed that the mandate to increase Indigenous content within school curriculum had created new requirements for Indigenous teacher candidates to share their culture. The new generation of teacher candidates are required to infuse Indigenous content into unit plans, allowing for the opportunity for culture to be addressed in the classroom. Tom commented:

We had a couple of overlays that insured that is right; all [teacher candidates] must infuse Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding into their extended practica experience. And that means at least one of the units must demonstrate a focus on Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding. And you have a Saskatchewan educational curricular system that says exactly the same thing right.

Judy had similar comments:

One of their unit plans definitely has to do with that. I mean, if you understand curriculum it is fused into all curriculum—instructional strategies as well. It's not just the history or the information—it's the way of being in the classroom that is important.

Sara commented that this started to happen because the Ministry of Education set the priority for improved Indigenous graduation rates and focused on struggling learners: “Then, that permeates the school division and then the College is saying, ‘We had better prepare teachers to address those needs. That’s where it started, and it seems to be flowing.’”

All the participants felt that there were increasing opportunities for Indigenous teacher candidates to share their culture within the school; however, the extent to which this happened depended on the relationship between the teacher candidate and cooperating teacher. George indicated that it was up to the teacher to promote the teacher candidate’s opportunity to share their culture. He suggested that maybe there could be a joint effort between the university

supervisors, the teacher, and the school to determine how to better promote Indigenous culture in classrooms.

Kevin summarized his definition of culturally responsive extended practica as one where “there would never be a sign anywhere that says ‘we’re working towards a’. In other words sort of the behaviours or whatever are, they’re already normalized. There’s nothing unusual.” Kevin was describing a culturally responsive extended practica, as organically existing; one that evolved as circumstances required. Other key insights into culturally responsive extended practica included having teacher supervisors and principals open to learning and a teacher candidate who is willing to share.

Many participants saw the concept of ethical space as an approach which supported and encouraged culturally responsive practices. In particular participants highlighted the capacity of ethical space to facilitate dialogues between Indigenous teacher candidates and their Caucasian cooperating teachers which would allow for culture-specific knowledge and worldviews to be exchanged, leading ultimately to the creation of new knowledge.

However participants expressed mixed opinions on the extent to which ethical space was present within the extended practica. Conditions varied significantly between and even within schools, and a number of participants highlighted the critical role of the classroom teacher in this regard:

It depends so much on the placement and the classroom teacher. I am not sure that there was ethical space. The expectations from everyone, the school system, the university, was pretty much the same for everyone across the board. If the expectations of the classroom teacher don’t match, on good education practices, and secondly, other ways of doing things and other ways of knowing, then it makes it difficult for any [teacher candidate]

and it makes it difficult for some Indigenous students who have in some cases (not to generalize) a lot of other things going on against them, more difficult...I think the really big issue is the classroom teacher—the school as well, the whole school, but the classroom teacher—and his or her experience with Indigenous students.

Schools are busy places. Sometimes I think it is kind of a superficial ethical space that's provided. For example, planning to sit down together to plan a unit that has a First Nations content/perspectives is good but maybe not the place to start. Build that relationship first.

George also highlighted the importance of the cooperating teacher and suggested that “we probably should be a little bit more discriminating on who takes the [teacher candidates] as sometimes I think they're not necessarily in the best position to be a cooperating teacher.”

George commented that:

I think it is certainly possible for it to happen and I guess it leads to the idea okay, so if that's a desirable thing, which I think it truly is, how do you facilitate the creation of that space that doesn't come across as coercive? I think what you try to do is create opportunities for that space to happen where clearly people can feel safe.

Kevin interpreted ethical space as the creation of opportunities for people to feel safe while expressing views that might otherwise offend. He concluded that education was the key to developing more respectful views:

For people who actually hold a discriminatory prejudicial view, you actually want to have a space where they can be free to express what they're really thinking. Without sort of saying “well this is fake. You're setting me up. You're going to record all of this.”

You're not going to inject anyone with cultural competency; it's got to be through education.

The participants all stressed that knowing and understanding Indigenous teacher candidates and not making assumptions contributed to a culturally responsive extended practica. They felt that cooperating teachers needed to recognize that Indigenous teacher candidates may bring different talents, perspectives, and skills that could be valuable to the school. It was widely acknowledged that support is needed throughout and establishing a relationship or connection with the students may help to understand if supports are required. Other strategies in working towards a culturally responsive extended practica included getting to meet the teacher candidates, helping them set up their classrooms, and providing hands-on support. Tom felt that the conditions conducive to the creation of ethical space had increased over the years, facilitated by a growing appreciation for the cultural knowledge that Indigenous teacher candidates brought to the schools and increasing commitments within schools to view diversity as an asset:

When I think of ethical, I don't primarily go to cultural aspects. But that being said, I believe that all of the settings that I was involved in were ethical. There was tolerance and acceptance and interest and even a commitment to being diverse and being interested and crafting educational experiences. Where culturally diverse experiences were welcomed in the classroom.

Participants agreed that culturally responsive considerations were becoming more visible within extended practica as a result of ministerial directives and the university's commitment to indigenization. An increased appreciation for the value of Indigenous cultures and knowledges within a wider appreciation of diversity was evident as a consequence. Participants also saw the concept of ethical space as helpful in imagining ideal culturally responsive extended practica

placements for Indigenous students as it created conditions conducive to seeing Canadian and Indigenous cultures at their best, facilitating reciprocal exchange of knowledge and opening possibilities for the creation of new knowledge.

### **Relationship Building**

In different ways all participants acknowledged that extended practica occurred within a welter of relationships and that the quality and efficacy of these relationships was a huge factor in ultimately determining the success or failure of Indigenous teacher candidates. Data identified relationships between the college, school divisions and individual schools, relationships between teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers and the wider school personnel in which their placement were located, including the school principal, relationships between teacher candidates and college supervisors, relationships between teacher candidates and staff from Indigenous Teacher Education Programs and relationships between teacher candidates and their family or community support systems as all being critical to the ultimate success of Indigenous teacher candidates.

A common thread running through the interviews regarding factors that strongly impacted the success of teacher candidates was the randomness of their placements, and in particular a tendency for Indigenous teacher candidates to be placed in schools which were not affirming of Indigenous cultures and with cooperating teachers whose personalities were incongruent. While the College was working towards more effective placements through innovative computer programs that matched teacher candidates and cooperating teachers based on identification of congruent values, that system had not yet been extended to the placement of Indigenous teacher candidates. John spoke about the negative impact that a mismatch with a teacher supervisor and school environment had on a particular Indigenous teacher candidate:

Well one of the schools, there were two candidates and very early on the principal made some assumptions about the candidates as far as their abilities and so on...But this candidate was trying, was working really hard, and I think instead of helping her people just sort of you know judged her and were pretty negative about having her teach in their school.

But participants were also of the opinion that simply assuming that Indigenous teacher candidates should all be placed in First Nation schools or schools with large Indigenous student populations, was also counterproductive. George stressed that “you shouldn’t because someone is First Nations assume that we got to put them in a First Nations school or in a classroom with lots of First Nations kids. In fact, they might not want that at all.”

Participants recommended an extensive process of consultation involving the college, schools and individual teacher candidates to determine the optimum placement. They also stressed that a key component of a culturally responsive extended practica would be to eliminate the randomness of placements through better matching and ensuring a more effective process of relationship building between Indigenous teacher candidates and cooperating teachers before commencement of the extended practica.

Most of the participants agreed that the principal’s support was critical in assuring that the teacher candidate was welcomed into the school, which in some cases gave them the confidence they needed. Small gestures, such as knowing teacher candidates’ names or checking on their classroom experience, may help boost Indigenous teacher candidates’ self-esteem and provide the encouragement they need.

Many participants highlighted the importance of the relationship between Indigenous teacher candidates and the various Indigenous Teacher Education Programs. These programs



were established initially to provide academic, personal and cultural support to Indigenous students attending post-secondary institutions and logically those supports were extended into extended practica. Tom explained that the support of a TEP college field supervisor was critical to the success of some of his candidates:

There was a First Nation woman on campus whose job it was to provide supports for Indigenous [teacher candidates] ...she's a marvelous lady. And I think that's what people like...people like that are the ones that are best able to help lead that navigation. To say goodbye to individuals when you have to because the gap is just too—or the individual initiative or the whatever it is—the circumstance just doesn't allow it....and God bless her and she would be fiercely protective and say 'these students have met the same rigor as every other student.' And I believe they have at the end of the day, but it's a much tougher journey for them.

The importance of developing relationships and paying attention to the teacher candidates to ensure they developed confidence in themselves as teacher candidates was also stressed. As Jack stated, "Pay attention to them. Hands-on type of relationships with whoever happened to be in the college....and if you have all these things, they have to have a little bit more, they bring something added to it but they also need more confidence I think in their ability".

George acknowledged the importance of relationships by stating, "That's why relationships are critical. And I think because relationships are so important in being culturally responsive, you got to work on that". George also described a situation in which the relationship between the teacher supervisor and the Indigenous teacher candidate was not very strong:

There was one First Nations intern that was in our building that didn't finish her internship and the relationship between the teacher and the intern wasn't very strong. And

the expectations that the teacher had were not – the candidate or the intern was not meeting what the teacher thought were the expectations. And the teacher - I don't think in my opinion - was a good fit for that intern because I think the teacher could have had a little bit more understanding of perhaps what it would look like to perhaps work with an older First Nations student.

Poor relationships between teacher-supervisors and teacher candidates were in some cases harmful to the teacher candidate as they may not feel comfortable in interacting with their supervisor. Sara explained that “the students that had a healthy relationship with their cooperating teacher, quite often that person became those supports. Those that had those good relationships, usually the cooperating teacher ends up providing that emotional, psychological support”. A strong relationship allowed the teacher candidate to develop trust in order to reach out to their supervisor when support was needed to be successful in the extended practica.

Relationships as well opened the door for conversations and knowledge sharing. As Sara stated, “In terms of the ethical space, too, what I found is that as the relationships develop over the course of the four months, and they become closer, that quite often the non-Aboriginal teacher is asking questions”. The development of relationships was important in the ability to share culture. As Judy emphasized that “I think there's opportunity, yeah. Again it's so dependent on the relationship of the intern and cooperating teacher”. The ability for the teacher supervisor and teacher candidate to share knowledge, culture and ideas to enhance culturally responsive extended practica was strengthened through strong relationships.

Participants affirmed the vital importance of relationships in the overall extended practica process and the ongoing need to foster better relationships. They felt that ideally a space for ethical engagement should be promoted in all these relationships, as this ultimately led to

respectful and affirming engagements, reciprocal knowledge exchange and the possibility of creating new knowledge. Better preparation or orientations for schools about the added value that Indigenous teacher candidates bring to schools can change attitudes by eliminating negative assumptions and judgements towards Indigenous candidates. Positive relationships allowed for supports or support services to be discussed in the event they were required, helping increase Indigenous teacher candidates' level of confidence and increasing prospects of success in their extended practica. Participants agreed that extended practica are improving for Indigenous candidates through attention to improving the myriad of relationships involved in the complex process; but they also felt that the process was still uneven and requiring further attention.

### **Summary**

The interview process provided rich data and important insights from the participants' comments and observations. The data documented the experiences of Indigenous teacher candidates at particular moments in time through the lens of people who were intimately involved in the extended practica but who were generally from outside the teacher candidates' own cultures. The interviews highlighted the unique qualities that Indigenous teacher candidates contribute to school settings and to the learning environments in provincial and First Nations systems. What was evident from the interviews was that most Indigenous teacher candidates added significant quality to schools through their contributions to the school environment, connections with Indigenous students, and their shared knowledge with school staff. The main themes that emerged from the study included challenges, the importance of relationship building, structural change and innovation, support, and cultural responsiveness. The challenges included tangible socio-economic barriers such as daycare, housing, and finances, while other not-so-obvious challenges included systemic racism, including assumptions of inferiority on the part of

some school personnel, and teacher candidates' lack of confidence and uneven levels of preparation, which included unfamiliarity with the provincial curriculum. The pattern of disproportionate challenges that Indigenous teacher candidates face is a clear indication of the structural barriers that still exist and that lead to ongoing incommensurate educational experiences for Indigenous students. The participants' noted that these challenges were being addressed through strong leadership and innovative practices, yet many felt that the structure of the extended practica was still designed for single Caucasian students in their early 20s, a category into which very few Indigenous teacher candidates fell. Participants noted a need for strategic conversations to reduce the randomness of placements, targeted support to meet the ongoing challenges Indigenous teacher candidates' experience, and better relationship building with all those involved in the process.

While data collection provided rich insights into experiences of Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica, the responses of some participants to interview questions also revealed certain personal assumptions which suggest ongoing complexities and contradictions within Indigenous teacher education. All participants agreed on the need to increase the number of Indigenous peoples within the teaching profession, both in response to the growing number of Indigenous students within Saskatchewan classrooms and also because of the potential of a diversified teaching profession to construct new knowledge to complement existing largely- Eurocentric curriculum. All participants also demonstrated sensitivity and caring in delineating the extraordinary challenges faced by Indigenous teacher candidates and in recommending thoughtful strategies to mitigate some of these challenges. However, an observation that came through in some of the participants' comments was that assumptions were coming from a place of White privilege. Within the interviews there were many incidences of

judgements, observations and comments that may have originated from a White privileged lens. White privilege was defined for this research by McIntosh (1990) as the benefits and advantages which confer privileges on White people that non-Whites do not possess by virtue of their skin colour. She described this as "an invisible package of unearned assets" (p.5) that includes cultural affirmation, social status and acceptance, and general freedom from discriminatory treatment (McIntosh, 1990). This research encompasses the lens of Levine-Rasky (2000a) in that a "revised approach to whiteness shifts to the discourse, the culture, the structures, the mechanisms, and the social relations of whiteness that produce radicalised subjects including whites" (p. 1). Though many of the participants' observations provided essential data for the interviews, there were many comments that generalized Indigenous teacher candidates and made White privileged presumptions that may be harmful in designing a culturally responsive practica. The college field supervisors were in a position to comment on the practica process but not on how the Indigenous teacher candidates perceived or felt about their experiences. In doing so, some of the participants comments were informed by a pan-Indigenous lens and a voice centred White privilege. Generalizing and assuming deficit thinking undermines the intent of defining a culturally responsive extended practica. George's statement of a 'sense of isolation', 'intimidated, quiet or shy' or Kevin and Sara's comments on 'lack of confidence' are essentializing. John's reply regarding teacher candidates experiences in that he felt that, "in his view, the two candidates were equally gifted but one of them could not survive the pressure coming from the classroom teacher and the principal" comes from a place of White privilege. As does John's generalization that the students should go out to Wanuskawin to learn about Indigenous culture. The participants, though well meaning, are judging the students from a White privilege lens. This systemic practice likely caused harm to the students they were trying to

support through generalization and a deficit approach in viewing the situation. Though their observations and comments obviously came from a place of good intentions, the data also revealed some deficit assumptions and essentializing generalizations about Indigenous students embedded in the consciousness of participants that speaks to the need for ongoing reflexivity framed by a commitment to achieving true ethical space within Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

*I think there is hope and we need lots of success stories shared, not just the negative ones.*

—*Judy 2016*

The purpose of Chapter Five was to align the themes from the data presented in Chapter Four with the main insights emerging from the literature review presented in Chapter Two. This process identified where my findings aligned with previous inquiries and where the research findings suggested innovative insights and recommendations. Chapter Five began with a brief summary of the research, followed by a description of salient local events in the research context during data collection. A discussion of the findings, thematically presented, followed, leading to a reconceptualization of themes and consideration of their implications for practice. Chapter Five concluded with recommendations for future research.

#### Summary of the Study

This study sought to gain insight into Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica experiences from the perspective of their college field supervisors. The research question that underpinned the study was as follows: What does a culturally responsive Indigenous preservice extended practicum look like from the perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators? The period when the data were collected (2012–2016) saw dramatic change in education policy within school environments, the College of Education, and wider post-secondary institutions across Saskatchewan. Chapter Four documented the participants' insights regarding Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica during this period of change. Highlights from the interviews included evidence of a culturally responsive turn within schools

and teacher education in Saskatchewan, responding to demographic changes, provincial policy and federal commitments to Truth and Reconciliation; an emerging appreciation for the unique contributions that Indigenous teacher candidates make to school settings; a pattern of disproportionate challenges faced by Indigenous teacher candidates; significant changes to the College's approach to preservice extended practica; and a sense that some traditional aspects of extended practica remain in place. There was also evidence of deficit assumptions within some of the comments from the participants, acknowledging that even among those motivated by good intentions, aspects of White privilege still coloured perceptions of Indigenous peoples. Although not always explicitly articulated by participants, an underlying current in all five themes was an acknowledgement of the importance of ethical space in promoting culturally responsive approaches that would enhance prospects of success for Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica. Each of these themes were discussed in the following section to examine the findings further in the light of the related theoretical and research literature.

### **Context of the Research**

The findings show that from 2012 to 2016 many positive initiatives have impacted Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica, including indigenization initiatives at the school, college, and university levels. Demographic trajectories were the main driver in these innovations, as a dramatic increase in the Indigenous school-age population and continued educational achievement disparities have focussed institutional, ministerial and divisional attention on the imperative of ensuring that Indigenous students benefit more equitably from schools (Cottrell & Hardie, 2019). High profile policy briefs dating back to RCAP (1996), the Joint Taskforce and the TRC's *Calls to Action* have all added urgency to the call for a culturally-responsive turn within schools and all educational contexts (Cottrell & Hardie, 2019;



Government of Saskatchewan, 2018b). A challenge identified in the research is in sustaining the momentum of culturally responsive initiatives and ensuring that all schools across the province embrace them (Pete, 2014).

However two recent episodes also highlighted that colonial mindsets and systemic racism, including the persistence of negative and prejudicial attitudes towards Indigenous peoples, still persist both among members of the general public and at the highest levels of provincial, political, educational and legal leadership. The first was the controversy generated by the killing of Colton Boushie, a 22-year-old Indigenous man in 2016 and the subsequent controversial trial of Gerald Stanley, the man accused in the killing, in 2018. Public discourse around that incident, especially on social media, indicated the depth of animosity still existing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Saskatchewan. In particular, the fact that the accused was Caucasian and was tried by an all-white jury led to accusations of bias and unfairness within the justice system (Roach, 2018). The second event occurred in 2017 when the former provincial Minister of Education, Bronwyn Eyre, commented on treaty education in Saskatchewan and mused that perhaps too much Indigenous content may now be infused in school curriculum (Warick, 2017b). These are just two examples of the systemic racism that is normalized in the province, suggesting that there is much work to be done to decolonize the province's legal and education systems (Pete, 2014; St. Denis, 2007, 2010). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education's most recent (2018-19) *Strategic Framework* is still underpinned by deficit perspectives through performance measures focused on graduation rates, credit attainment, and attendance rates for Indigenous students that are not always consistent with culturally responsive provincial initiatives such as *Following Their Voices* and *Inspiring Success* (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018b). Though the report does stress the metric of engagement

addressed in *Ourschool Performance Measures* (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018b, p. 6), the absence of authentic culturally responsive metrics indicate a lack of alignment between those initiatives and the strategic plan. An example of more authentic metrics can be found in Bishop, Ladwig, and Berryman's (2013) focus on classroom climate or *Whanaungatanga*. Tunison (2018), citing Bishop, Ladwig, and Berryman (2013), noted that schools that cultivate the sense of family embodied in the Maori term *Whanaungatanga* were tremendously successful – especially with Indigenous students (p. 7).

The data from the participants' interviews, including John's comment regarding principals openly acknowledging that they do not want Indigenous teacher candidates placed in their schools, demonstrated there are underlying currents of systemic racism within educational institutions (Pelletier et al, 2013; Pete, 2014; St. Denis, 2007, 2010). As public education in Saskatchewan is government funded, the school divisions must follow the Ministry of Education's provincial framework. If systemic practices are entrenched within leadership, they are likely to filter into the schools and classrooms. The Saskatchewan government implemented initiatives to address graduation rates through increasing the employment rate of Indigenous teachers and administrators and focusing on curriculum changes, including mandatory treaty teaching (Cottrell & Hardie, 2019). However, if the former Saskatchewan Minister of Education, and school principals question these practices, how do schools move forward? McDowall (2017) suggested that to truly bring Indigenous perspectives into classrooms, it is imperative to make connections with the local community:

Instead of wanting to learn about Indigenous people, learning that different knowledges are held and expressed in different ways. Instead of wanting to teach about Indigenous people, facilitating Indigenous community members being able to bring their own

knowledge into the classroom. Instead of wanting to know, wanting to be in relations. Lines of wants and have meet Indigenous thought and bend themselves into new configurations. Configurations that aren't predetermined before picking up a pen to write; but that demonstrate a little difference that matters. (p. 8)

Encouraging teachers to seek out the benefits that Indigenous cultures and knowledge bring to school environments is a role urgently required of school leaders and government. In addition, preparing Indigenous teacher candidates and welcoming them into schools is a necessary step for school leaders. Yet as Stelmach, et al. (2017) reported, "However, there is an onus upon teachers to critically self-reflect and consider whether the teaching life is for them if they are consistently unhappy and exhibiting behaviours that turn a student off learning" (p. 15). Including teachers in the conversations around the changes required in schools is critical for the self-reflection needed to move towards greater cultural responsiveness, both in extended practica and wider school contexts.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

In this section the themes that emerged from the data analysis in Chapter 4 are aligned with research synthesized in the literature review to delineate the original contributions of this research and highlight areas for future research.

#### **Challenges**

Data collected for this study indicated that college supervisors perceive that Indigenous teacher candidates face numerous and significant challenges during their extended practica that present greater obstacles to success than faced by their non-Indigenous counterparts. These challenges range from a lack of support from supervisors and schools, a lack of cultural awareness and the presence of colonial mindsets in school environments, and a lack of

understanding regarding the effects of poverty and related socio-economic factors on Indigenous students' capacity to achieve educational success. Tom spoke of the "non-typical journeys" that many Indigenous teacher candidates took:

It has to somehow recognize that individual's cultural profile sometimes presents barriers that have to be investigated... Financial, familiar, pedagogical. Like those barriers, we can't just be blind to them. We have to somehow try to work within that context so that we respect all of those things.

It was very clear from the participants' responses and insights from the literature review that socio-economic factors rooted in intergenerational poverty still constitute significant barriers to Indigenous peoples' educational success. Peden's (2011) research outlined issues facing Indigenous education at both reserve schools and provincially controlled schools that include differences in funding, human capacity, curriculum, and infrastructure. Poverty has long been a barrier to Indigenous student success and that situation continues, despite some improvements. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) indicated that "First Nations people tend to have significantly lower socio-economic well-being than other Canadians. Socio-economic well-being can be measured by tracking indicators in areas such as education, income, and health" (OAG, 2018b). Kristoff's (2019) research on Indigenous students attending an Indigenous post-secondary institution found that poverty constitutes a major barrier to persistence and success for Indigenous students. Insights from this research confirm that poverty remains the single greatest obstacle to success for First Nations students aspiring to become educators at the institution studied here. If a student is struggling to pay rent, feed his/her family, access reliable childcare or ensure appropriate transportation to the site of the extended practicum, it is unlikely that that student will experience success.

In applying the concept of ethical space to this reality participants suggested that this would require non-Indigenous people involved in extended practica (both at the school and college level) to develop a full awareness of how historical colonial legacies continue to impact current generations of Indigenous peoples, without viewing those working hard to achieve success through deficit lenses. Ethical space also requires support for appropriate levels of federal funding for First Nations students. Given inadequacies in this area, post-secondary institutions will also need to address challenges stemming from poverty to enable Indigenous students to achieve success at the post-secondary level (Kristoff, 2019).

Although not explicitly articulated by participants, the concept of white privilege was alluded to as one of the barriers to achieving ethical space within extended practica (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Manglitz, 2003; Page, 2009; Peden, 2011). Judy commented: “When you think of other teacher candidates...the white teacher candidates. They were successful in school—that’s why they went into college, most of them”. Peden’s (2011) research found “that real change will occur only when people recognize that racist attitudes remain and continue to be perpetuated cyclically and generationally within our system” (p. 335). It was also evident from the participants’ interviews that deficit thinking was present within some of the school environments in the treatment of the Indigenous teacher candidates based on stereotypes. In some cases the participants’ comments revealed generalizations regarding Indigenous teacher candidates which, though well- intentioned, were coloured by deficit lenses informed by White privileged assumptions. The fact that senior educators, all of whom were motivated by a genuine desire to improve the educational experiences of Indigenous students, still either consciously or unconsciously carried such deeply-ingrained deficit assumptions, spoke to the need for additional work to decolonize educational systems at all levels.

St. Denis (2010) reported that schools continue to fail Indigenous students and that there is an urgent need to improve Indigenous education in public schools. In addition, she stressed, “that there should be a focus on Indigenous teachers’ professional knowledge and experience—their working lives and their personal and practical professional knowledge—because this is an important source of data about how to improve Indigenous education” (St. Denis, 2010, p. 11). The number and percentage of First Nations educators are slowly increasing within Saskatchewan’s School Divisions, from 5.97% in 2015 to 6.3% in 2017. This is opening avenues for First Nations content and perspectives in curriculum and an increase in the presence of Indigenous role models in classrooms. In addition, it allows for a more welcoming environment for Indigenous teacher candidates and fosters the conditions in which ethical space can develop. However, the population of Indigenous students in 2016/17 within the Saskatchewan provincial K–12 schools was 18.6 per cent, indicating that more work needs to be completed to close the gap between the number of Indigenous educators and the number of Indigenous students within the school divisions (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018a, p. 12). This study frames teacher education as a critical site of innovation in achieving this desired outcome.

### **Changing the Structure of Extended Practica for Increased Success and Innovation**

Participants’ data confirmed that huge strides had been taken by the U of S College of Education during the time data was being collected to introduce innovations within the teacher education program and extended practica. Participants also spoke of innovations at the K-12 level to address inequitable outcomes. There has been a distinct line of progression in understanding the needs of Indigenous students from St. Denis’s (2007) research to Pelletier, et al.’s (2013), to Merasty, et al.’s (2014), to Steeves, et al.’s (2014). These studies have helped move Indigenous education forward through initiatives such as the Joint Task Force and

*Following Their Voices*, which have contributed to success for Indigenous students in graduation rates, attendance and credit attainment (Following Their Voices, n.d.). The challenges moving forward are to ensure socio-economic needs are met, value sets are reconciled, and support is provided to ensure success for the Indigenous teacher candidates through programs such as ITEP and SUNTEP.

Participants agreed that changing the extended practica structure increased the prospects of success for Indigenous teacher candidates. Kevin indicated that the college was making some major changes around the kind of requirements that the teacher candidates themselves would have to fulfill during their extended practicum, due to the “shifting cultural imperatives”. He also identified a major shift in the role of the college supervisor away from evaluation towards mentorship:

When they were making some major changes around everything from the kind of requirements that the [teacher candidates] themselves would have to fulfill during the course of their extended practica it was a pretty exciting time because people of course were pretty much used to what had been there for the previous ten years...It was much more to me a guiding type of thing, a supportive kind of thing as opposed to a supervisory-evaluative kind of thing that it had certainly been in its past history.

Kevin spoke of a clear generational shift among supervisors within the College of Education:

From my point of view I saw the full range because even within the college itself, I can remember very specific situations where some of the [teacher candidates] I was involved with, for example, that required special accommodations...yet there were staff at the college that actually didn't want to accommodate because it doesn't look like you need it.

I saw a clear shift in the composition of the folks that were [teacher candidate] supervisors.

Innovation was a common thread throughout the interviews as the U of S College of Education had moved to a computerized matching system to place the teacher candidates. As Solheim (2017) explained, “compatibility between the teacher candidate and mentor can contribute to a positive relationship and help to ensure a successful extended practica experience for both parties. Predicting compatibility can increase the chance of successful extended practica experiences” (p. ii). However, TEP teacher candidates continued to be reviewed by the TEP office to ensure the match was appropriate. In addition, some of the TEP teacher candidates were placed together as a cohort at a high school in Saskatoon with the college field supervisor working from the high school. In a follow up conversation with George, he suggested that:

Not all people feel this type of extended practicum structure is the best but in order for Indigenous [teacher candidates] to feel comfortable within their placements it is a necessary move until all schools and divisions recognize the need for allowing ethical space and culturally responsive placements.

This cohort approach is a positive move towards collaboration with the school divisions and an innovative approach to extended practica (Ronsyn-Misselbrook 2013; Solheim, 2017). Based on the principle of strength in numbers the creation of Indigenous cohorts enabled the generation of psycho-social and cultural sustenance for Indigenous teacher candidates within a school where the teaching staff was mainly non-First Nations. It also assisted the Indigenous teacher candidates in incorporating Indigenous knowledge into their teaching, for the benefit of the non-Indigenous teachers and all students. The cohort approach to placements disrupted traditional hierarchical power dynamics within extended practica, facilitating more egalitarian



interactions consistent with Ermine's (2010) concept of ethical space, and also enabling what Goulet and Goulet (2014) described as "*otootemitowin*" (respectful openness and acceptance of others).

## **Support**

As noted previously data collected for this study indicated that college supervisors perceived that Indigenous teacher candidates face greater challenges during their extended practica than their non-Indigenous counterparts. It has long been recognized that various forms of support, including financial, psycho-social, and cultural, can enhance Indigenous students' prospects of success within educational systems that were designed primarily by and for non-Indigenous People (Preston, 2016; RCAP, 1996). Both the ITEP and SUNTEP programs were pioneers in this regard, and over time programs such as these developed strategies to support the successful transition of Indigenous students, often coming from First Nations communities, within post-secondary institutions. Based on Indigenous relational ontologies, a critical aspect of this approach was through instructor-counsellors developing close personal relationships with students through which academic and personal support was provided (Pelletier et al, 2013; Wimmer et al, 2009). Participants commented on the vital importance that Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica placed on these personal relationships with staff from Indigenous Teacher Education programs, but occasionally the jurisdictional complexity within extended practica presented obstacles to the extension of those relationships into schools. Highlighting the ongoing merit of these supportive relationships, and identifying the need to create structures to enable them to function to maximum effect within extended practica, is an important insight derived from this research.

Support for Indigenous teacher candidates can also be provided through culturally responsive practices that create invitational and affirming school environments for Indigenous students and teacher candidates. This corresponds with Peden's (2011) and Battiste's (2000, 2002) research on culturally responsive curricula. Additionally, Ralph, Walker, and Wimmer's (2010) research in Canadian schools found that positive aspects of extended practica for the teacher candidates included the supportive relationships that they developed with individuals with whom they worked.

George described that:

I don't think anybody says here's a support. I think a lot of times these [teacher candidates] land in the buildings and teachers aren't overly prepared or knowing – especially if you're a new teacher and haven't had an [Indigenous teacher candidate] before. You're not really sure what to expect. So, I think there could be more supports. I think definitely for First Nations candidates, I think there should be more support available.

Kevin suggested that the increased awareness of the imperative for support was recognized in recent shifts in language and terminology:

I personally like the changes that they were moving to, even the change in language, because instead of being extended practica supervisors, it was the language which was moving to one that was much more supportive, much more dealing with handling relationships particularly in the liaison role and how we would be working with the [teacher candidates] themselves.

The focus in the data on the need for additional supports to ensure the success of Indigenous teacher candidates confirms insights of previous studies (Kristoff, 2019; Ronsyn-

Misselbrook, 2013). Application of the concept of ethical space, moreover, suggested that enabling these supports required a depth of empathy that could best be achieved through a thorough knowledge of First Nations history, including inter-generational dimensions such as the transmission of poverty and trauma. Participants felt that all personnel involved in extended practica should have this knowledge, but many of them indicated that staff of the Indigenous teacher education programs possessed such knowledge and insight to a greater degree than others. This suggests a particularly important role for the staff of these programs in providing appropriate support for Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica, requiring the resolution of a number of complex jurisdictional issues.

### **Cultural Responsiveness**

The findings from the data confirmed the importance of culturally responsive practices for the success of the Indigenous teacher candidates, with benefits extending to the whole school environment. Most participants reiterated that understanding that building relationships, and ensuring ethical space exists within the school were critical in creating culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates. Many of the participants suggested that, in the schools that did not value cultural diversity, Indigenous teacher candidates were less likely to succeed. The participants' comments confirmed St. Denis's (2010) recommendations (see Section 2.3.1) that in order to increase the success of Indigenous students the following areas were essential:

- (i) honour and respect the unique nature, value and contributions of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing and learning; (ii) select, train, hire and actively seek to retain more Aboriginal teachers and (iii) require training and/or course work in Aboriginal education, including a focus on: contemporary Aboriginal issues; a

critical perspective on the history of colonization; critical anti-racist education; and Aboriginal cultural knowledge, such as values, traditions and ceremonies. (p. 9).

St. Denis's (2010) recommendations apply to the post-secondary Indigenous students and teacher candidates. Similarly, Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy (2007) noted that "students identified that the relationship they have with their teachers was the most influential factor in their ability to achieve in the classroom" (p. 15). The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education elaborated on the importance of incorporating cultural knowledge into education:

First Nations and Métis cultural practices in the education sector and school communities are to be encouraged and supported so that the learning environment is a welcoming and culturally responsive and affirming place. Authentic inclusion of Indigenous people in education is foundational to the provincial system. (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018a, p. 8)

Likewise, Galman, et al. (2010) suggested that "although attention has been focused on transforming teacher candidates' beliefs and developing practice with antiracist pedagogy, similar attention should be paid to teacher educators' beliefs and practice" (p. 225). They offered two approaches on moving forward towards changing how we are as teachers:

(i) aggressively hack at our roots while tenderly working with others; (ii) aggressively lobby for valued space and tenderly govern its use and (iii) aggressively challenge our job descriptions, rewriting them if necessary, so that we might more tenderly promote growth. (Galman et al, 2010, p. 234)

Smith (2013) recommended that breaking down colonial value sets among teachers by decolonizing their own practices required asking if they were perpetuating whiteness and colonialism in their own practices. George stressed that,

The SPSD used a value assessment to give a self-assessment to administrators on their cultural awareness but to date a system-wide value assessment has not been presented to teachers. These types of initiatives will assist in decolonizing education and moving towards culturally responsive education.

The findings also confirmed the challenges of providing an ethical space for the teacher candidates. Ermine (2007) suggested that ethical space is the respectful engagement of two disparate worldviews which needs to occur for transformational cross-cultural dialogue to take place. One challenge is to provide the avenue for these conversations to take place such as through the co-operative teacher's and teacher candidate's openness and confidence. For the ethical space to be present, a second challenge is creating the space within the school divisions for this to occur. For Ermine (2010) it was by challenging the embedded assumptions and associated prescriptions from the institutions and systems that continue to shape our lived realities (Coleman & Ermine 2010ab).

A critique of Ermine's concept of ethical space suggests that Ermine's definition assumes all parties come from the same power position or that everyone is on equal footing. In challenging the embedded assumptions to make space, Ermine's concept failed to acknowledge that a power difference is present. Systemic practices exist within our teaching environment and huge structural inequities are noticeable throughout Saskatchewan where a hierarchy of entrenched superiority is present. For ethical space to be animated, governments and policies need to be in place to overcome the inequities and allow space for discussions and learning. The Calls to Action and other noted initiatives need to be strongly supported by our governments to allow for an equal playing field.

The creation of a common space or a third space may provide that opportunity to allow for the exploration and dismantling of hegemonic views rooted in colonialism. Zinga (2019) introduced the “concept of teaching as the creation of ethical space” (p. 278). Pete (2014) identified the SPSD as being highly responsive in that they achieved “higher results for FNIM learners than the provincial average” (p. 78). As she explained, the SPSD developed an “integrated, achievement oriented and responsive system” (Pete, 2014, p. 80) that is working towards greater levels of success for Indigenous learners. Pete’s (2014) report further explained that educators were challenged to examine their core beliefs. As Prowse (2013) commented (as cited in Pete, 2014) they took a “making it personal to make it professional” (p.80) approach to transforming the organizational culture. As Palmer & Zajonc (2010) outlined, for change to occur, transformation through personal risk and trust are necessary. The participants indicated that the willingness to embrace personal risk varied among cooperating teachers and school principals: some embraced the cultural transformation made possible by working with an Indigenous teacher candidate, while others were more rigid and not open to accepting Indigenous teacher candidates. Approaches like SPSD’s may be a guide for other divisions to begin this transformation.

### **Relationship Building**

The data and existing research suggest that extended practica occur within a welter of complex relationships, and that the quality of those relationships are critical to teacher candidates’ success. These include relationships between the college, school divisions and individual schools, relationships between teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers and the wider school personnel in which their extended practica placements were located, including the school principal, relationships between teacher candidates and college supervisors,

relationships between teacher candidates and staff from Indigenous Teacher Education Programs and relationships between teacher candidates and their family or community support systems.

Cattley (2007), Trent (2013) and Solheim (2017) suggested that “a poor [teacher candidate] mentor relationship compromises negotiation and discourse, which affects [teacher candidate] agency, and can have a negative impact on the formation of a professional identity” (p. 10). As well, Bradbury & Koballa, (2008); Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, (2009) as cited in Solheim (2017) stated “A negative experience may lead to disillusionment with the profession, increased stress and anxiety, high mentor teacher turnover, and even withdrawal from the profession” (p. 1). Other important findings regarding the value of relationships within extended practica as cited by Bradbury and Koballa, 2008; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hastings, 2010; He, 2009; Patrick, 2013; Trent, 2013 in Solheim (2017) included the “examination of [teacher candidate]-mentor relationships often uncovers the importance of expectations regarding the role of the [teacher candidate] and the mentor as well as the goals of the extended practica” (p. 156). Cattley (2007) found that the preservice teachers in her research “raised issues such as time-management, team work, student engagement on learning tasks, managing differences between parent and teachers’ values and balancing the workload of the teacher role with relaxation activities” (p. 340). Ensuring that these areas are discussed will help to ensure expectations between the teacher candidate and cooperating teachers are aligned. Frank conversations where the expectations of all parties were unambiguous were identified by the participants as critical to success.

This research confirmed the importance of relationship building and the connection between positive relationships and ethical space. All of the participants indicated that strong relationships correlated with success for the teacher candidate. They also spoke of the negative

impact of the randomness of placements. Initiatives, including the computerized placement matching that included a compatibility factor and ITEP's placement of teacher candidates at one high school in Saskatoon with a high Indigenous student population and an Indigenous administrator, are innovative methods to eliminate the randomness of placements and increase teacher candidate success through relationship-building.

An aspect of relationship building requires moving past negative assumptions. Within some of the participants' statements generalizations and deficit assumptions regarding Indigenous teacher candidates were noted. As described in the participant selection section in Chapter Three the majority of the participants were white and over 55. Though this generation has contributed to significant innovations and improvements in Indigenous education across Saskatchewan, many also carry assumptions from an earlier era. Some of the participants may represent a generation that are beginning to move towards reflexivity yet need guidance and training to achieve greater reflexivity to overcome their deficit assumptions.

It is evident that colonialism still exists in provincial school divisions. A most recent example is within the SPSD's Evan Hardy High School. A parent made public her concerns regarding a Social Studies quiz in which her daughter had to answer a question on the year 'Europeans discovered the Americas'. The parent stated:

She was surprised this curriculum is still being taught. She said it reinforces the stereotype that pre-contact Indigenous presence in North America doesn't count. This doctrine of discovery seeks to erase the record of Indigenous existence. I thought we'd gotten past this (Warick, 2019).

However what was encouraging was that her daughter, the student, changed the word to "colonizing" in recognizing the wording was wrong. As well, the SPSD admitted that the



concerns regarding the material were valid. Their statement read: “The only way we can do better as a learning community is if we are open to addressing such issues and move forward together. We aspire to achieve the goals set out in our school division's response to the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action” (Warick, 2019).

It is an important time for reflection from all school educators (and society as a whole). A critical role for college field supervisors in supporting Indigenous teacher candidates is to develop a trusting relationship, one of mentorship not judgements. For this to occur may require the college field supervisors to engage in reflection of their own value sets and in some instances, their White privilege. The participants in this study represent a generation that are beginning to move towards reflexivity; however they may need additional guidance in this regard.

### **Reconceptualization of Themes**

Five main themes—the necessary ingredients for a culturally responsive extended practica—emerged from this research. Analysis of data suggested that the concept of ethical space (Ermine, 2000, 2007) and related ideas of ‘third space’ (Kanu, 2011; Madden, 2014; Zinga, 2019), have important implications for efforts to improve extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates. Ermine (2000) described ethical space as an intellectual encounter between Western and Indigenous worldviews where a reciprocal appreciation and exchange of cultures occurs, leading to possibilities of epistemological innovation. This ethical or third space, “far from being a site for the re-inscription of essentialist narratives of culture, is a liminal space for interaction, conflict, and mutual assimilation that every encounter between cultures involves” (Bhabba, as cited in Kanu, 2011, p. 97).

Participants in this study noted that extended practica provide an ideal setting for the animation of ethical space in that they are sites that enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to engage with each other in respectful relationships which acknowledge both the challenges and the assets that both bring to the encounter. They can lead to enhanced cross-cultural understanding and appreciation through reciprocal transfer of knowledge. Consistent with others' conceptualizations of third spaces (Kanu, 2011; Madden, 2014; Zinga, 2019), innovations that participants highlighted in extended practica have the potential to foster more respectful engagement and strengthen social relations, making it possible for dialogue to allow genuine cross-cultural learning and new knowledge production to occur.

Insights from other scholars can also be mobilized here. Cross-cultural engagement and dialogue may be facilitated through *kiskinaumagehin* (teaching one another) as illustrated in the Model of Effective Teaching for Indigenous Students developed by Goulet and Goulet (2014, p. 87). Other essential insights from the Goulets' (2014) research are the Cree social relations concepts of "*otootemitowin* (respectful openness and acceptance of others) and *weechiseechigemitowin* (alliance for common action)" (p. 70). Both of these have the potential to foster engagement and strengthen social relations, making it possible for dialogue to allow genuine cross-cultural learning and innovative knowledge production to occur.

Ethical space and related concepts were thus evident in all five themes identified in the data and a reconceptualization of these original themes identified ethical space as a necessary precondition for culturally responsive extended practica. The recognition of ethical space informing all five themes in animating culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates is illustrated below in Figure 5.1.



**Figure 5.1** Reconceptualization of the Themes

In examining the findings and themes, a definition of a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate extended practica emerges. The five themes supported by ethical space,

provide the preconditions for a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate extended practica to develop. Once these conditions are available, four main components are necessary for a culturally responsive Indigenous extended practica to be realized. They include: (i) Ensuring that the students' socio-economic needs are met. These may include that financial, transportation, childcare and other structural barriers are removed. This will require insight and support from the university to make this happen; (ii) The college and the cooperating teachers are aware of the teacher candidate's inferiority and provide support; (iii) The university, cooperative teacher and the school are committed to learning about Indigenous culture from the teacher candidate. It is viewed as an opportunity to bring culture into the school; and (iv) Embrace the benefits that the teacher candidates bring to the extended practica. Look at ways to maximize the teacher candidates' strengths and maximize hiring opportunities for Indigenous candidates.

By providing the necessary space for relationships to develop, supports to be available, innovation to emerge, cultural responsive environment and recognizing the challenges that the teacher candidate face will allow for the conditions to be implemented. The conditions will allow for the development of culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidates to be realized with our school systems.

### **Implications: Moving Forward**

This research has documented college field supervisors' and one school principal's experiences with Indigenous teacher candidates within extended practica from the years 2012–2016. The data are important in confirming support for the recent initiatives in some school divisions and universities and confirming scholars' and researchers' recommendations of how Indigenous teacher extended practica may be enhanced. The research depicted an extended

practica system that was undergoing changes from a very traditional approach to one embracing innovation. One of the main drivers of that innovation was the imperative to make schools in Saskatchewan more culturally responsive. Recent contributions to the research on culturally responsive extended practica included Soslau and Bell (2018), whose research conducted at a mid-size state university located on the eastern coast of the United States examined the challenges of educating predominately white middle-class, female, teacher candidates to be race conscious and eschew the oft-embodied color-blindness stance taken by teachers (Sleeter, 2008) and confronting whiteness as it relates to educational practices (White, 2009). While my participants were invariably kind and well-meaning, some of their insights were typical of many of their generation in that they betrayed a welter of deficit assumptions about Indigenous peoples that framed them as less capable than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Through the lens of Critical Race theory these assumptions are rooted in White privileged notions of meritocracy and given the importance of their role in supporting Indigenous teacher candidates a requirement for college field supervisors to engage in far deeper critical self-reflection is urgently needed. This has obvious implications for the selection and training of college field supervisors going forward. As addressed in Chapter 2, the role of the college supervisor has been evolving. Future changes should include education colleges having stronger requirements within the selection of college supervisors to ensure culturally relevant experience is provided. A stronger selection and orientation process, one that includes requirements for reflectivity around racial dynamics and insights from Whiteness studies, may help to navigate this concern with future college supervisors.

Allen and Wright (2014) found teacher candidates' perceptions of their professional development during their practicum was important as it uncovered how they perceive the

practicum in “enabling an integration of theory and practice and some of the issues that they viewed as impeding or supporting the integration” (p. 136). Some of the participants in their study found that they were lacking clarity in their practicum and that there was a breakdown in communication between the school and university making it hard for the “teacher candidate to integrate the theory and practice” (p.145). My research is important in demonstrating how clear communication continues to be an important factor in the effectiveness of extended practica. Clear and open communication will assist in fostering conditions likely to animate ethical space. Further research regarding innovations to the extended practica to allow for ethical space to develop within learning environments are suggestions for continuous improvement of educational practices.

### **Implications for Research**

As this research is a historical documentation and contains data from four years of extended practica progression, a further examination of more recent data regarding Indigenous teacher candidates from 2012 to 2018 may be useful to determine if certain schools or practices have been more effective in ensuring their success. Additionally, the research may be used for longitudinal data connecting extended practica to success in the teaching profession. Examining divisions’ practices and incorporating them into the structure of the extended practica may be an area to build upon. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education’s *Inspiring Success* policy framework outlined actions for “improving student engagement and achievement through policy, programs, curriculum, building partnerships, shared decision-making and accountability [to help] ensure alignment of the ministry and sector actions with the goals of the ESSP [Education Sector Strategic Plan]” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018a, p. 2) Ensuring that the government

leadership is committed to and supports these action steps may be an area to support through research.

An important insight of my research was that the concept of ethical space was implicated in all of the themes as a necessary precondition for achieving more culturally responsive extended practica through negotiation and engagement. Therefore, school divisions must ensure that this space is provided within the school environments. As well, teacher education programs and schools must fully appreciate the challenges that Indigenous teacher candidates may face and recognize that extra support may be required. Governments need to acknowledge how separate educational programs are valuable for Indigenous students. As Burm and Burleigh wrote (2017), “With an increased focus on national reconciliation efforts, (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), faculties of education are being called on to improve their programming and better attend to Indigenous perspectives. This effort, out of necessity, must include both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and educators” (p. 44). The national focus on reconciliation has created an opening for ethical space and Indigenous perspectives to become central to both K-12 and post-secondary education. Lastly, the research provides strong support for existing calls to increase the presence of Indigenous people within the teaching profession in Saskatchewan in order to meet the needs of the growing Indigenous population and to provide a balanced education for all learners in Saskatchewan schools.

### **Recommendations for Future Work**

Three key areas for future research emerged from the research findings, which included:

- 1) Reconceptualization of the conceptual design to provide a place for ethical space to be present. The participants repeatedly commented that the success rate for Indigenous teacher candidates increased by allowing for ethical space within extended practica, either through

relationship building or an enhanced understanding of Indigenous cultures. Yet to allow for the ethical space to be present requires self-reflection among those supervising extended practica. It requires answering Zinga's (2019) question of, "now that you know how you are implicated, what are you going to do about it?" (p. 286). Providing a common space for engagement and negotiation allows all individuals to reflect on Zinga's (2019) question and the opportunity for the transfer of knowledge and knowledge creation that it affords. This ethical space may be animated by restructuring the extended practica to become more authentically a process of mentorship rather than a process of evaluation. Since mentorship requires a very different relationship, this recommendation also warrants a fundamental reconceptualization of current extended practica relationships. This will require a process of self-evaluation or training to assist college field supervisors to engage in reflection moving towards a process of mentorship. This may also occur through a more rigorous and intentional selection and professional development process of college field supervisors that requires a deep evaluation of value sets around race and culture.

2) As the country is working towards meeting the TRC's *Calls to Action*, determining which *Calls to Action* have been met and whether they have positively affected Indigenous students will be necessary. This area of study may uncover the causes behind systemic racism and is a fundamental step in setting the goals and policy of education by ensuring that the link between higher socio-economic challenges and lower education attainment is clearly demonstrated to the government. Develop concrete metrics that track performance indicators and remain accountable on graduation rates, innovative curriculum, hiring of Indigenous staff, and infusion of language and culture within the education systems.



3) A follow up longitudinal study in five years of the Indigenous teacher candidates' experiences in the teaching profession. This research study would link Indigenous teacher candidates' experiences with their careers. It would investigate whether a successful and positive extended practicum experience led to the Indigenous teacher to seek a career within the Saskatchewan school division.

### **Final Comments**

The purpose of this research was to determine, through qualitative inquiry, what components make up culturally responsive extended practica for Indigenous teacher candidates. It is important to note that the data were collected during a time of significant change for Saskatchewan school divisions, universities, and the U of S's College of Education extended practica process.

Highlights of various initiatives from 2010 to 2018 include:

- The restructuring of the College of Education extended practica process to include an innovative computerized matching system that aligns value sets.
- The generational shift of college field supervisors.
- A cohort approach to Indigenous teacher candidate placements within some Saskatoon schools.
- The Government of Saskatchewan's initiative *Following Their Voices* implemented within some schools.
- The Indigenization goals of the U of S.
- The TRC's report and *Calls to Action* and the country's promise to work towards the *Calls to Action*.
- Treaty education within Saskatchewan schools.

- The inclusion of a PD School model called *Wahkohtowin* working in collaboration with SPSD, GCSD and Kahkewistahaw First Nation for the ITEP program.

However, ongoing change is still needed. As indicated in the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's 2018–2019 *Education Plan*, the system has been responsive to the initiatives from *Following Their Voices* and have implemented both three- and five-year graduation targets, instead of just three-year graduation targets (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018b). However, there is still resistance. The drivers of changes, such as the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' educational success, the unevenness between school divisions in providing ethical space, and the need for culturally responsive programs to meet the growing Indigenous population, continue. While there is an appetite for young Indigenous people to become teachers, the socio-economic barriers still exist for many of them. These barriers illustrate why programs such as ITEP and SUNTEP are crucial for Indigenous teachers' success and why this research is necessary.

This study was undertaken to help understand why the success rate for Indigenous teacher candidates was lower than non-Indigenous teacher candidates by investigating what culturally responsive Indigenous preservice extended practica look like from college field supervisors' and administrators' perspectives, with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan school divisions. Through personal correspondence with the College of Education professors Dr. Cottrell and Dr. Carr-Stewart, I was asked to investigate the extended practica for Indigenous students, specifically to ask whether the extended practica was meeting the needs of our Indigenous students. The research question asked, what does a culturally responsive Indigenous teacher candidate extended practica look like from the

perspectives of college field supervisors and administrators? The literature review examined four main areas that supported the data collected from the interviews: the importance of culturally responsive teacher programs, culturally responsive school environments, Indigenous pedagogy, White privilege and teacher candidate experiences. These areas confirm the necessity for relationship building, support, understanding challenges, innovation, cultural responsiveness and reflexivity underpinned by the creation of ethical space and culturally responsive extended practica. These areas need to be considered when structuring extended practica.

In addressing the areas of support, socio-economic barriers, and educational attainment, there needs to be strong direction from government and stakeholders. Component 2 of the Assembly of First Nations' First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review 2018 *Interim Report* called for a strategy that used "a whole-of-government approach involving coordination among federal Departments and working with First Nations on a Nation-to-Nation basis, to provide the supports necessary to support student success" (p. 14). This whole approach to coordination recognized that lower socio-economic status within First Nations correlates with lower education attainment.

The OAG (2018b) calculated on-reserve and overall Canadian high school graduation (or equivalent) levels from 2001 to 2016:

While results for First Nations had improved, the results for all Canadians had improved by a greater amount: The gap was 30 percentage points in 2001 and 33 percentage points in 2016. In our view, this is a clearer way to measure and report on education results and would help to provide a more meaningful picture of well-being.

The OAG (2018a) further disclosed,

Many Indigenous people face barriers to sustained employment, such as living in isolated communities and having low levels of education. They experience high unemployment rates and low average earnings, and often lack job stability. In 2007, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people was just under 11%. In comparison, it was just under 6% among non-Indigenous Canadians. By 2017, these unemployment rates had increased to just over 11% and just over 6%, respectively. Many Indigenous people need training and support to build the skills they need to find and keep jobs.

The correlation between education and higher attainment of employment for Indigenous peoples is important to voice to government and stakeholders because recognizing that correlation is imperative for increasing Indigenous teachers in our school divisions to promote student success. What does this mean for successful Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica? It means that federal government recognizes the harmful effects of the educational gaps and socio-economic barriers and are working on areas to improve education by developing relationships between organizations. It means that it is not just teachers who need to "hack at their roots" (Galman, et al., 2010, p. 234), but that all involved in teacher education and schools need to look closely at themselves and their value sets to allow for ethical space.

As demonstrated in the literature review and the conceptual framework and confirmed by the participants' interviews, in order to ensure that Indigenous teacher candidates' extended practica are culturally responsive, certain elements are essential: support, consciousness-raising, the role of educators, change in social institutions, and extended practica structures that allow for ethical space. These elements are crucial because they contribute to raising awareness regarding inequities in education, systemic racism, and the importance of a culturally responsive education system. The research as well gave evidence of the persistence of assumptions that need to be

addressed. I began this study reflecting on the unintentional harm that I may have caused a group of Indigenous students through a careless comment made through ignorance. Over the years I have reflected upon my roots and have been fortunate to be given the tools from colleagues and friends to assess my value sets. All educators should be given this opportunity for reflexivity. The opportunity for reflexivity and awareness has been happening as indicated by the formation of the TRC, government initiatives, and the move towards indigenizing post-secondary institutions. Working together with universities on continuing innovative approaches for extended practica and working as a community towards addressing systemic racism will assist in moving towards a fairer, equitable education system that welcomes Indigenous teachers and teacher candidates. It involves working together to create a space that allows for engagement, negotiation, reconciliation and knowledge creation, towards the ultimate end of creating a more equitable and just society.

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions

1. What role do you play in supporting Indigenous teacher candidate extended practica?
2. Describe the current extended practica process and the process for the placement decisions.
3. How receptive have schools and teacher candidates been to recent innovations in the placement system?
4. To date, can you describe how the process been beneficial to the Indigenous teacher candidates and schools?
5. Describe a story about your experience with extended practica.
6. Holistic support may encompass emotional, spiritual, psychological, family, and financial support. How have these supports been available for the teacher candidates?
7. Describe the types of culturally responsive practices within extended practica that support Indigenous teacher candidates' success. These practices could include school selection; choice and preparation of the co-op teacher; preparation of the co-op placement; the selection of College supervisors, etc.
8. What is your understanding of *ethical space* in education and do you feel it is possible for ethical space to be developed within the extended practica placement?
9. Describe how it has been possible for the Indigenous teacher candidate to share their culture within the school environment or classroom.
10. What are some of the challenges or barriers faced by Indigenous teacher candidates that non-Indigenous teacher candidates typically don't experience?
11. What unique strengths do Indigenous teacher candidates bring to their extended practica?  
In your opinion, what would a perfect culturally responsive extended practica look like?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Letter of Initial Contact and Recruitment**

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Review Board on (date)

Hello,

My name is Margaret Leslie Martin and I am a doctoral candidate in the department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. I am in the process of conducting my dissertation research titled “What does a Culturally Responsive Indigenous Teacher candidate’s Extended Practica Look Like: Perspectives of College Field Supervisors and Administrators”. As my research aim is to discover what a culturally responsive extended practica looks like from the perspectives of Indigenous teacher candidates’ college field supervisors and program administrators, the research may contribute to understanding why Indigenous teacher candidates feel comfortable in certain classroom/school environments and succeed in their extended practica. Allowing for Indigenous teacher candidates to flourish in their extended practica and grow as a teacher may contribute to an increase success rate for Indigenous students.

You have been chosen as a potential participant in this study for your expertise in the area of education. Data will be collected through two semi-structured interviews which will last approximately 1.5 hours and will be tape recorded and then transcribed.

I would greatly appreciate if you would agree to participate in this research and believe you can make a very valuable contribution to the project. If you agree to participate in the research, you are free to withdraw at any time without repercussion and any information you have shared will be destroyed. However, once the report is completed, you will not be able to withdraw.

I will send you a formal invitation to participate and a form that invites you to consent to participation (needed for ethics protocol). I would ask that you sign this form and email it back to me. I could also pick it up prior to the interview.

In the meanwhile, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (306) 477-9229 or (306) 381-8012.

Sincerely,  
Leslie Martin

## APPENDIX C

### Letter of Interview Consent

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Review Board on 04 Oct-2016

#### LETTER OF INTERVIEW CONSENT

Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in this research study: “What does a Culturally Responsive Teacher Candidate’s Extended Practica Look Like from the Perspectives of College Field Supervisors and Administrators?”. This research is intended to understand why some Indigenous teacher candidates feel comfortable in certain classroom/school environments and succeed in their extended practica. Elements for consideration include the power dynamics from either supervisor-teacher candidate relationship or from the prevailing worldview that may exist within the teacher supervisor’s classroom. Allowing for Indigenous teacher candidates to flourish in their extended practica and grow as a teacher may contribute to an increase success rate for Indigenous students.

In order to protect the interest of each person taking part in this study, I will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. You will be interviewed twice and I anticipate that each interview will take approximately 1.5 hours. I will be recording the interview and you may discontinue the interview, or the recording of the interview at any time. You may also choose to



- not answer individual questions. The interview will occur either at the University of Saskatchewan or at another venue deemed convenient to you.
2. After each interview, I will transcribe and analyze the data for major themes. I will send you a copy of the transcripts so you have an opportunity to add, delete, or change any part of the transcript (if you choose to do so) such that the document reflects exactly what you had intended to represent. You will then be asked to sign a transcript release form.
  3. The data, including all recordings and transcriptions, collected throughout this study will be kept in a secure place in accordance with the University of Saskatchewan guidelines. After completion of the study, the tapes and other data and consent forms will be securely kept for five years at the University of Saskatchewan and then destroyed.
  4. The results and interpretations of this study will be part of the data collection for dissertation. I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the report and any additional publications. Please call or email me and I will forward a copy to you either electronically, by mail, or in person. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time before the completion of the final report without repercussion. If you withdraw from the study, the recordings and interview data will be destroyed. Once the report is completed, you will not be able to withdraw.

At all times in the research and dissertation your identity will remain confidential. The participants in the study will be drawn from a potential pool of college field supervisors and program administrators throughout Saskatchewan so there is a low likelihood that you might be

identified as a participant in the research. However there are limits to confidentiality since individual participants could be identified because of the nature or size of the sample.

As a participant in this study, you have the right to contact myself, Margaret Leslie Martin at (306) 381-8012 or (306) 477-9229 or [martinl@siit.ca](mailto:martinl@siit.ca) at anytime if you have questions about the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read the above guidelines as described to me and agree to participate. I understand the procedures and possible risks which were explained to me by the interviewer. A copy of this form has been given to me for my records and at the end of the study I will have access to a summary of the findings.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant

Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Date

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Interview Format**

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Review Board on 04 Oct-2016.

### **INTERVIEW FORMAT**

#### **Rapport Building**

- A. Build rapport with interviewee
- B. Overview
  - a) purpose
  - b) interview format
  - c) reminder of confidentiality
- C. Recording
  - a) permission to record
  - b) agreement to turn recorder off at any time

#### **Interview Questions**

1. What role do you play in supporting Indigenous teacher candidate extended practica?
2. Describe the current extended practica process and the process for the placement decisions?
3. How receptive have schools and teacher candidates been to recent innovations in the placement system?
4. To date, has the process been beneficial to the Indigenous teacher candidates and schools?

5. Can you tell me a story about your experience with extended practica?
6. Holistic support may encompass emotional, spiritual, psychological, family, and financial support. Are these supports available for the teacher candidates?
7. Can you describe any types of culturally responsive practices within extended practica to support Indigenous teacher candidates' success? These practices could include school selection; choice and preparation of the co-op teacher; preparation of the co-op placement; the selection of College supervisors, etc.
8. What is your understanding of "ethical space" in education and do you feel it is possible for "ethical space" to be developed within the placement?
9. Is it possible for the Indigenous teacher candidate to share their culture within the school environment or classroom?
10. What are some of the challenges or barriers faced by Indigenous teacher candidates that non-Indigenous teacher candidates typically don't experience?
11. What unique strengths do Indigenous teacher candidates bring to their extended practica?
12. In your opinion, what would a perfect culturally responsive extended practica look like?

## APPENDIX E

### Letter of Consent for Release of Transcripts

Thank you for participating in this research study: “What does a Culturally Responsive Teacher Candidate’s Extended Practica Look Like: Perspectives of College Field Supervisors and Administrators”. I am forwarding the transcribed recordings of our interviews for your perusal and your release of this confidential information for use in my research.

In order to protect the interest of each person taking part in this study, I will adhere to the procedural and ethical guidelines below:

1. Reading and rechecking the transcripts for accuracy of information and intent. You are welcome to edit the transcript to clarify what you intended to mean and I invite you to make comments in your own words or delete information that you do not want to be quoted in the study.
2. Interpretations of data collected from this study. I will use finding for my dissertation research. Throughout the study, your participation has remained and will remain confidential. Your name will not be used in the report or in any presentation.
3. In accordance with the University of Saskatchewan Guidelines on Behavioural Ethics, the recordings and transcripts made during the study will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan until the study is finished.

4. Participation in the study is voluntary, and you may withdraw participation at any time without penalty. If this happens, the recordings and interview data will be destroyed.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ wish to review the transcripts of the interview before data is analyzed.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the guidelines above and agree to release the revised transcripts to the researcher.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As a participant in this study, you have the right to contact myself, Margaret Leslie Martin at (306) 381-8012 or (306) 477-9229 or [martinl@siit](mailto:martinl@siit) at anytime if you have questions about the study.